



December 7, 2017

Panhandling In Our Community

There has been a noticeable uptick in panhandling in our community, much of it due to the generosity of our residents. There are no absolutes in panhandling - many are from outside of our area and organized - others are truly in need. The Board recently approved my motion to look at an innovative program out of Albuquerque, NM - "There Is a Better Way", using a jobs first approach to address some of this complex issue.

Fairfax County's New County Executive

One of the most important jobs of the Board of Supervisors is to hire a County Executive to run the day to day operations of the county. I am pleased to welcome Bryan Hill as our new County Executive. I believe Bryan has the leadership skills, energy and knowledge to bring positive change to the County and I look forward to working with him. He starts January 2nd.

Fairfax County Parkway Widening Public Information Meeting Set for TONIGHT (Dec 7)

Please consider attending this meeting addressing one of our long overdue transportation projects that will relieve a major bottle neck (the Popes Head Road traffic light) from the Parkway.

VDOT Pre-treating Roads - Please see VDOT release below.

Please see VDOT release below.

Panhandling In Our Community

Over the past year or two, there has been a noticeable uptick in the amount of panhandling in our community. There are no absolutes in panhandling - many are from outside of our area and organized but others are truly in need. The County has undertaken a program to discourage giving to panhandlers and instead give to area charities providing support services or referring individuals to services. I do not believe the answer is that simple, but requires a range of responses - potentially including a change in our law. I have proposed the County look at an innovative program out of Albuquerque, NM called "There Is a Better Way", utilizing a jobs-first approach to address some of this complex issue.

Our residents are extremely generous, and many of those that choose to panhandle have taken notice of our generosity. It is important to keep in mind that many panhandlers are not homeless or in dire need. Some panhandlers choose to panhandle and take advantage of our generosity; there are even organized, professional panhandling rings. Fairfax County knows of many cases where panhandlers have come from outside the County and even outside Virginia. Some, like the panhandler I pass most days in the interchange of Braddock and the Fairfax County Parkway, do it because they can make more money panhandling than working.

Asking for money in public areas, including roadway medians, may be a protected act under the First Amendment and not currently a violation of County law. The County has not banned the act of panhandling, and the Fairfax County Police Department cannot arrest those just asking for money in public areas. Our police officers will intervene when panhandlers commit traffic violations or engage in criminal activity. If you encounter either of these actions, please call either 9-1-1 or the non-emergency phone line: 703-691-2131. To date in 2017, our Police Department has received approximately 2,100 calls related to panhandlers in Fairfax County. The calls range from traffic issues to concerns about the panhandler to fears about a suspicious person at an intersection.

The County has begun a program to encourage residents to not give money to panhandlers. While panhandling is not against the law in our county, one way to reduce its occurrence is to stop giving money to panhandlers. Organized and professional panhandlers rings will not come if it is not profitable. In addition, panhandlers who are truly in need often require more resources than small amounts of money.

The County is suggesting that instead you do the following:

- Provide a panhandler with our human services hotline number: 703-222-0880. The County offers a full-range of services and resources to help those in need, suffering from mental illness, or substance abuse disorders. **For a list of resources, please scroll to the bottom of this email.**
- Consider making a donation or volunteering for one of our [nonprofit community partners](#) dedicated to assisting our residents in need. Please [click here](#) to view a list of Fairfax County nonprofit community partners. Many of these organizations seek volunteers, if you cannot donate monetarily.

These services are not always easy to obtain, many have waiting lists, and some people are reluctant to accept services. Contrary to popular belief, many homeless people and panhandlers want to better themselves and change their situation. And being homeless isn't cheap or free - they still need food, support, shelter and access to resources in order to help themselves (e.g., a phone). They rely as much on your donations as many residents rely on their paychecks.

As one example, there is an intellectually disabled mother of an autistic teenager that occasionally panhandles in a shopping center near our office. She works part-time to house, feed, and clothe her family but needs additional funds to provide the rest of the family needs. She is unable to get state relief because the income she makes as a bagger for a nearby grocery store is just over the threshold for which she could get assistance. She has resorted to being a part-time panhandler.

I have proposed the County look at a program that started in Albuquerque, NM, called "[There's a Better Way](#)" which has become a national model for a jobs-first approach by offering the homeless dignity through work and connecting them to needed services. I also recently learned from our Acting County Executive of a similar, but more comprehensive program in Boulder, Colorado - "[Ready to Work](#)" - that also focuses on the dignity of work as well as the consolidation of needed services.

I was reminded of these programs when, at our last Revitalization Committee meeting, staff noted that they are seeking laborers to help maintain and improve our streetscapes in our commercial revitalization districts. In addition, there is more work for the Sheriff's Community Labor Workforce than we currently have inmates to perform it. There are also opportunities in Parks, other county agencies, and even the private sector for unskilled or low skilled labor.

I see the potential for this program to address a number of County issues:

- A way to proactively address the panhandling issue as it did in Albuquerque
- A way to provide homeless with the dignity of work, a work history and job references

- A way to connect these individuals with services by proactively engaging them
- A way to utilize our funding of revitalization districts, community projects, parks, etc. to help our most vulnerable residents improve their lives through work.

It is clear that any solution would require the participation of the non-profit community and the business community. A pilot program or phased approach could also be used to test the concept. The Board approved my motion to direct the County Executive to have the Office to Prevent and End Homelessness work with our nonprofits, business community, and the various County agencies that employ unskilled labor, to identify if and how a program like "There's a Better Way" or "Ready to Work" could be implemented in Fairfax County. I am looking forward to receiving a report at an upcoming Health and Human Services Committee meeting.

Fairfax County Selected a New County Executive

One of the most important jobs of the Board of Supervisors is to hire a County Executive to run the day to day operations of the County. After a national search and conducting several rounds of interviews, on Tuesday, November 21, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors appointed Bryan Hill as county executive, effective Jan. 2, 2018. Mr. Hill is currently the James City County, Va., County Administrator and Clerk to its Board of Supervisors. He replaces Edward L. Long, [who retired in September](#). Kirk Kincannon, our Park Authority Director is [currently serving as acting county executive](#). Hill has been with James City County since 2014, and he previously spent seven years with Beaufort County, S.C., as Deputy County Administrator.

James City County Board of Supervisors Chairman Kevin Onizuk said in a prepared statement "Bryan Hill has been an asset to James City County and we are very proud of our accomplishments over the last three years, I am confident Bryan's hard-charging leadership style, his finance and budget expertise and his forward thinking mindset will benefit the County of Fairfax for many years to come."

I believe Bryan has the leadership skills, energy and knowledge to bring positive change to Fairfax County and look forward to working with him. For more information, please [click here](#).

Fairfax County Parkway Widening Public Information Meeting Set for December 7 (TONIGHT)

The Virginia Department of Transportation will be hosting a Public Information meeting regarding the project to widen the Fairfax County Parkway between Route 29 and Route 123. This includes an interchange at Popes Head Road that will accommodate a future extension of Shirley Gate Road. VDOT intends to have a few

different interchange concepts available for residents to weigh in on and VDOT and FCDOT staff will be there to answer questions we may have.

[Click here for the project website.](#) The presentation and other materials from the Public Information Meeting will be uploaded in the days following the event.

Thursday, December 7 (**TONIGHT**)

6:30-8:30 pm (presentation at 7:00 p.m.)

Virginia Dept. of Transportation NOVA District Office

4975 Alliance Drive

Fairfax, VA 22030

VDOT Pre-treating Roads

Please see VDOT release below on their efforts to pre-treat the roads before the weekends predicted cold temperatures and precipitation:

CREWS PREP ROADS AHEAD OF FRIDAY EVENING COMMUTE

Drivers asked to watch forecast

FAIRFAX-Crews are using opportunities between rush hours today and Friday, while temperatures are favorable, to treat roads with anti-icing materials in northern Virginia in anticipation of [potential winter weather](#) during the Friday afternoon rush hour and on Saturday. Drivers are encouraged to monitor the National Weather Service's forecast by visiting www.weather.gov.

Throughout Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William and Arlington* counties (*Arlington maintains own secondary roads) crews treat about 2,150 lane miles with brine or liquid magnesium chloride in advance of potential winter weather. This includes interstate, primary, and high-volume secondary roads, particularly ramps, bridges, and other critical areas prone to freezing. Once completed, drivers may see white brine lines on roads that have been treated.

The Virginia Department of Transportation asks drivers to give tanker trucks and trailing safety vehicles room to work. Anti-icing vehicles are heavy, not as agile as passenger vehicles, and require a larger turning radius. Also, drivers who follow too closely may experience reduced visibility due to the liquefied salt in the brine mix.

Ahead of any wintry precipitation, VDOT reminds drivers to fill their gas tanks, slow down, be aware of potential slick spots such as shaded areas and bridges, and to use the following resources:

- Visit www.virginiadot.org/novaemergency for the latest updates and resources from VDOT in northern Virginia
- Follow [@vadotnova](https://twitter.com/vadotnova) on Twitter

- Check <http://www.511virginia.org/> or the [511 mobile app](#) before you go for traffic conditions and lane closures
- Get more details on [snow removal in northern Virginia](#)
- This is also the perfect time to place or update an emergency kit in your car. Recommended items can be found at: www.ready.gov/car

Fairfax County Services

Mental illness, substance use disorders and intellectual disabilities

Contact: Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB). Provides services for people with mental illness, substance use disorders and intellectual disabilities.

Entry and Referrals: 703-383-8500, TTY 711

Emergency Services: 703-573-5679, TTY 711

Victims of domestic violence

Contact: Fairfax County Domestic Violence Hotline/Helpline. 24-hour hotline and helpline for victims of domestic violence to provide information and referrals for shelter, counseling services and treatment.

Call 703-360-7273, TTY 711

Chronic health conditions, prescriptions and dental and eye care

Contact: Fairfax County Homeless Healthcare Program. Ensures that homeless residents receive care for chronic health conditions, prescriptions are refilled and arrangements for dental and eye care are provided.

Call 703-246-2411, TTY 711

Emergency food, shelter, clothing, transportation, health care and dental services, job training, job search and legal assistance

Contact: Fairfax County Coordinated Services Planning provides information and referrals for emergency food, shelter, clothing, transportation, health care and dental services, job training, job search and legal assistance.

Call 703-222-0880, TTY 711