

April 2011

Bulova Byline

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Inside this Month's Issue:

- Contract Extension for I-95 Incinerator...3
- VRE Beats Ridership Record.....4
- Fairfax County Rescue Team Returns Home.....6
- Moving Tysons Transformation Forward.....7
- Successful Public Outreach for Tysons Access Study.....7
- Postal Service Approves Use of 'Tysons Corner'.....7
- Tysons Pedestrian, Bike Improvements Coming.....8
- A Message on Disaster Preparedness from Fairfax County.....8
- County Announces New Disabilities Communications Efforts.....9

We are fast approaching the **April 12 date when the Board of Supervisors will mark up**, or make changes to, the Advertised Budget for Fiscal Year 2012. We recently completed an extensive public outreach effort, which included approximately 20 community meetings and culminated in three nights of public hearings before the board on March 29th, 30th and 31st. During a series of Budget Committee Meetings beginning last October, we have discussed priorities with County agencies, and met jointly with the Fairfax County School Board.

Adoption of the budget is the top priority of our Board. When we adopt a budget, we are investing in the priorities of our community. It is always critical that our residents are at the table with us as spending (and saving) decisions are made.

Below are highlights of the County Executive's Advertised Budget for Fiscal Year 2012.

The County Executive's Budget, released on Feb. 22, included an advertised tax rate of \$1.09, the same as current tax rate. The Advertised rate becomes the upper ceiling for the tax rate that will be adopted by the Board this month. We can adopt something lower, but not higher. Because of a modest increase in property values a tax rate of \$1.09 would mean an increase of \$110.55 in the average taxpayer's annual bill.

That budget includes **\$3.38 billion** in General Fund Disbursements, which includes General County Direct (other than School) Expenditures of **\$1.24 billion** and a **\$1.61 billion Transfer to the schools**.

The FY 2012 budget for the County includes **\$9.8 million in reductions and reorganizations in County agencies**. For the School Transfer there is no change from FY2011. The School Board has requested an increase of \$42 million. **Per the Virginia constitution, the Board of Supervisors does not have "line item" authority over the School Budget.**

Commercial and residential real estate taxes make up the majority (**62.2 percent**) of the revenue that the County receives to provide county services. Our second largest source of revenue is from the personal property tax (**15.5 percent**).

After four years of falling residential real estate values, assessments for FY2012

are estimated to be a modest increase of 2.34 percent. Homes are beginning to sell again and according to MLS, the average price of homes sold increased by 8.9 percent. We are still experiencing foreclosures with a total of 842 in December, an increase of 5.8 percent over the previous year.

Commercial values, after having plunged 18 percent last year, show a surprise increase this year of 3.73 percent for a **combined increase in our Real Estate Tax Base of 3.27 percent.**

The County Executive’s budget included an available balance of \$30 million, which could be used to reduce the tax rate, address unfunded needs/requests or hold in reserve as a hedge against future downturns or reductions by the federal government or the state.

On compensation, the FCPS budget assumed an increase in compensation (2 percent market rate adjustment plus step increases) for all School employees. The School Board’s requested increase in their Transfer would cover the cost of this increase. The General County Budget does not assume any increases in compensation. While we are seeing some modest signs of recovery, we are not yet out of the woods.

Detailed information about the Advertised Budget, and previous Adopted Budgets, can be found on the County’s website at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dmb/.

Sincerely,



Sharon Bulova – Chairman, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

Budget Links

- [County Executive's Budget Presentation to the Board \(Feb. 22, 2011\)](#) 
- [Citizen's Guide to the Budget](#) 
- [Overview Volume](#) 
- [Transcript of County Executive’s online chat on February 23, 2011](#)
- [Provide your feedback on the FY 2012 Advertised Budget](#)
 - [Report on Public Feedback \(March 15, 2011\)](#)

- [FY 2012 Budget Calendar](#)
- [Q&A Search Tool](#)
- **General Fund Receipts - "Where It Comes From" Pie Chart:**
 - [One Pager](#) 
 - [Detailed, Drilldown Version](#)
- **General Fund Disbursements - "Where It Goes" Pie Chart:**
 - [One Pager](#) 
 - [Detailed, Drilldown Version](#)

Board Votes to Pursue Service Contract Extension for I-95 Incinerator

At our Board meeting on March 29, our Board discussed options and terms for either purchasing the I-95 Waste-to-Energy plant, or for extending a service agreement with Covanta Energy. **After carefully weighing the options before us, I supported the motion to extend a service contract over the option to purchase the facility.** I believe this action represents the best option for Fairfax County residents.

Fairfax County has been in a successful public-private partnership with Covanta since 1987, known then as Ogden Martin. The I-95 Waste-to-Energy plant, one of the largest of its kind on the East Coast, went online in 1990 as a state-of-the-art facility. The initial term of the service agreement expired in February of this year with the contract provision that Fairfax County could exercise an option to purchase.

Our decision is the culmination of years of negotiations between the County and Covanta and thoughtful consideration by my colleagues. Throughout the process of exercising due diligence and considering a potential purchase, most of my colleagues and I have remained open-minded to all options. **This has been critical in order to ensure County staff's ability to negotiate successfully on behalf of our resident's interests.**

Exercising our right to explore the potential to purchase allowed us to negotiate a service contract renewal based on the new economic reality and with a stronger negotiating position. **The extension will result in \$300 million in savings over the life of the new contract compared to the terms negotiated in 2008.**

Under the new contract, Covanta will continue to own and operate the facility until 2041. Fairfax County owns the land on which the plant sits. Renewing the contract on the terms County staff has negotiated provides an **economical, safe and secure way to ensure Fairfax County residents have reliable, affordable and environmentally preferable trash disposal for the next 30 years.**

This is a complex issue and one that impacts residents near the plant as well as customers receiving trash service throughout the County. In January I proposed an extensive public outreach process that included three public information sessions and a public hearing before the Board of Supervisors on Feb. 22. **I have appreciated the letters, e-mails, testimony and generous amount of public engagement our Fairfax County residents have invested in the question of a purchase.**

County staff has been negotiating with Covanta since 2005 to find a mutually agreeable solution to continue our partnership. Late last year, they presented three options to the Board of Supervisors:

- Allow the contract to expire and the market to determine the cost and availability of use;
- Negotiate a new long-term contract similar to the current contract that includes price and capacity stipulations;
- Purchase the facility and competitively bid a service contract with the private sector

County staff recommended the purchase of the facility. As a result of the most recent round of negotiations, however, between the County and Covanta, staff was able to secure some key provisions that make a contract extension more attractive, gives the County greater future flexibility and more options than a purchase.

Our County staff worked very hard to secure these terms and I commend them for their efforts throughout the almost six-year process.

VRE Beats Ridership Record for Third Time This Year

The following is a guest column written by Dale Zehner, CEO of the Virginia Railway Express. I am currently serving as Chairman of the VRE board and couldn't be more excited about the growth VRE is experiencing!

Virginia Railway Express' growth could be compared to a fairytale. Once upon a time, there was a little train that could...And like fairytales, VRE has what looks to be a happy ending. At a time when transit systems are cutting costs and raising fares during a recession, VRE has kept fares steady, while increasing service to its riders. VRE has broken ridership records four times this year, twice in the month of March alone. On-time performance and reliability has been increasing as our new locomotives are put into service pulling our new rail cars.

Increased Ridership

On Wednesday, February 16, 2011, VRE carried more than 20,000 trips for the first time ever. Then a month later, on March 15, VRE broke that record by carrying 20,573. Then a week later, VRE carried 21,136 people. Overall, VRE's ridership is 11% higher than this same period last year.

Truly a victim of our own success, on the Fredericksburg Line, nine out of fourteen peak trains are operating at 90% or greater capacity, with seven over 100% capacity. On the Manassas Line, five out of thirteen peak trains are operating at 90% or greater capacity, with four over 100% capacity. Throughout the system, six of our thirteen stations with parking are at or over capacity, including the Rolling Road station on Burke Road.

New Equipment

Seven of our new locomotives have been delivered. VRE has ordered a total of twenty, which are being manufactured by MotivePower in Boise, Idaho. These locomotives boast 3600 horsepower and a separate 600 kw engine that powers all of the train's creature comforts, like lighting, heating, and air conditioning and are compliant with all EPA standards. They are powerful enough to pull and power ten rail cars full of riders at track speed. By May, all of our train sets should be equipped with these new locomotives.

While these new locomotives are amazing on their own, they are even better when they are seen with our new rail cars. The first of these cars were originally put into service in January 2007. VRE now boasts 71 new rail cars. These rail cars not only provided VRE with a mostly standardized fleet (after a period of years when we had four different types of rail cars), but they also have improved passenger amenities: roughly one-third of all rail cars has a restroom, increased signage and improved P.A. systems, and a wheelchair lift on every car.

Growing Demand

Even when a fairytale ends with happily ever after, we all know that the end of the story isn't really the end. The story continues. The prince and the princess may live happily ever after, but they still have the age old woes of raising kids and paying taxes. After our happy ending of successive ridership records



Chairman Bulova waving from one the new locomotives.

being broken and new equipment, VRE still has many concerns that must be addressed. Meeting the increase in ridership demand is proving to be a challenge.

To meet that challenge, VRE is working with its host railroads to increase capacity by any means possible. Three separate options are currently in the works. First, effective May 2, 2011, VRE will bring down the cost of the Step-Up fare needed to ride select Amtrak trains to \$5. By buying down some of the cost that the rider must pay, VRE hopes to shift some riders from VRE trains to Amtrak trains. In Fairfax County, VRE riders using Burke Centre could ride select Amtrak trains with their VRE ticket and a \$5 Step-Up ticket. This program will also be available to riders at Woodbridge, Quantico, Manassas and Fredericksburg. By shifting some of these riders to Amtrak, VRE is expecting seats on its trains to open up for our riders further up the line at stations like Lorton and Rolling Road.

Second, VRE is working with CSX, Norfolk Southern and Amtrak to return one of its trains to the Broad Run storage yard during the day. By freeing up space at our mid-day storage yard, we would be able to add some cars to some of our most crowded trains. We are still working through the details, but hope to add this service later in the spring.

Our third option is to continue to work on our L'Enfant storage track. VRE had contemplated storing trains there by terminating one train on each line at L'Enfant. This was an unpopular move with our ridership. Instead, we are working to construct a switch on the north end of the existing storage track so that trains can serve Union Station, then back track to the storage track to be stored during the day.

Happily Ever After

As VRE looks forward, the future is bright. VRE's long-term growth is really a reflection of the commitment that the region has made to finding and delivering meaningful transportation alternatives to the people. VRE's Operations Board and owning jurisdictions have been invaluable in supporting initiatives that brought new railcars and locomotives to our fleet and upgraded stations and infrastructure in an effort to position VRE for success. People today rely on VRE far more than in the past because it's a viable alternative to the car and our performance is such that people are very confident in their riding experience once they get onboard. For VRE, that is truly a fairytale ending.

Dale Zehner, CEO of Virginia Railway Express

Redistricting Process Coming to a Close; Hearing on April 12

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing on the redistricting plans for our nine magisterial districts. The Redistricting Advisory Citizens Committee, chaired by former Board Chairman Kate Hanley, recently submitted its plans for redistricting. The result of this open and transparent process is a plan that will cause minimal disruption to the voters – never an easy task. I commend the Committee for their work and thank Kate Hanley for her leadership.

To sign up to speak at the April 12 hearing, please visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/redistricting. The Board will adopt a final plan on April 26.

Fairfax County Rescue Team Returns Home from Japan Mission

News accounts describe the moon that rose Saturday and hung brightly in the sky throughout the night and early morning Sunday as a “Supermoon.” The last time such a distinctive full moon appeared so close to the earth was in 1993, eighteen years ago.

In the early morning hours of Sunday, March with the Supermoon high in the sky, I was pleased to welcome home members of our Fairfax County Urban Search and Rescue team, VATF-1. After spending a week in Japan, the team was ready to return and their families were happy to see them. Mason District Supervisor Penny Gross and I joined family members at the Fire and Rescue Academy on West Ox Road, the headquarters of VATF-1. Among the crowd were lots of little children in pajamas and jackets with their homemade “Welcome Home” signs.



Receiving a briefing from FCFD on March 15

The Japanese Ambassador to the U.S. gave a very moving speech to our team, thanking them for the courageous service to his people. I presented Ambassador Ichiro Fujisaki with a Fairfax County lapel pin to signify what will always be a strong connection between Fairfax County and the country of Japan.

Our team completed its mission and returned to Misawa Air Force Base on March 18 to prepare for their return to the U.S. VATF-1 completed its search of central Ofunato on Tuesday, and searched Kamaishi City on Wednesday and

Thursday. Tragically, neither VATF-1 nor CATF-1, the Los Angeles based team that joined the Fairfax County team in Japan, found any live victims in either location.

The two teams, the only two in the U.S. qualified for foreign urban search and rescue missions, transferred \$145,000 in equipment to the Ofunato Fire Department for use in additional recovery efforts. The equipment includes 4 zodiac boat kits - containing boats, motors, fuel tanks, and paddles - 16 kerosene heaters, 160 cots, and 160 sleeping bags.



Welcoming home VATF-1 with Ambassador Ichiro Fujisaki
(photo by Jeanne Theismann/The Connection)

The team will get some much needed time off before returning to regular duty here in Fairfax County. This time off, like all the work, training and equipment, is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development.

I continue to offer my condolences and sympathy to the people of Japan in the wake of this terrible tragedy. They will continue to face hardships for a long time, and my thoughts and prayers are with them.

In my remarks Sunday morning, I shared with our USAR Team the good wishes and pride that Byline readers have expressed. I am very proud of our team. I also thank their families for their support of this program. **I hope that the world does not soon see another tragedy like the one in Japan, but I know that the members of VATF-1 are always ready to serve.**

 **Tysons Corner Update**

Board Continues To Move Tysons Transformation Forward

Almost a year ago the Board of Supervisors adopted a bold vision for the transformation of Tysons Corner. When the Board approved the plan we also approved a series of **follow-on motions**; some of them have been completed and work on the others is underway. For instance, **last month we received approval from the US Postal Service for the use of Tysons Corner, or Tysons, as an official mailing address** and the **Tysons Metro Station Access Management Study** has been conducting public outreach (see below).

Staff has also either received or is aware of 12 development proposals for Tysons Corner. Many of these proposals are in the initial stages of the approval process. So far 9 have been submitted and 6 have been accepted by staff.

Public Outreach for Tysons Access Study

We are very fortunate to have had tremendous participation during our Tysons Metrorail Stations Access Management Study public meetings last month. We had an average of 72 people at each of the four meetings. At each meeting we had: McLean High School-125, George C. Marshall High School-45, Teqcorner Building-25, and Westbriar Elementary School-93. Online participation has been even better. **After just a week of being available, 440 people took the TMSAMS online survey.**

We sent out a survey reminder last week and the survey will be available through the month of April so if you haven't already, please go to www.tmsams.info and take the survey.

The ultimate goal of the TMSAMS effort is to ensure that high quality public transit, pedestrian and bicycle access is provided to the stations.

Given the countywide implications for re-development at Tysons, the importance of the implementation plan to ensuring that we achieve our vision, and the long history of community engagement in the Tysons process, I feel strongly that **the Board and the public must be kept informed of the County's progress on the implementation of the plan.** To this end I have asked that the Board be presented with an overview of the rezoning applications, and the status of the follow-on motions along with a plan for community outreach at our **April 12th Revitalization Committee meeting.** I also asked that the Planning Commission, working with staff, to develop an inclusive process to address several follow-on motions and return to the Board with its recommendations on how best to address those issues in **September.**

Use of 'Tysons Corner' Official

For the first time in its 60-year history, Tysons Corner (or just Tysons) is now an officially acceptable mailing address. The U.S. Postal Service approved the use of Tysons Corner in the 22102 and 22182 Zip codes of McLean and Vienna late last month. The new designation is purely optional – **all businesses and residents can continue to use their respective McLean or Vienna addresses or can choose to use Tysons Corner or Tysons.**

Giving business and residents this option will give Tysons Corner a sense of place, character and identity.



Federal Money Going to Dulles Rail Pedestrian, Bike Improvements



At our Board meeting on March 28, the Board of Supervisors approved the allocation of federal grant money to build pedestrian and bicycle improvements to the Dulles Rail corridor

between Route 123 and Wiehle Avenue. These improvements will be focused on **top priorities along the corridor** as identified by County staff. The total project cost will be covered by federal dollars - no local cash match is required.

Specifically, we approved the allocation of \$8.6 million from existing federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality, or CMAQ, funding for these critical improvements. We also

directed the County Department of Transportation to execute what's called a "Standard Project Administration Agreement" with the Virginia Department of Transportation to administer the design and construction of the project.

Some of the changes are: the construction of a **multi-use trail** on the south side of Route 123 under the Dulles Airport Highway Interchange; the addition of **signalized crosswalks** at Route 123 and International Drive, International Drive and Greensboro Drive and Tysons Boulevard and Galleria Drive; **sidewalks** on Route 7 under the 123 interchange, and on Sunrise Valley Drive between Soapstone and South Lakes.

A Message on Disaster Preparedness from Fairfax County OEM

Fairfax County is susceptible to both natural (**floods, hurricanes and tornadoes**) and man-made hazards (**terrorist acts and accidental releases of hazardous materials**). Some of these events have the capacity for catastrophic local and regional impacts. Such impacts can create a variety of issues for which the community must quickly address in order to limit further hardship on county residents, local businesses and non-profits.

Following a disaster, complex issues, with impacts far beyond what county government can single-handedly resolve, will arise. The local economy may falter due to supply-chain disruptions, infrastructure failures, business closures and/or inaccessible work-places. There could possibly be population displacement, housing shortages and rebuilding issues, and potential social and psychological impacts.

While the effects of disasters are wide ranging and cannot be predicted, planning before a disaster occurs can prepare our community to more ably recover from a major incident.

Planning ahead will allow us to build community partnerships in order to identify gaps, break down barriers, and establish decision-making structures and procedures. These can focus and accelerate the recovery process during the stressful and often overburdened post-disaster period.

Fairfax County is committed to ensuring not only that stakeholder interests are considered throughout the Pre-Disaster Recovery Planning process, but that our nonprofit and private sector partners help drive and define the outcomes. The Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management invites you to participate in a Public Survey to support the development of the Pre-Disaster Recovery Plan by [clicking here](#).

For more information about the **Pre-Disaster Recovery Planning initiative** and to sign up for automatic project updates, please visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/oem/pdrp.

County Announces New Disabilities Communications Efforts

Fairfax County has rolled out a new disabilities communications effort that includes a new webpage and stronger, more inclusive social media presence. Fairfax County's website features a new ADA Accessibility webpage at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/living/accessibility/. The page includes information about the ADA, links to county services for people with disabilities and information on accessible parking, entrances and restroom facilities. It also includes information on filing a complaint.

The Office of Public Affairs is working on a second phase of this page that will include more information on related topics.

Fairfax County Disabilities, the county's [newest Facebook page](#) is now live. The page will share information on county services and events with people with disabilities. It will also host conversations and provide answers to questions about ADA accommodations and other disability rights.



More Details on the Coming Connector Changes for BRAC

One of the major events looming on the horizon is the September deadline for the movement of 20,000 Defense Department employees to the Ft. Belvoir area under the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process.

To prepare for these workers, my colleagues on the Board and I have been working with our County staff to identify transportation improvements and choices in the corridor.



Beginning in May, Fairfax Connector staff will launch a broad service change campaign and public outreach effort to inform South County residents of bus service changes that will accompany the BRAC movements this fall.

Information on the proposed bus service changes will be provided on the Fairfax Connector website (www.fairfaxconnector.com)

and through various social media outlets, including Twitter (@ffxconnector) and Facebook (facebook.com/fairfaxconnector).

In June, staff will hold a series of public meetings in southern Fairfax County to share information with the public about the proposed new service and receive comments on the routes and schedules. When the public meetings have concluded, the comments received regarding the proposed bus service changes will be reviewed and considered for incorporation into the final service plan.

By August, staff will finalize the schedules and begin training drivers. The final schedules will be available to the public by the **end of August**. Look for the new service to hit the streets in **late September or early October**.

The proposed BRAC service plan incorporates nine new buses and significantly increases Fairfax Connector bus service in South County. Funding for these new buses and the increase in service will come from our C&I (Commercial and Industrial) Real Estate Taxes, earmarked for transportation improvements.

Summer Months to Bring Significant Progress on Road Projects

The summer of 2011 will bring some significant progress to major road improvement projects around Fairfax County – such as the widening of I-95 between 7100 and 123, HOT Lanes on the Capital Beltway and I-395, and BRAC road changes. Below is a summary of the schedule VDOT released at the beginning of April. **Watch this space for regular updates** this summer.

- **I-95 Widening** – adding a 4th lane between Fairfax County Parkway and Rt. 123
 - **Benefits:** Save commuters 10-20 minutes during peak hours, ease congestion.
 - **Status:** 94% completed; projected to finish by summer 2011.
- **I-495 HOT Lanes** – 2 new lanes in each direction
 - **Benefits:** Introduction of HOV to Beltway and Tysons Corner area, reliable option for commuters, congestion free corridor for transit, enhanced connections with interstates.
 - **Status:** 65% completed; 75% of sound walls done, at least half of all bridges replaced. Estimated completion: late 2012.
 - **2011 Construction:** traffic will shift to newly-constructed outer lanes this summer, bridge replacement and widening continues throughout the corridor.
- **I-95 HOT Lanes** – add an extra lane, extend HOV lanes south.
 - **Benefits:** similar to 495 HOT Lanes; reliable commute, seamless connections, new corridor for express bus or BRT.
 - **Status:** Citizen outreach meetings anticipated for fall. Construction to begin 2012 and take 2 -3 years.
- **BRAC/Fairfax County Parkway** - complete missing section of Parkway
 - **Benefits:** enhance ability to handle substantial influx of personnel to Ft. Belvoir, EPG
 - **Status:** Phase I and II completed, Phase III expected to be completed summer of 2012, Phase IV expected to be complete summer of 2011.
- **BRAC/Mark Center**
 - **Benefits:** mitigate influx of traffic due to BRAC-related job shift.
 - **Status:** Ramp – funded by VDOT, design and environmental studies to be completed 2011-2012, construction to take 24 months.
- **Dulles Rail**
 - **Benefits:** Rail access to Tysons, Reston, Herndon, Dulles Airport and beyond. Seamless connection to existing Metro rail system.
 - **Status:** Phase I expected completed by 2013 – construction currently 33% complete. Phase II anticipated construction completion by 2016.
 - **2011 Construction:** bridges across I-495 to be built. Utility relocation nearly completed, easing of impacts to Rt. 7 and W&OD trail, situational closures continue along Rt. 123 and 267. Eight complete night time closures of I-495 anticipated for July and August.
- **Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project**
 - **Benefits:** Replaces aging infrastructure, enhances traffic flow along Telegraph Rd. and Huntington Ave. Pedestrians also have improved access and safer options.
 - **Status:** Telegraph Rd. Interchange and Jones Point Park expected completion 2012.