



Summer 2010

- **Schools Request Another \$1.3M** – The school system and School Board have requested another \$1.3M from the county to fund a “priority” schools initiative. I voted against the request for four major reasons including the fact that if it were a priority, schools could find the funding for it in their \$2.2 billion budget. The Public Hearing on carryover and this request will be on September 14 at 10:00AM.
- **Tysons Lunch Time Shuttle Service: For Now, Not a Wise Use of Scarce Transportation Dollars** – With an average of less than one rider per bus trip, the Tysons Lunch Shuttle is a waste of money and bad for the environment. I asked staff for options to better spend the \$1 million per year we are spending for this service.
- **Tysons Comprehensive Plan Approved** – Tysons Corner is the economic engine of Fairfax County and its future growth is critical to the County’s future. With the coming of rail and the Beltway HOT Lanes I fully support density and transit oriented development in Tysons. However, I have some concerns with the plan that was presented and the way the plan was approved.
- **Land Disturbance Regulations Are Still Hurting the County’s Home Improvement and Pool Contractors** - Last year I wrote to you about a homeowner who was unable to pay for a small addition to his home because of the new way County staff was calculating land disturbance and requiring submission of a full-scale grading plan. While my efforts to fix part of these regulations were successful, our home improvement and pool contractors are still facing tough times as the cost of these plans are hurting their businesses. Staff is looking at changes.

- **Fair Lakes Parkway/Fairfax County Parkway Interchange Project Moving Ahead** – The project went to bid last week, Commonwealth Transportation Board approval expected in September, construction should start in the Fall.
- **Police Department Publishes History Book** - The Fairfax County Police Department has published a new book chronicling their history from 1921 to 1990.
- **Update on Efforts to Save Clifton Elementary School** – The fight to save Clifton Elementary School goes on with a number of efforts under way.
- **Watershed Plans Released for Review** – Fairfax County recently released the Pohick Creek, the Little Rocky Run and Johnny Moore Creek, and the Lower Occoquan Watershed Management Plans for review and comment. The goals of the plans are preserving and restoring the natural environment and aquatic resources, and protecting human health, safety and property. See below for forum details.
- **Meeting Notice: Fairfax County Parkway Extension Project** - A meeting to provide an update on this project has been set for August 25th.

Schools Request Another \$1.3m

At the July 27 Board Meeting, the Board was asked to consider allocating an additional \$1.3 million to support the Priority Schools Initiative which is a loosely defined initiative. The Board voted in favor on this allocation. I voted no on this request for four major reasons:

- I believe this is a horrible way to budget and it sets a terrible precedent for the future.
- Budgeting is about setting priorities and if this was such a high priority it should have been funded in the school's budget. I don't think it is appropriate to show up at the 11th hour talking about how important something is when you passed up an opportunity to fund it just two months ago.
- I'm not sure anyone knows exactly what this \$1.3 million is for. We had a two hour meeting on this topic, received very few straight answers, and have yet to see the details on what the funds will be spent on.
- Finally, and most importantly, I believe the school system can find \$1.3 million in a \$2.2 billion dollar budget if it were such a high priority.

The County Executive, Mr. Tony Griffin and the County CFO, Mr. Ed Long have done an outstanding job of saving money by holding vacant positions open and working with all of the agencies to become a more efficient government. County staff continuously monitor both expenditure and revenue categories. Because of these successes and the success of all of our employees we will use those savings to fund things that we as Board

deem to be priorities, like the new Legacy Systems Replacement Project, which the school system will also benefit from. Because of the importance of this project the County Executive included \$10 million in the FY10 Carryover Review. Why?--because it is a priority. The County Executive and his staff have been able to accomplish this while the county is facing increased demand for human services and public safety.

In contrast, the school system has a larger budget but their staff has not been nearly as successful at becoming more efficient and saving money. I have no doubt the school system can find \$1.3 **million** in a \$2.2 **billion** budget to fund this initiative. As *Herrity Report* readers know, I have been on record identifying specific places where I feel the school system can be more efficient and am certain there is money to be saved in the Fairfax County School System.

Tysons Lunch Time Shuttle Service: For Now, Not a Wise Use of Scarce Transportation Dollars

At the February 23, 2010 Board meeting, we discussed the implementation of the Tysons Corner lunch time bus service or “Tysons Shuttle.” At that time the service was making 106 runs on average but had only 75 passengers – less than one per trip. The recommendation at that date was to give the shuttle “more time” to develop ridership.

The shuttle has now been operational for more than 8 months. In July I asked staff for updated numbers on the shuttle, which is still making 106 runs on average. The average numbers of passengers per day is only up to 97 (less than one per bus trip), with the highest number of riders, 165 (about 1.5 per bus trip), on Friday, April 16.

At a time where transportation resources are scarce, running empty buses through Tysons is both a waste of money and it is bad for the environment. At this July 27th Board meeting, with unanimous support of my fellow Board members, I asked staff to provide options to more effectively utilize these funds by the September Board meeting.

A circulator service in Tysons will clearly be needed in the future but this service is well ahead of its time. I believe there are better ways to spend our scarce transportation dollars than running empty buses around Tysons at lunch time.

Tysons Comprehensive Plan Approved

On June 22, The Fairfax Board of Supervisors approved a new plan for Tysons Corner. After several years of citizen meetings and hard work by our County staff, this plan was approved with an 8-2 vote. The item was the last on the agenda and involved more than 60 speakers and went very late into the night. I don’t believe the Board has ever taken a vote the same night as this much testimony – much of it mixed.

While I believed it was critical to move the Tysons plan forward, I also believe that in a case that involves this many citizens showing up to speak it is important to hear their concerns, address and evaluate them and then make a decision. Voting the same night

did not allow for that and I could not support the plan that night without the opportunity to adequately consider the testimony of our citizens.

As I have stated in previous Herrity Reports, I also have concerns with the transportation component of this plan. The plan punted on funding transportation. Instead of asking the development community to fund a comprehensive transportation plan as we have done in much of Fairfax County's history, we asked the business community to fund a host of other requirements in the plan including a 20% affordable housing requirement, significant and expensive storm water improvements, LEED certified buildings and at one point, provide a 1% contribution for public art. As a result the Board will have to take up how to fund transportation improvements in Tysons in November – potentially at the expense of other parts of the County. I believe we should have reduced the collateral requirements and focused the developers' investment into transportation solutions.

The plan that was approved is only a start and I will continue to work to help address transportation by making it the priority. Please let me know what you think.

Fair Lakes Parkway/Fairfax County Parkway Interchange Project Moving Ahead

The Fairfax County Parkway/ Fair Lakes Parkway Interchange project went to bid in Richmond last week. Once the bid is approved by the Commonwealth Transportation Board (likely at its September meeting) construction should begin this fall.

Land Disturbance Regulations Are Still Hurting the County's Home Improvement and Pool Contractors

Last year I wrote to you about a homeowner who was unable to pay for a small addition to his home because of the new way County staff was calculating land disturbance and requiring submission of a full-scale grading plan. This requirement made it difficult, if not impossible, for contractors to design and build projects in a manner that would 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, with the support of County staff, we were able provide immediate relief to the problems we were seeing in the homeowner improvement area.

Recently, however, home improvement and pool contractors called my attention to the fact that they are still having problems staying under the 2,500 sq. ft. threshold of land disturbance because the soil retention pile, the pile of dirt dug out to create the pool or excavate for an addition, counts toward the disturbed land area. They are required to calculate this soil retention pile and an access road even if they haul it off site and do not disturb the land – the point of the regulation. If they go over the 2,500 sq. ft. then a full grading plan is required at a cost of approximately \$15,000 to \$30,000 causing the project to be too expensive for the homeowners – often 25% of the total cost. Because of this, the County is seeing a decrease in the number of pool permits issued.

This most recent issue is being looked at by our land development staff who are trying to find a balance between protecting our environment, particularly our streams, and allowing flexibility in the land development process. I spoke with staff recently and they intend to present some options at the September Land Development Process Committee meeting. As I noted last year, this is not the time to be restraining our small businesses. They are the ones who are providing the “shovel-ready” projects which stimulate our economy.

Police Department Publishes History Book

The Fairfax County Police Department has published a new book (at no cost to taxpayers) chronicling their history from 1921 to 1990. The book vividly shows the evolution of the department over the years and how they have become arguably the best police department in the country. Along with the changes that the department underwent, the book also shows changes that the county has gone through, and there are some truly remarkable pictures from Fairfax County’s past.

I have a copy on display in our office or if you would like to purchase this book you can follow this link - http://www.amazon.com/History-Fairfax-County-Police-Department/dp/1934285285/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1280410184&sr=1-1

Update on Efforts to Save Clifton Elementary School

The fight to save Clifton Elementary School goes on with a number of efforts under way. These efforts include everything from the recently filed lawsuit to getting the school historic designation.

As readers of the *Herrity Report* know I am extremely opposed to the School Board’s decision to close the school and I fully support the efforts to make sure that this community school stays open and keeps providing the high standard of education that it is known for.

Please see the web site at www.savecliftonelementary.org

Watershed Plans Released for Review

Fairfax County has released its draft of the Pohick Creek, the Little Rocky Run and Johnny Moore Creek, and the Lower Occoquan Watershed Management Plans. These are eleven of the County’s 30 watersheds and three of its 13 watershed planning units. The County is soliciting comments through August 27 for Pohick Creek, through September 16 for the Little Rocky Run and Johnny Moore Creek, and through September 25 for the Lower Occoquan. The goals of these plans are preserving and restoring the natural environment and aquatic resources, protecting human health, safety and property as well as complying with several local, state and federal laws, mandates, initiatives, and policies.

The County is holding forums for the public to review and comment on the plans. For further details, go to this website: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/watersheds/> .

Meeting Notice: Fairfax County Parkway Extension Project

A meeting to provide an update on this project has been set for:

Wednesday, August 25

6-8 p.m.

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

It is understood that the timing of the meeting in late August is not ideal for maximum attendance, however a meeting is needed to ensure as many people as possible are informed about the upcoming activities on the project. The full meeting invitation is available online at <http://www.fairfaxcountyparkway.org/images/Public-Meeting-Flyer-8-25-10.pdf>

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>. If you no longer wish to receive the *Herrity Report*, please send an e-mail to springfield@fairfaxcounty.gov with "Unsubscribe" in the subject line or call us at 703-451-8873.