



Herrity Report March 9, 2011

Board Approves County Subsidized Luxury Affordable Housing Project Which Will Compete Directly With the Private Sector

On Tuesday, March 8, the Board of Supervisors approved the 270 unit "Residences at the Government Center" over the objections of Supervisor Cook, Frey and I. I opposed this plan because **I do not believe that the County should be in the business of subsidizing luxury affordable housing - especially when it directly competes with the private sector.**

There are right ways to encourage development of affordable housing and wrong ways. This project was wrong on a number of fronts:

- Luxury does not belong in county subsidized affordable housing - As clearly stated on the applicant's web site - "Although the development is a luxury product, the units will be leased out to households earning between 50 and 100% of the Area Median Income". The luxury units also include significant onsite amenities - a pool, exercise and weight room, tot lot and party rooms.
- Federal Tax Credit Subsidy in Addition to the County Subsidy of \$10- \$15M - By providing the land the county will be subsidizing the units to the tune of \$10 to \$15 million. By approving this project for a developer who can only make this project work by taking advantage of LIHTC tax credits, we are also contributing to our national deficit. In 2010, the President's Economic Recovery Advisory Board estimated that the LIHTC program would cost the federal government \$61 billion in lost tax revenue from participating corporations from 2008-2017.
- Subsidizing a Product that Competes with the Private Sector - Because this is in my district I am aware of that there are ample (several hundred) units currently available at or below the subsidized rents that will be offered by this project. In essence the County is subsidizing a luxury product to compete with the existing private sector apartments that actually have lower more affordable rents already. This subsidized luxury project will

reduce the values of surrounding private sector buildings and have a negative impact on our commercial tax base.

- No Park Contribution. The applicant did not provide the per unit funds typically contributed as a part of the requirement for the Park Authority, typically used for things like the construction and maintenance of community fields, for example, Patriot Park. They did not provide these funds because of the extensive money they will be spending for onsite amenities including a pool, spa, exercise and weight room, tot lot and party rooms. However most of these facilities are not accessible to the public.
- No Preference for Fairfax County Government Employees - This project was initially proposed by my predecessor for Fairfax County Government employees. Despite a \$10 to \$15 M subsidy there is no guarantee that any of the 270 units will be occupied by Fairfax County employees.

Despite the fact that this property is in the Springfield District and my familiarity with the impact on the surrounding properties, Chairman Bulova provided a substitute motion to my motion to deny this project and asked the Board to approve it. It was approved 7 to 3 with Supervisors Cook and Frey joining me in opposing the project.

More Progress on the Fairfax County Parkway in Springfield District

I am happy to announce the project to **extend the auxiliary southbound lane on the Fairfax County Parkway** between Lee Highway and Braddock Road has been funded and survey work is currently underway. It is projected to begin in Fall 2013 if as expected no land acquisition is required. This low cost project should ease congestion in the Parkway in this area.

This is just one of the efforts to improve the Parkway that are currently underway:

- In the February 25 edition of the Herrity Report, I discussed results of the safety study that Delegate Dave Albo and I requested the state conduct on the Fairfax County Parkway / Franconia-Springfield Parkway between Route 7 and Interstate 95. I have made both the study itself and the VDOT presentation from my February 23 community meeting available on my website at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/springfield/events.htm>. At the community meeting, **VDOT did share that it was likely it would be able to begin some of the guardrail improvements this fall**; however, the larger initiatives remain unfunded. I have asked the Board of Supervisors to add this project to its list of priority projects which will be approved later this month. There are some recommendations in the study that are worthy but will definitely require citizen input before they can be advanced. I plan to solicit resident feedback regarding some of these items in as they would clearly affect those who use the roadway (as I do daily) if they were implemented.
- I am still working to find funding for the **North Loop of the Parkway at Rolling Road**. This loop results in the Parkway north being narrowed to one lane and is already becoming a major bottleneck. I had it added to the Board's priority list and hope funding will come soon.
- Construction related to the **planned interchange at the Fair Lakes Parkway and Monument Drive** is underway. Information on VDOT's website for the project is

updated monthly on its website at

http://www.virginiadot.org/projects/northernvirginia/fairfax_county_parkway-fair_lakes.asp

Making a Potential Braddock - 123 Bypass a County Priority

At the March 8th Board Meeting Supervisor Cook, jointly with Chairman Bulova and I presented a motion to add a potential Braddock - 123 Bypass to the County's priority transportation project list. A long term solution to the Braddock - 123 intersection, an interchange with a price tag of \$84 million, has no funding source currently identified. In the meantime this Bypass, identified in the George Mason Transportation Master Plan, would be an interim alternative that will take significant pressure off of this intersection.

George Mason has proposed creating a new West Campus Connector (Bypass) which would be built entirely on land owned by the University. The Bypass would connect Braddock Road west of Route 123 at Prestwick Drive to the main campus via Mason Pond Drive using an overpass over Route 123. This should remove a significant number of vehicles from Braddock Road where 46 percent of all vehicle trips access the campus.

The Bypass is expected to cost approximately \$15 million and George Mason has been working with the Commonwealth and VDOT to identify up to \$10 million in VDOT funding to build this project now. Discussions are ongoing between the stakeholders to identify sources for the rest of the funding. I strongly support this low cost commonsense project and will be working with Supervisor Cook, GMU and VDOT to get it completed.

Governor McDonnell Announces 2011 "Pothole Blitz"

On March 8, Governor McDonnell directed the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to immediately start a coordinated campaign to patch the thousands of potholes that formed this winter across the Commonwealth. VDOT will use state and contractor resources to quickly identify and repair potholes on Virginia's highway system. You are encouraged to assist this effort and report potholes to VDOT's Customer Service Center at 1-800-FOR-ROAD or via its online form at: <http://www.virginiadot.org/travel/citizen.asp>

Pothole patching videos and other useful information on potholes is also available on VDOT's website at <http://www.virginiadot.org/info/faq-potholes.asp>.

Community Meeting Regarding Potential Traffic Signal At Rolling Road/Hunter Village Drive Intersection

In response to citizen concerns about safety, VDOT agreed to undergo a traffic signal study at the intersection of Rolling Road and Hunter Village Drive in Springfield. VDOT is wrapping up its review and has agreed to make a presentation on the results at a community meeting I have set for:

Thursday, April 14, 7 p.m.

**West Springfield Government Center Community Room
6140 Rolling Road, Springfield**