



March, 2009 “A Month in Review”

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Getting to the Bottom of Take Home Vehicles

On Monday, March 30, Fox News ran an investigative story on the Fire and Rescue Department’s policy on take home vehicles and I have included the link to this story below. I have and will continue to praise the work of our hardworking, dedicated public safety employees. However, during these tough economic times and budget woes, tough choices need to be made and unnecessary habits needs to be changed. In the story I called for the Board of Supervisor’s Auditor to conduct a full audit of the County’s policies on **all** take home vehicles. I met with the auditor in Tuesday and was happy to see the Board Chairman echo my call for an audit on Wednesday. I certainly understand the importance of having our some of our public

safety employees with take home vehicles for emergencies, however not as a perk as reported in the story. I would rather see agencies streamlined (with perks and fat eliminated) than cutting the jobs of those that protect our families. I will continue to keep you informed on this important issue and the progress made on the audit that I have called for.

http://www.myfoxdc.com/dpp/news/033009_fox_5_investigation_paying_for_perks

Opposing New Park Fees and Pending Problems

On March 25th the Park Authority voted to implement a \$4 per vehicle entrance fee for Fairfax County residents entering one of Fairfax County's four lake front parks: Burke Lake, Lake Accotink, Lake Fairfax and Riverbend Park. Starting July 1, the Park Authority will be charging residents just to enter one of those parks even if they only plan to go for a run or have a picnic with their family. I am opposed to these entrance fees because I feel that County residents have already paid for the parks once through their taxes and now we're forcing them to pay a second time with a fee. I am pleased to report that the Springfield District Park Authority Board Member, Harold Pyon, voted against the implementation of this new fee. Unfortunately he was the only one.

I see many other problems with this fee. For one, people will now try and park in the neighborhoods next to these parks so that they can avoid paying the vehicle entrance fee. This is going to be a nuisance for these neighborhoods and is going to cause us to have to monitor these neighborhoods for parking and other violations. I also believe this will also cause an increase in problems with unpermitted walk on field use as groups currently using these parks will look elsewhere to play. In addition I am worried about congestion and the impact on roads like Rt. 123 as cars back up to pay the fee. Please keep my office informed if you see any of these problems developing.

In addition to this new park entrance fee the County Executive has proposed in his budget adding or raising 15 different County fees. I think it is disingenuous for the Board to publicly stating that we are only nominally raising the average property tax bill this year while at the same time we are reaching into the other pocket of our citizens for potentially over \$40 million worth of fees and payments. I oppose most of these fee increases including the increase in park fees for County residents, the 136% increase in the Athletic Use fee and the Motor Vehicle Decal Fee.

Response to the School Budget – Changing the Equation

On March 23, I sent out a special edition of the *Herrity Report*, **The School Budget-Changing the Equation**. I am pleased to say that the response was overwhelming and unanimous in support of taking a hard look at the way the school system does business. I have included a link to the newsletter if you have not yet read it and always appreciate any feedback that you may have. It is imperative that you let the School Board and Administrators know how you feel on the important issues I have laid out.

The speaker list for citizens interested in testifying on the FY 2010 School Budget opens on Friday, May 1 and closes on May 11 at 4:30. The public hearings on the School Budget are

scheduled for May 12 and 13 at Jackson Middle School, 3020 Gallows Road, Falls Church at 6 p.m. I encourage you to testify at one of the public hearings and ask the School Board to reduce class sizes and focus funding on teachers, kids and the classroom.

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/springfield/herrity-report-newsletter.htm>

Transportation Updates

Fairfax County Parkway Extension Project/Boudinot Drive Ramp

As an update to previous articles in the Herrity Report, I am pleased to report that thanks to the efforts of Supervisors Gerry Hyland, Jeff McKay and I, the Boudinot Drive ramp for drivers to access the southbound lanes of the Parkway from Fullerton Road has been included in the Memorandum of Agreement for the project. This will give the Fullerton Industrial Park access to I-95 North and the Parkway.

As a further update, the initial project work for the Parkway extension will require relocation of communication cables along Rolling Road near Richfield Road. Prior to the cables' relocation, trees within state right-of-way will either be removed or "severely cut back" according to VDOT. This work may begin as early as April 6. For more information on this part of the project, as well as an overview of the work to be done (including maps) visit the official website for the project: http://www.fairfaxcountyparkway.org/images/Fact_Sheet.pdf

A "Pardon our Dust" meeting for the Parkway Extension Project has been set for:

Tuesday, April 14

6-8 p.m.

**West Springfield High School
6100 Rolling Road, Springfield**

Representatives from VDOT and the FHWA will be discussing the overall project plan, the preliminary project schedule, plans to mitigate traffic impacts, and safety improvements. All interested residents are encouraged to attend. For more information, view the meeting announcement flyer at

http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/springfield/pdf_files/pkwy_ext_mtg_flyer0409.pdf

Multi-Way Stop at Post Forest Drive/Legato Road

VDOT representatives have informed me the multi-way stop and related pavement markings, including re-installation of the crosswalk across Post Forest Drive on the eastern side of the intersection, should be completed in the next two weeks, weather permitting. This is a much-needed improvement for all the residents (drivers and pedestrians) in the area.

UPDATE: As of April 2, work has begun; VDOT has started eradicating existing pavement marking from the roadway and installed temporary "Unmarked Pavement" signs. More work

was to be done this week but the rain is holding it up. Barring more rain next week, VDOT still hopes to complete its work on the intersection by the week of April 13th.

District-Wide Community Parking District (CPD)

I am still receiving inquiries from residents asking whether I plan to pursue a CPD for the entire Springfield District as was done in the Mount Vernon District last year. According to the Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT), a District-Wide CPD would prohibit the parking of watercraft, motor homes, campers, trailers, vehicles greater than or equal to 3 axles, vehicles with a weight greater than or equal to 12,000 lbs., and vehicles transporting greater than or equal to 16 passengers (except school buses) on public streets in residentially zoned areas. For more information on the Large-Area CPD process, visit the FCDOT website at http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fcdot/large_cpd.htm . If you have taken the time to share your view on this topic with me previously, you need not contact my office again; I have maintained a record of all correspondence on this issue, regardless of whether it came in via e-mail, phone, or US Mail.

Rolling Road Widening

The funding for the widening of Rolling Road from Old Keene Mill Road to the Fairfax County Parkway has been removed from VDOT's Six Year Plan. For the second time the residents of have been through a very painful design process only to see the funds evaporate. It is too soon to tell if stimulus funding will be available to complete the project. I will keep you updated.

Board Members Add New Restrictions on I-66 Inside the Beltway Spot Improvements at TPB

On February 18, 2009, the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments Transportation Planning Board (TPB) voted to remove three planned spot improvements for I-66 westbound from the Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Fairfax County's TPB members, Supervisors Hudgins and Smyth cast the two deciding votes to remove the I-66 spot improvement projects from the plans. By doing so, they acted in clear opposition to the Fairfax Board of Supervisors' policy of supporting such improvements. At the Board of Supervisors meeting on February 23, I and several other board members strongly objected to the vote as Phase I of these improvements are funded. The Board directed these two TPB members to rescind the February 18 vote.

At the March 18th meeting, Supervisors Hudgins and Smith voted against a simple motion to rescind the February 18 vote as directed by the Board of Supervisors. While they did vote to restore the funded phase of the I-66 Spot Improvements (Phase I - Fairfax Drive to Sycamore Street), they voted to impose significant new restrictions on Phase II and III which will take years to complete and will prevent them from being funded in the near term. What is most disturbing to me is the secretive manner in which these Board members added the restrictions.

As a result of their actions, federal stimulus money or other funding sources cannot be used for the second and third I-66 spot improvement projects until the long-term study is complete—

many years from now. The citizens of Fairfax County and the majority of the Board of Supervisors want to see these improvements sooner than later.

For more information on the scope of the three spot improvements for I-66 westbound, visit VDOT's website at http://virginiadot.org/info/i66_spot_improvements.asp

Administrative Change Is Stopping Homeowner Improvements—Update

Background: Last year, County staff issued a letter to the building industry stating that they were revising the way in which builders should calculate the amount of land that is being disturbed during a construction project. Most notably they increased the buffer from 10 ft. to 15 ft. This past month I received many calls — one from a homeowner who, because of this new requirement, can no longer afford a small addition to his home. Another call was from a contractor who has had to submit grading plans for 100 percent of his projects since the letter was issued. Prior to this time, he had only submitted grading plans for less than 1 percent of his projects. Both had the same concern: the County was destroying their plans, and for the latter, possibly his business.

This new burden could not have come at a worse time and raises many concerns. First, the County staff did not reach out to the real stakeholders in this issue – the homeowners of our communities who remodel their existing homes and those small businesses that help them do it. These are the people who are bearing the cost of the grading plan that they must now submit. This new requirement should have been fully vetted by these communities before this was issued. Secondly, the County did not calculate the true impact and cost of this new policy change. The cost of a grading plan plus subsequent filing fees to the County could cost the homeowner up to \$30,000 putting many projects out of their reach. These requirements also make it difficult, if not impossible, for contractors to design and build projects in a manner that will sustain their businesses enabling them to pay their permits and taxes, improve County properties and ultimately raise the value of the County's tax base. My motion to revisit this policy was unanimously approved and this issue was sent to the Board of Supervisors' Development Process Committee which was held on Monday, March 16.

Update: I was successful, with the support of County staff, to get the 15 foot buffer put back to 10 feet. This should provide immediate relief to the problems we were seeing in the homeowner improvement area. Although there are differences among Board members on how to resolve land disturbing activities in the long term, my approach would be to require a new house location plat and allow approval without a full blown commercial grading plan for land disturbing activities between 2,500 and 5,000 s.f. Although this would require a code amendment and additional costs for field inspection, a full scale grading plan would no longer be required for land disturbance activities between 2,500 and 5,000 s.f. Please let me know if you would like to be kept informed on this issue.

Reducing the Cost of Regulations On Our Citizens, Businesses, and the County—Update

Background: The prior issue in the article above is a prime example of why we need to do a better job of analyzing our regulations and requirements that we issue. As is seen in the case

above, the cost of the new policy change was an overwhelming burden to small businesses and our homeowners such that small design builders may not be able to sustain their business and homeowners may stop remodeling projects. This is not what we want or need in Fairfax County. At a time when we are seeking to expand our commercial base and encourage economic development, we should not be creating additional burdens on those people and businesses that can help us achieve our goals.

The County is being shortsighted in not addressing the regulatory and fiscal impacts of our regulations. A perfect example is the Tree Ordinance with its 125 pages of regulation. The Board Item presented for its passage included no analysis of the fiscal and process time impact of the regulation. In fact it listed the fiscal impact as “NONE.” That is why I made a motion, which was approved by the Board, that we consider whether our regulations and requirements produce a benefit equal to the cost to the County, to the regulated community and to our citizens. This issue was also addressed at the Development Process Committee on March 16.

Update: I believe we made significant progress on this issue as well, at least going forward. As a result of my Board Matter, County staff recommended, and the Board agreed, to revisions to the REGULATORY IMPACT section of the Board Package to include estimates of the following for both small and large projects:

- List of entities to whom the regulation would apply
- County Staff Cost
- County Staff Time
- Process Impacts (especially time)
- Developer Costs (rely on industry to provide their costs)
- Costs to Individuals (homeowners)
- Benefits of the Regulations

I asked that this also be highlighted in the FISCAL IMPACT section of Board Items. My hope is that with these revisions we can start to consider the true impact of the cost of regulations (including process time) on our County government, the regulated communities and our citizens and homeowners. While this will help moving forward I am still pushing for a look at past regulations which were passed without consideration of the fiscal impact.

Sign Up For the West Springfield Police Newsletter

As readers of the *Herrity Report* know, staying informed on the issues that matter to you in the county has never been easier. That is why I would like to draw your attention to another important monthly email that is sent out in the Springfield District called *The West Springfield Shield*.

Through their monthly email the West Springfield District Station of the Fairfax County Police Department wants you to know about law enforcement initiatives, prevention programs, arrests, crime trends, and much more. Staying informed and working together, we can ensure our communities remain safe and enjoyable places to live.

The West Springfield Shield is published monthly by our Crime Prevention Unit, and all you need to do to subscribe is simply visit <http://www.FairfaxCounty.gov/police/newsletter/> and select start.

For more information you may call the Crime Prevention Office at 703-644-5026.

Upcoming Events

- **Town Hall Meeting – 136% Athletic Fee Increase**

On Tuesday, April 07 Supervisor Mike Frey and I will be hosting a Town Hall Meeting to discuss the proposed increase in the Athletic Fee. I am opposed to this fee as I think it discourages participation in youth sports. I will report back on how the meeting went in the next *Herrity Report*.

What: Athletic Fee Town Hall

When: Tuesday, April 07, 2009 at 7:30 PM

Where: West Springfield High School

The *Herrity Report* is a monthly publication from the Office of Supervisor Pat Herrity to keep citizens informed on the issues facing Fairfax County. Communication is important to Supervisor Herrity and he encourages your feedback on the items in the *Report* or other issues that concern you. Past issues of the *Herrity Report* can be found at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/springfield/herrity-report-newsletter.htm> . To sign up for the Herrity Report please go to <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/springfield> .