



Summer 2009 Part II

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Finally, the First Step Towards a Long-Term Solution for I-66 Congestion is Underway

At the Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance's Annual "What You Need to Know About Transportation Seminar" held on September 9th, Virginia Transportation Secretary Pierce Homer released the schedule for the much-needed Multimodal Environmental

Impact Statement (EIS) for I-66 outside the Beltway. As you may recall from previous articles in the *Herrity Report*, I believe the restart of the EIS is a crucial first step towards relief for this congested corridor. In 1999, Virginia began to study solutions for the I-66 corridor outside the Beltway. In 2002, Virginia stopped work on the EIS despite the fact that it was fully funded. Since then, no significant work has been done toward a long-term solution for this corridor. As a result, many of our secondary roads — including Braddock Road, Route 29 and Little River Turnpike — are used as alternatives and end up just as gridlocked as I-66.

One of my first actions upon taking office in 2008 was to have a letter sent to the Virginia Secretary of Transportation on behalf of the entire Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to push the restart and timely completion of this EIS. A year and a half later, it is finally being restarted, although it is inexplicable that inaction continued on a funded transportation project in a time where transportation dollars are growing increasingly scarce.

While the EIS will incorporate ideas for short term solutions, it will also look at the need for multiple modes of transportation in the corridor as part of a long-term solution. For instance, the first item in the EIS is a transit study that should be completed this November. Ultimately, according to Secretary Homer, the environmental process (NEPA) will incorporate key findings and recommendations and should be completed in 2011. No significant traffic solutions can take place until the EIS is finished. The high occupancy toll (HOT) Lanes project under construction on the Beltway required a similar study, and once it was completed, the private sector proposed a cost-effective solution and work was under way almost immediately. The private sector is lined up to provide similar and timely cost-effective solutions for I-66 outside the Beltway during these times of scarce transportation funding, but cannot move forward without the EIS.

There isn't time to wait for traffic relief, so I have also been pushing for short-term solutions in this corridor. The local VDOT office has been very supportive of my efforts to mitigate I-66 congestion with these ideas, including the extension of the hours for the shoulder lanes, weekend use of the shoulder lanes when congestion dictates and having the slip ramps at Stringfellow Road and Monument Drive opened outside of HOV hours. I will continue to press for these, both the short-term improvements in the congested I-66 corridor and a meaningful long-term solution for the problem.

Congestion adversely affects the quality of life of our residents and the ability to attract and retain the businesses which are the economic engine of Virginia. As we continue to work to increase the flow of funds for transportation, we must also ensure that projects that are funded come to fruition in a timely manner. This is especially true when they can lead to creative funding for a desperately needed solution in one of our most congested corridors. Richmond has finally taken this important first step in a solution for I-66 congestion but we all, residents and businesses alike, must continue to push to ensure it is completed sooner rather than later.

A Cost Saving Way to Monitor Alcohol Offenders

Back in January I happened upon a technology called Secure Continuous Remote Alcohol Monitoring (SCRAM) and saw an ability to better monitor those with alcohol problems and at the same time save the County money. While this technology is being used effectively by surrounding jurisdictions, it is not something we currently use in Fairfax County.

I began investigating its use and took a trip with former Deputy Police Chief Suzanne Devlin to Loudoun County to meet with the Chief Judge and Drug Court which both use the technology. After receiving very positive reports from the Loudoun County officials I took this idea to Fairfax County's Oversight Committee on Drinking and Driving which, after thoroughly reviewing the technology, endorsed the use of SCRAM. Next I discussed SCRAM with Commonwealth's Attorney Ray Morrogh, Delegate Dave Albo and Sheriff Stan Barry and received positive feedback.

SCRAM is a tool that many courts and agencies in Virginia are using to continuously monitor their alcohol offenders to ensure they're not drinking. The SCRAM system, used predominantly to manage DUI and domestic violence offenders, involves a bracelet which the offender wears 24 hours a day, a modem the offender installs at a house or place of employment and SCRAMnet which uploads the data from the bracelet once a day. The bracelet, which is worn on the ankle, measures the offender's perspiration for alcohol every 30 minutes. Once every twenty four hours the modem downloads that day's readings from the bracelet and sends the information to SCRAMnet. If the offender has been drinking, the proper authorities are notified. SCRAM is 100% offender pay, it costs \$12 a day, and all of the work (installing, monitoring, etc.) is done by an outside company. The company that provides SCRAM in Virginia does have an indigent fund for those who are mandated by the court to be on SCRAM but can not afford the daily fee.

The decision to use SCRAM lies solely with the judges and courts. SCRAM is not an alternative to incarceration, rather it is another tool in the tool box that our judges could use in circumstances where an alcohol offender needs to be monitored but not necessarily incarcerated. Our Sheriff's Department currently monitors some alcohol offenders on probation by either traveling to the offender or having the offender go to them. Loudoun County courts estimate that the use of SCRAM saved them just under one million dollars last year and reduced a significant amount of their staff's workload. Some Virginia courts have expanded their usage beyond DUI offenders to include juvenile, family and drug court offenders.

I am pleased to report that the technology is being tested in our court system. This new tool gives us an enhanced ability to more easily monitor alcohol offenders while at the same time potentially saving us a significant amount of money. I am continuing to spread the word on the benefits of this new tool.

Some Good News at West Springfield High School

As *Herrity Report* readers know I have been keeping you up to date on the strong community effort aimed at getting West Springfield High School renovated before its currently scheduled renovation date of 2021 (West Springfield was built in 1966 and has never undergone a full renovation). Spearheading this effort are the leaders of *SOAR* West Springfield (<http://www.soarwestspringfield.com/>) – a group made up of extremely dedicated and hardworking West Springfield community members.

While there is still a lot of work to be done if we are going to get West Springfield moved up on the renovation queue, I wanted to let you know about some of the significant repairs that took place this past summer:

- Extensive roof repairs and replacement of all roof drains that has fixed all of the roof leaks. These repairs complement the 2008 replacement of all WSHS pipes.
- Removal of very old carpet in 10 rooms and replacement with tile
- Repair and painting of exterior windows
- Hand-me-down scoreboard from newly renovated Woodson HS to replace WSHS Aux Gym scoreboard that did not work
- Removal of old divider in Auxiliary Gym and replacement with a new top-down roll divider of the same type as the one installed in the Main Gym in 2008
- Stadium safety upgrades, including bigger walkways, new fencing and additional steps off the bleachers
- Installation of new \$400K state-of-the-art track that is the same type of track at George Mason University - WSHS is the first of any FCPS high school with this type of track. Prior to this WSHS could not hold home track meets as the track was severely cracked.

I want to thank the FCPS facilities staff for getting these repairs done but I also continue to challenge them to find a way to get WSHS renovated as soon as possible. Letting a school go 55 years before renovating it is simply unacceptable.

I have been working with School Board member Liz Bradsher and Delegate Dave Albo on creative ways we can speed the renovation of WSHS. I will keep you informed on my progress.

Do You Plan to Stay in Your Home After Retirement?

Universal design modifications can make your home more safe and comfortable as you age. I am sponsoring a Universal Design seminar on September 24, 2009 from 9 a.m. to Noon so that you can learn how to make your home more livable as you grow older. You will learn how Universal Design concepts can apply to you, affordable changes you can make in your home, and how to hire a contractor for your project.

Fairfax County staff will be making presentations and will be able to answer your questions. I have also invited several companies who are experts on Universal Design and will show you projects they have done. Vendors include Butler Brothers, Osborne Company, Inc., Seniors Living Well, and Granting-You-Access.Org, to name a few.

Along with this seminar I am hosting an Open House so that you can visit my office and meet my staff. Refreshments will be served. Since we have limited space, we are accepting reservations. Please call Marlae Schnare, my legislative aide, at 703-451-8873 to reserve your spot. I look forward to seeing you there!

2009-2010 Area Plan Review (APR) Process is Underway

The APR process provides citizens an opportunity to comment on possible changes to the county's Comprehensive Plan, the guide used by the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors to make land use decisions.

The formal process ended with the nomination submission period which began on August 3 and ended September 16. Once these nominations are screened and accepted for review, the Department of Planning and Zoning staff will request comments from other County agencies and prepare a staff report containing analyses and recommendations for each nomination. Community task forces appointed by members of the Board of Supervisors will also review the nominations and formulate recommendations. Both task force and staff recommendations will be transmitted to the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission will hold public hearings to receive testimony about each nomination. Only those nominations that they support will be forwarded to the Board of Supervisors for additional public hearings and final decision. The Comprehensive Plan will be amended if the Board of Supervisors votes to adopt a proposed change.

For a schedule of the APR process and summary information about each nomination, please go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/apr. The nominations may be viewed online or at the DPZ Planning Division Office, at the Planning Commission Office, at the Supervisor District Offices and at the County libraries. If you have any questions about this process, please call my legislative aide, Marlae Schnare, at 703-451-8873.

Upcoming Events

- **Springfield District Council Meeting to Discuss District-Wide Community Parking District**

Springfield District residents are invited to the upcoming Springfield District Council (SDC) meeting set for Thursday, October 1. At my request, the SDC will be discussing the pros and cons of a potential Community Parking District (CPD) for all of Springfield District, as was recently implemented in Mount Vernon District. Staff from the Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) will be making a presentation and will be available to answer any questions you

may have. For more information on Community Parking Districts, visit the FCDOT website at http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fcdot/large_cpd.htm.

October 1, 2009, 7:30 p.m.
Community Room
West Springfield Government Center
6140 Rolling Road, Springfield

- **Seminar on Land Use Planning & Zoning**

Attention Springfield residents: The Fairfax County Planning Commission will sponsor a free 2-hour *Land Use Planning & Zoning Seminar* on Tuesday evening, November 10, 2009 from 7 to 9 pm. The seminar will be held in rooms 4 and 5 of the lobby level Conference Center at the Government Center located at 12000 Government Center Parkway in Fairfax.

There will be presentations by County staff on the following topics:

- Overview of the Land Use Process in Fairfax County
- The Comprehensive Planning Process
- The Land Use Application Process
- The Role of the Public in the Land Use Planning & Zoning Process
- Navigating the County's website

Planning Commission Chairman Peter Murphy and County Staff will be available to respond to questions during the last segment of the session.

To reserve your space at the seminar, call 703-324-2865 or send an email to plancom@fairfaxcounty.gov.