



Mount Vernon Advisor



www.fairfaxcounty.gov/mountvernon

May 2016

Dear Friends,

With Mother's Day behind us and Father's Day just ahead, I want to take a moment to thank all of the wonderful moms and dads out there for the hard, yet tremendously rewarding, work you do. I hope you agree that Fairfax County is one of the best places in the country to raise children—full of intellectual energy, diversity, plenty of recreational activities, and vast opportunities for cultural enrichment.

Even though the Board of Supervisors formally adopted the FY17 budget last month, budget season really is year-round. Fairfax County is currently undertaking a comprehensive review of its nearly 400 Lines of Business as part of a multi-year planning initiative, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to evaluate the county's strategic priorities during that process. I also look forward to a robust discussion about how we can diversify our revenue streams to support those priorities. I discuss one idea—the meals tax—in more detail [below](#).

Five months into this position, I am happy that we have accomplished some of my short-term goals. First and foremost, I made good on a campaign promise to fully fund the Mount Vernon District's public schools by leading the effort to devote the full fourth cent of the property tax increase to education, and I helped get an additional \$13 million in other county funds repurposed for schools. I accelerated the process of developing workforce housing at [North Hill](#) and committed myself, my staff, and the county to doing everything in our power to break ground on the development in 2017. In line with my pledge to increase government transparency and citizen engagement, I have increased my office hours, communications avenues, and options for in-person meetings with constituents. I also kicked off the first of many community meetings on the plan to revitalize the Richmond Highway corridor known as [Embark Richmond Highway](#).

In the coming weeks, I will begin to outline some longer-term initiatives, including my vision of how we can leverage some of the Mount Vernon District's cultural treasures in ways that protect them while promoting economic development. I will expand on that idea in coming newsletters, articles, and community meetings. As always, I welcome your input.

Respectfully yours in public service,

Dan Storck
Supervisor, Mount Vernon District
Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

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Stay Connected

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Office Hours

Monday -Wednesday, Friday: 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Thursday: 8:30 a.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Second Saturday Each Month (except August)

Lorton Library: 9 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
MV Dist. Office: 12:30 p.m. - 3 p.m.
Walk-ins and by appointment

It Is Time to Consider a Meals Tax for Fairfax County

With the hard work of hammering out and approving the Fiscal Year 2017 budget behind us, we as a county must now turn our attention to identifying more sustainable sources of revenue over the long term.

It is crucial that we find a way to diversify the county's revenue streams—one that doesn't fall solely on the backs of homeowners via property taxes. One much-discussed issue has been a meals tax, something that most surrounding jurisdictions did years ago. I am encouraged that, earlier this month, the Board of Supervisors' Budget Committee recommended that a meals tax referendum be put to voters during the general election this fall.



A meals tax is levied on prepared foods and beverages at restaurants, cafes, mobile operations, and the like. A four percent meals tax would generate more revenue than a four-cent real estate tax increase. Whereas the real estate tax applies to any and all property-owning residents, regardless of their ability to pay, the meals-tax burden would fall on residents who choose to eat out, as well as commuters, travelers, and tourists who dine out in Fairfax County. In 2014, according to the Virginia Tourism Corporation, about 28 percent of meal expenditures in Fairfax County was generated by non-county residents. A four percent meals tax applied to those figures would have resulted in almost \$23 million in revenue raised from non-county residents.

Unlike other states, all state income taxes paid by Fairfax County residents go directly to Richmond. Not being able to take advantage of this largest and most progressive source of tax revenue means having to utilize other sources like real estate or sales taxes to fund critical services. In fact, of all the money the state collects from Fairfax County, only about 22 cents of each dollar is returned in services or payments to us. A meals tax would lessen our dependence on property taxes and provide another tool to meet the county's needs. Best of all, 100 percent of the money raised would stay in our county to be allocated to schools, public safety, county services, and other vital projects.

As a business owner myself, I understand restaurant owners' concerns about a meals tax. However, many neighboring jurisdictions have one and still have a thriving hospitality industry, including: Alexandria City (4%), Arlington (4%), Falls Church (4%), Fairfax City (4%), Herndon (2.5%), and Vienna (3%), as well as the District of Columbia (10%). A meals tax in Fairfax County should not adversely affect our businesses' competitiveness with peers in these jurisdictions. Restaurant owners I have spoken with don't believe the meals tax will hurt their business, as long as they are able to recoup the cost of collecting the tax, and this is something I support.

It is pretty clear where I stand on the meals tax; I will vote for it if it reaches referendum. But more importantly, I support letting the voters decide whether the meals tax is an appropriate tool for our county, so I will encourage my colleagues on the Board of Supervisors to put it on the ballot in November.

The Past, Present, and Future of North Hill

Thank you to those of you who joined me on April 27 to discuss the development of North Hill, the 33-acre area of land at the intersection of Richmond Highway and Dart Drive. I am pleased that we as a county are moving forward to create a mixed-income housing development that will have a tremendous revitalizing effect on this area of the Mount Vernon District.

Housing in Fairfax County should not be a privilege for just those living at the top of the income ladder. To create and foster a diverse community, we must make housing affordable and available for all families. Fairfax County depends on police officers, firefighters, nurses, home health aides, construction workers, and others who serve our community, and we have a moral obligation and a community responsibility to have available housing for these workers, young families, and others who are struggling to make ends meet.

The current development plan for North Hill includes almost 300 workforce housing units alongside another nearly 200 market-rate townhouses. It offers a balanced solution which will provide housing for a broad range of incomes and needs, including rental and ownership options, for working families, people with disabilities, seniors, and others.

This development has been a long time in the making. North Hill is part of a larger 48-acre piece of land that Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority acquired in 1981 using federal Community Development Block Grant funds. In 1991, approximately 15 of the 48 acres were redeveloped into the manufactured home community of Woodley Hills Estates. The remaining land has gone undeveloped for more than 25 years.

On March 1, 2016, I got the Board of Supervisors to authorize a Comprehensive Plan amendment for the North Hill area that will enable the next phase of development to move forward. There are several more steps in the process, allowing the community significant opportunities for input. You can learn more about the North Hill project on the Fairfax County website [here](#), and I will continue to keep you updated on progress through this newsletter and the Mount Vernon District [webpage](#).

My Fairfax Portal Launched

Conduct your business with Fairfax County online through the [My Fairfax](#) portal. This is an ongoing customer service initiative to provide county residents with faster and easier access to their county information in a secure environment. Residents can register for an online account that provides them with direct access to Personal Property (Car) Tax, Business Personal Property Tax, and Real Estate Tax information. *My Fairfax* portal users can view or pay county bills online, view online payment history, change their address, and/or register a vehicle.

Envisioning Woodlawn's Future

I had the pleasure of visiting one of the Mount Vernon District's cultural gems recently, when I visited Woodlawn Plantation on a wonderful, warm spring day (and we've had so few of those lately!). There I met with representatives from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, who own and operate the estate, as well as folks from the Arcadia Center for Sustainable Food and Agriculture, which farms 25 acres on the property, and the Neighborhood Restaurant Group. Facing continued financial pressures that threaten Woodlawn's long-term sustainability, these organizations have teamed up for a unique new venture: a



“shared use” business model that combines nonprofit and commercial operations that preserve the site’s historic and cultural integrity while adding income-generating activities that are compatible with its mission.



Although planning is still in the early stages, I was impressed by the vision my hosts outlined. It includes:

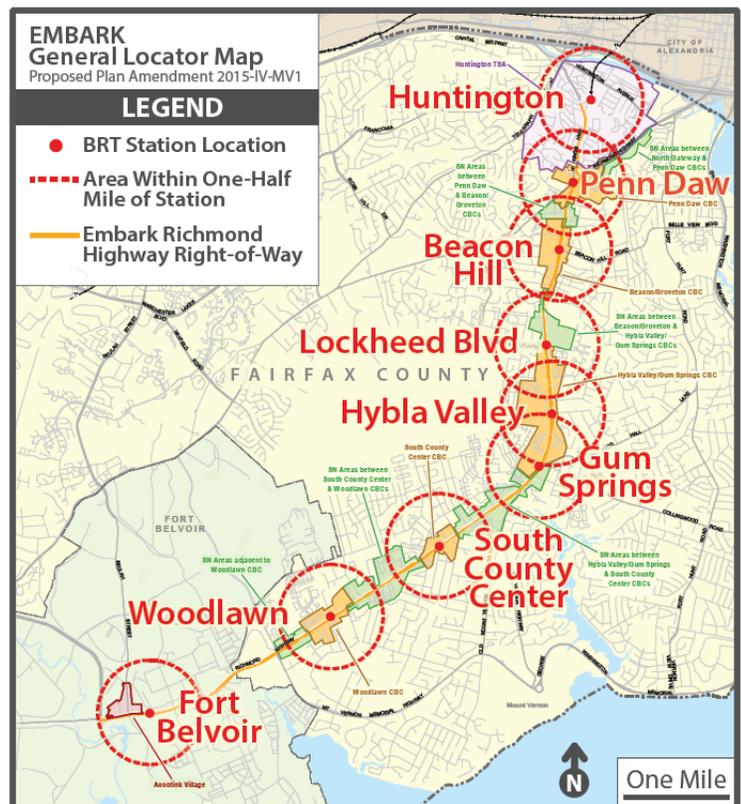
- Constructing enhanced event facilities at Woodlawn Mansion that will improve opportunities for public engagement.
- Rehabilitating and improving the structures at the historic Sharpe Barn Complex to include a welcome center, classrooms, and a variety of mission-driven commercial concepts, which may include a farmers’ market, a garden center, and/or a “food hall” featuring Virginia-specific specialty food products.
- Creating a farm-to-table restaurant and teaching kitchen featuring foods sourced from Arcadia’s fields and other local farms.
- Developing an interpretive trail system that enables visitors to experience the full range of the site’s 126 acres, its natural and cultural history, and the interconnected nature of the different operations on its site.

This kind of innovative approach highlights the rich heritage of a place like Woodlawn, increases public engagement, and provides mission-relevant retail and dining options that not only ensure the site’s long-term sustainability but also enhance the Mount Vernon District’s status as a major tourist destination.

Embark Update

On Monday, May 9, I joined my Board of Supervisors colleague Jeff McKay for the first in a series of community meetings about [Embark Richmond Highway](#), the county’s long-term plan for the development of the Richmond Highway corridor. Embark is a multi-year effort aimed at building more dense, mixed-use, transit-oriented developments to keep pace with and further promote growth in our area. One of the key features of the initiative is a bus rapid transit (BRT) system that will operate primarily on dedicated lanes along Richmond Highway, initially from the Huntington Metrorail Station to Fort Belvoir. Future plans include extending the Metrorail Yellow Line to Hybla Valley.

As part of the project, we will be updating our land-use plans to support future population and



job growth. Our efforts will focus primarily on planning for walkable, urban-style mixed-use development in the vicinity of the future transit stations with the goal of creating vibrant, active communities where people can live, work, shop, and enjoy leisure activities—all with easy access to transit—while maintaining most of the existing suburban housing, streets, and neighborhoods that define the core of our community.

Embark Richmond Highway resulted from a Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) study on the transportation needs for the Richmond Highway corridor. The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors endorsed the study's recommendations in May 2015, moving the project forward for planning, design, and construction, with implementation anticipated to occur after 2020.

An important component of the process is continued community outreach and engagement over the next year. The next community meeting will be in July. Check out the Mount Vernon District [webpage](#) or my Facebook [page](#) for updates.

Board Appointee Spotlight: Tree Commissioner Eleanor Quigley

“One of the things I like most about my work is taking all these details, all this background, all of these competing needs, and integrating them into a viable whole.”



Eleanor Quigley could be talking about her profession as a career coach, or she could be talking about her position as a Fairfax County tree commissioner. In fact, she is talking about both.

“Think about it...How can you have an innovative and vibrant community with public transportation, housing that meets the community's needs, robust economic activities, as well as access to ample green space, recreational activities, parks. As a career coach—how do you reconcile a person's history, his talent, his personal needs, his goals? How do you integrate these things to make the end result more than the sum of these disparate parts?” reflected Ms. Quigley. “Both take a great deal of problem-solving and also a great deal of compromise.”

With 40 years of coaching and leadership training within large institutions, including two federal agencies, Ms. Quigley's professional background isn't the most obvious for a tree commissioner. She was appointed to the post in 2000, after leading her neighbors in Wellington Heights in a hard-fought battle against a developer who wanted to clear cut nearby land for a housing development. Ms. Quigley and her neighbors were ultimately successful, and the Park Authority purchased the land and preserved it as one of the county's few upland forest parks.

The 15-member [Tree Commission](#) advises the Board of Supervisors on how to preserve and protect Fairfax County's arboreal treasures. One of their main responsibilities is educating both our elected officials and the public. As a commissioner, Ms. Quigley co-chaired the Tree Action Plan that created a 20-year strategic plan to “green” Fairfax County, and now she is helping to update the plan.

“We want Fairfax County to be a model, providing examples of how to integrate trees and green spaces into an active and growing community.”

Ms. Quigley wants to make sure urban planners recognize the benefits of trees, especially as the county undertakes major land-use projects like the revitalization of Richmond Highway. In a paper she prepared for the Embark Advisory Group earlier this year, *Greening the Richmond Highway Corridor*, Ms. Quigley cited research that illustrates the economic and social benefits of trees in the community. These include:



- In tree-lined commercial districts, shoppers report more frequent shopping and a willingness to spend 9 to 12% more for goods and services. They were also willing to travel greater distances to visit a district with high-quality trees, pay more for parking in those areas, and spend more time there once they arrived.
- Each large front-yard tree adds an estimated 1% to a home sales price. Larger trees in yards and on streets can add from 3 to 15% to home values throughout a neighborhood.
- Numerous studies link verdant surroundings to lower stress levels in adults and children. A 2010 USDA report claimed areas with more foliage saw fewer felony rates.

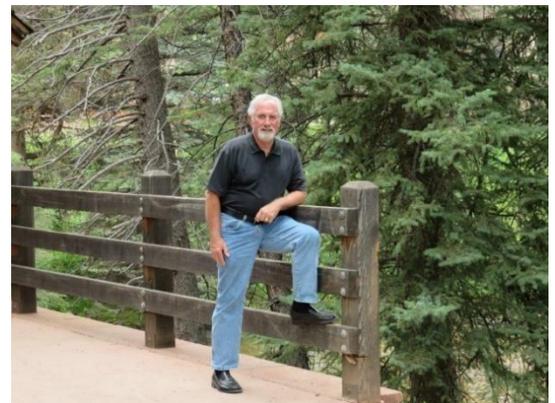
“The health and viability the urban forest is the priority of the Tree Commission,” said Ms. Quigley. “If we want to have large canopy trees down the road, we need to plan now. As big canopy trees hit their normal life span and die out, we are losing the next generation of trees. We want to make sure our children and grandchildren can enjoy green spaces in Fairfax County.”

Lord and Lady Fairfax Honorees Named

Each year, twenty members of the Fairfax County community—a man and a woman from each magisterial district—are named “Lords” or “Ladies” Fairfax in honor of their community service and leadership.

This year’s Mount Vernon District nominees are Lord Larry Clark and Lady Marcia Hanson.

Supervisor Storck nominated **Larry Clark** in recognition of his many contributions to the community of Spring Hill, where he has served as chair of its Transition Committee and its Community Relations Committee, as well as President of its Board of Directors. In these and other roles—including Vice President of the South County Federation—Mr. Clark has developed a reputation as someone who can effectively bring together parties to make meaningful and lasting progress. Specifically, Mr. Clark was instrumental in advocating for the transformation of Lorton Prison into the present-day project known as Liberty Crest, as well as in halting the expansion of the ESI construction debris landfill. Larry’s commitment, dedication, and outstanding leadership exemplify the characteristics of the 2016 Mount Vernon District Lord Fairfax award.





Marcia Hanson, who served as the chief aide and environmental representative for former Supervisor Gerry Hyland, has been a tireless champion for residents of the Mount Vernon District for three decades. She has been instrumental in transforming the Lorton Community into a vibrant, exciting, and more livable community by advocating for the closing of the prison, the addition of new schools, and the development of a championship golf course, new parklands, and the Workhouse Arts Center. As a community advocate, Ms. Hanson

worked to ensure the county's mass burn facility had the best environmental safeguards, and she pushed to close the I-95 county landfill. In 1984, she established the Federation of Lorton Communities, which evolved into the South County Federation. Ms. Hanson's continuous and energetic efforts have left an indelible mark on the Lorton landscape.

The Board of Supervisors recognized the honorees at the Board meeting on May 17th, and there will be a dinner in their honor on Tuesday, June 7. For more information contact Meagan Butkus of Celebrate Fairfax at Meagan.Butkus@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Serve Your Community! Vacancies on Boards, Authorities and Commissions

The Board of Supervisors has several boards, authorities, commissions, and committees that provide an excellent opportunity for civic education and engagement. Each Board member has a representative on the committees. Current vacancies for the Mount Vernon District are:

- Affordable Dwelling Unit Advisory Board
- Airports Advisory Committee
- Barbara Varon Volunteer Award Selection Committee
- Child Care Advisory Council
- Community Action Advisory Board
- Oversight Committee on Drinking and Driving
- Police Officers Retirement System Board of Trustees

Volunteering on these committees increases citizen participation in our district. If you are interested in serving on a county board, authority, commission, or committee (BAC), please provide a

BIKE TO WORK DAY IS MAY 20!

The 16th annual Bike to Work Day is just around the corner. Bicyclists across the National Capital Area will bike to work on Friday, May 20, 2016 to take part in a healthy, clean, low-cost commute. With 14 [pit stops](#) in Fairfax County from Mount Vernon to Herndon, local cyclists will have the opportunity to take a break from their ride and be rewarded for participating in the event; registration is open at www.biketoworkmetrodc.org.

Each pit stop will welcome bicyclists with refreshments, entertainment, and the chance to win great prizes, while supplies last. The first 15,000 to register will receive a free t-shirt at the pit stop of their choice.

Thousands of bicyclists are expected to participate in the 16th annual event, which is co-organized by Commuter Connections and the Washington Area Bicyclist Association.



But don't forget your helmet!

current résumé to our office manager, Donna.Slaymaker@fairfaxcounty.gov.

For more information, please download the [brochure](#) for a brief guide to BACs. Please note that certain members of BACs must file [financial disclosure statements](#) upon appointment, and annually thereafter.

Mark Your Calendars! The Mount Vernon Nights Concert Series starts June 3.

This series of free, public concerts features a variety of musical performances reflecting Fairfax County's diversity, culture, and community spirit.

Concerts are Friday nights at 7:30 at Grist Mill Park, 4710 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, and Saturday nights at 7:00 p.m. at the Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton. Come early to the Workhouse Arts Center to explore its vibrant arts scene.

For more information, visit <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/performances/mount-vernon-nights.htm>

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Please share this *Mount Vernon Advisor* with your friends and neighbors!
