



August 3, 2011

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- **Success in My Efforts to Reduce Some of the Regulatory Burden on Homeowners** - After a two year process the board approved part of my request to remove some of the financial and regulatory burdens on homeowners wanting to do simple home additions.
- **More Progress on I-66 Solutions** - Since taking office in 2008 I have made finding solutions to I-66 congestion a priority. Half of my four part plan has been implemented (HOV hours extended, ramps at Monument and Stringfellow are open), the other two are in the works (use of shoulder lanes and the long term EIS). In addition, VDOT is adding overhead variable message signs to inform motorists of estimated travel times. Below is an update on the use of the shoulder lanes, the EIS and other useful info.
- **Join me in Supporting the Boy Scouts** - the National Capital Area Council, BSA Patriot District 2nd Annual Golf Outing to Support Scouting is being held on Monday, September 12, 2011 at the General's Ridge Golf Course in Manassas. **As the Co-Chair of this event I ask you to please join me on a fun filled day for a worthy organization and partner in our community.** You can register your foursome by going to: <http://www.boyscouts-ncac.org/registration/calendardetail.asp?ActivityKey=988943>

Success in My Efforts to Reduce Some of the Regulatory Burden on Homeowners

Early in 2009, one of my constituents informed me of his plans to construct a small addition to his home in order for his aging mother to live with his family. Unfortunately, the County was requiring him to submit a full scale commercial grading plan which would cost him an additional \$30,000. For my constituent, this was a deal breaker - he could no longer afford to do the improvement. My concern was that our regulations on land disturbance were restricting our homeowners' ability to afford to make home improvements and in this specific case providing an opportunity for one of our seniors to age in place with her family. At that time I asked the staff to reconsider the process that requires this burden on our homeowners and to develop an alternative that is less costly but continues to provide the environmental protection to our land and streams.

I am pleased to say that last week, the Board of Supervisors approved a change in the requirements that will provide some relief to our homeowners. In the case of the constituent that approached me in 2009 he would likely save most of that \$30,000. Currently a grading plan is required for any land disturbing activities greater than 2,500 s.f. - a small addition to a house would disturb more than 2,500 s.f. Over the course of time, with changes to federal, state, and County requirements, the complexity and cost of preparing grading plans have increased and so has the cost to homeowners in both time and dollars.

The change approved by the Board would require a plat certified by a land surveyor, engineer, landscape architect or architect in lieu of a full grading plan for land disturbing activities. This plat would be called the Conservation Plan and is less costly than a full grading plan. This amendment only applies to the construction of an addition or accessory structure to a single family dwelling or a demolition of a single family dwelling or the demolition of an accessory structure to a single family dwelling, that results in a disturbed area of 5,000 square feet or less and does not require the installation of water quality controls or other drainage improvements. The goal to protect the environment and properties that are adjacent to development and our waterways remains unchanged. The intent of this amendment is to strike a balance between that goal and the costs to our homeowners. We have reduced the burden on our homeowners but will continue to maintain the same level of protection to our environment. The Occoquan Watershed Coalition reviewed these amendments and supported these less burdensome changes for homeowners.

This is a first step forward in addressing this often costly regulation. Although this does not apply to commercial construction or demolition, the Board agreed to consider amending the regulation to include those construction permits as well. We also need to look at the requirements surrounding the construction of backyard pools where our policies are still adding steep costs with little benefit. For those who are concerned about unforeseen or unintended consequences of this amendment, staff has assured the Board that our site inspectors will be sufficiently trained to note any drainage and water quality issue *prior* to construction so that appropriate controls will be in place.

My hope is that those homeowners who have forgone home improvement projects because of the cost of a grading plan will now be able to consider moving forward with their project.

More Progress on I-66 Solutions

Since taking office in 2008 I have made finding solutions to I-66 congestion a priority. Half of my four part plan has been implemented (HOV hours extended, ramps at Monument and Stringfellow are open), the other two are in the works (use of shoulder lanes and the long term EIS). In addition, VDOT is adding overhead variable message signs to inform motorists of estimated travel times.

Pilot Project for I-66 Overhead Signs Coming in Late August

I am pleased to share some information from the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) regarding a two-month signage pilot program it will be undertaking on I-66 beginning on August 22nd. Using the overhead variable message signs between I-495 and Gainesville, drivers will now be shown the travel times at three locations on weekdays from 5 a.m. to 9 p.m. and weekends from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.:

- Eastbound I-66, just east of Route 28 will display the travel time to I-495
- Westbound I-66, just west of Route 50, will display the travel time to Gainesville
- Westbound I-66, just west of Route 7100, will display the travel time to Gainesville

VDOT believes that giving drivers accurate travel times should help them make the decision whether or not to take an alternate route and avoid backups. VDOT will be obtaining its traffic data from Inrix, a company that provides traffic services and information as well as other sources to provide the travel times which will be updated every five minutes from the Public Safety Transportation Operations Center in Fairfax. If this is successful, the program will be expanded to other interstates (and later highways) state-wide. For more information on the program, including a visual of how a typical sign will look like, visit VDOT's website at http://www.virginiadot.org/projects/northernvirginia/travel_times.asp.

Update on Shoulder Use on I-66

Last week, VDOT hosted an informational meeting regarding its planned Active Traffic Management System (which will allow for shoulder use any time I-66 is congested) from the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge in D.C. to Haymarket. The project includes increased use of electronic signs and enhanced detection and camera systems, lane control signal systems, queue warning systems, and more. After implementation of the ATM system, drivers will see the shoulder lanes opened to traffic when congestion builds regardless of

the time of day or day of week. Due to the increased monitoring of the road, transportation, safety, and law enforcement officials will be able to respond more quickly to incidents. There is no major construction activity required and VDOT will not need to acquire any right of way for the improvements. According to VDOT, the goals of the ATM project are to increase safety, reduce congestion, and lessen fuel consumption. Visit VDOT's website for more information on this project, including materials from the meeting at http://virginiadot.org/projects/northernvirginia/i-66_atms.asp.

The Environmental Impact Study for I-66 between the I-495 and Route 15 continues to move forward on schedule. The draft should be out by May of next year and will study potential multimodal improvements to address existing and future transportation needs in this corridor and includes areas both north and south of I-66. For more information on this project, visit VDOT's website at http://www.virginiadot.org/projects/northernvirginia/i66_eis.asp and click on "scoping meeting handout." This is the first critical step before a long term solution can be implemented.

Join me in Supporting the Boy Scouts

Please join me for the **National Capital Area Council, BSA Patriot District 2nd Annual Golf Outing to Support Scouting on Monday, September 12, 2011** at the General's Ridge Golf Course in Manassas. The tournament will have a shotgun start at 9:00 am and include longest drive contests, closest to the pin challenge, prizes and raffles, and a Silent Auction.

You can register your foursome by going to:

<http://www.boyscouts-ncac.org/registration/calendardetail.asp?ActivityKey=988943>

The National Capital Area Council, BSA is currently one of the 300 plus local councils chartered by the National Council, Boy Scouts of America. It is a Class 200 council, (one of the largest) and is geographically comprised of ten counties in Northern Virginia, six counties in Maryland, and the District of Columbia.

The NCAC Patriot District seeks to bring the opportunities of Scouting to an increasingly diverse group of the youth in our community and expand services to existing units. The Patriot District broadened its recruiting efforts this year by raising the visibility of Scouting at many locations within the district, e.g., libraries, pools, shopping and community centers, Labor Day picnics and the Burke Centre Festival.

As the Co-Chair of this event I ask you to please join me on a fun filled day for a worthy organization and partner in our community.