



April 2009 “A Month in Review”

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*****SPECIAL NOTE: “Sexting”Town Hall Meeting on May 13th, 7:00 PM, West Springfield High School (Details Below)**

Update: The School Budget - Changing the Equation

On March 23, I sent out a special edition of the *Herry Report*, **The School Budget- Changing the Equation**. I am pleased to say that the response was overwhelming and unanimous in support of taking a hard look at the way the school system does business. I have included a link to the newsletter if you have not yet read it and always appreciate any feedback that you may have. It is imperative that you let the School Board and Administrators know how you feel on the important issues and questions the community has raised.

I urge you to speak at the School Board's FY 2010 public hearings. **The speaker list for citizens interested in testifying on the FY 2010 School Budget opens on Friday, May 1 and closes on May 11 at 4:30. The public hearings on the School Budget are scheduled for May 12 and 13 at Jackson Middle School, 3020 Gallows Road, Falls Church at 6 p.m.** Please consider testifying at one of the public hearings and ask the School Board to reduce class sizes and focus funding on teachers, kids and the classroom.

I have continued to try and schedule a meeting with the School Board's Budget chairman and the Administration to discuss "Changing the Equation" but have been told the meeting will have to wait until after the budget. Several concerned citizens have put a common sense transportation solution on the table that could save \$11M – enough to eliminate the 0.5 student proposed increase in class size. While a 0.5 student increase in class size does not appear large on the surface it can translate into dropped classes and significant increases in actual numbers of students in the classroom. I believe we also need to give our teachers a step increase – even if we do not fund it – in order to stay competitive with surrounding jurisdictions and keep the best teachers in Fairfax County.

I plan to testify at the Budget Hearings and hope you will as well.

Developing a Vision for a Countywide Connected Multi-modal Transportation Network

The pending completion of the Beltway HOT lanes project provides the county with the potential for a critical north-south mass transit link running in semi-dedicated lanes at guaranteed speeds. For the first time in decades we will have the ability to provide mass transit from the southern areas of the County into one of our largest employment centers – Tyson's and the Dulles Corridor - in a reliable, time-advantaged basis. However, as of today there are no concrete plans for transit in this corridor and how this project opens up other corridors where we have existing or planned mass transit.

The County has designated certain corridors including I-495, I-66, I-95, I-395, Route 1, Route 28, Route 267, and the Dulles Corridor, as "Enhanced Public Transportation Corridors". Too often these corridors are looked at in isolation instead of as a connected system. The time has come for Fairfax County to develop an overall vision for a more robust interconnected regional transit network. This network will support future growth in the County and provide a feasible alternative to congested highway corridors.

At the May 4, 2009 Board meeting I made a motion, which was unanimously approved, to begin a Board level discussion of a vision for Countywide connected multi-modal transportation network. This is one of my transportation priorities and I will keep you updated on the progress of this initiative in future *Herrity Reports*.

I believe that people will take transit if it is time and cost competitive and reliable. For instance, during our recent budget discussion the proposal to eliminate several of our express bus routes created uproar. The users expressed to the Board of Supervisors that

they were actually willing to pay more in order to maintain the time advantage, reliability and convenience the express bus routes provided. They made it clear they would return to their cars if their only other option was to take the Metro with multiple stops on the way to the Pentagon. This provided a clear example of the importance of giving transit users a time advantage. We have the opportunity in Fairfax County to create an integrated mass transit system that will provide our residents with a time- advantaged and cost competitive commute. Most importantly it could be provided in a cost effective manner using our existing and planned HOV and HOT lanes.

This discussion will also include a review of how we can bring transit into the 21st century and make it more reliable and user friendly by including features such as WiFi connections and online and interactive arrival and departure information.

Raising Awareness of the Serious Dangers of “Sexting” to Our Youth

On May 13 Delegate Dave Albo, the Fairfax County Police Department and I will be hosting a Town Hall Meeting to raise the public’s awareness of the very real dangers of the recent phenomenon of “sexting” (the sending or receiving of nude or semi-nude photographs via cell phone message). I would like to invite all interested persons to the meeting which will take place at 7 pm, in the Cafeteria of the West Springfield High School, 6100 Rolling Road in Springfield.

“Sexting” is here. It is destroying lives. Because the distribution or possession of child pornography is a felony, “sexting” among high-schoolers is a much bigger problem than many young people can imagine, and the consequences are devastating. It can also land you permanently on the sexual offenders list. How do you know if your teen is sending or receiving racy photos using their cell phones? What steps should you take?

The Town Hall Meeting will address these and other questions and include powerful presentations by members of the Fairfax County Police Department’s Online Child Sexual Exploitation Unit, a School Resource Officer, as well as an expert from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. There will also be an opportunity for the public to ask questions. I hope you will be able to join us.

Update: South County Middle School, Two Steps Closer to Reality

There have been two major developments on the South County Middle School front. At our last meeting the Board of Supervisors approved the 2009 School Bond Referendum which will be on the ballot this November. Included in this referendum is the funding for the South County Middle School.

At that meeting the Board of Supervisors also approved a land swap between Fairfax County Public Schools and the Fairfax County Park Authority. Approving this land swap was a key step in the process and needed to be done before moving forward in the planning process.

If the School Bond Referendum is approved in November the ground breaking for the new middle school could happen as soon as late winter 2010.

Kicking Off Summer in the Springfield District

The Springfield District Kickoff Summer Concert will be held at Burke Lake Park on **Sunday June 21st from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM.** We invite families to come out and celebrate the start of summer and Father's Day with good music and quality family fun. This is the second year of the Springfield District Concerts at Burke Lake Park. Last year's inaugural concert in September was a huge success with over 300 people in attendance.

Investigating Creative Housing Programs

We are all aware of the challenges facing the county because of the current housing crisis. However, out of challenges come opportunities. It has been a long-standing desire of mine to see more of our county employees able live in Fairfax County. Having employees living in the County they support makes them even more vested in the jobs they do every day.

Last year the Prince William County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a program called "Home Help". This program is a first of its kind in the nation and represented a partnership with SunTrust Bank to provide assistance for full time county employees to purchase homes in the County. **No taxpayer dollars are used for this program and the County does not purchase any property.**

I have been following this program since it was first approved last May. In February of this year they had the first lottery and about half of the 320 employees that participated were winners. By all accounts the program has been a success. I believe it is time for Fairfax County to consider a similar program for our employees. Our County employees are our most important asset. In these tough times we need to do everything we can to help them.

I made a motion at our March Board meeting, which was unanimously approved, to direct the County Executive to investigate Prince William County's Home Help Program to see if we could offer our employees a similar program.

Making Sure We Receive our Fair Share from Online Travel Companies

The City of Anaheim was recently awarded \$21.3 million in Transient Occupancy Taxes from the online travel companies Expedia, Orbitz, Priceline, and Travelocity. The companies had been collecting the tax at the retail rate but only remitting the tax at the lower wholesale rate. Other localities throughout the country have now also filed suit after this ruling.

At our February Board meeting I made a motion, which was unanimously approved, to have the County Executive work with our Department of Tax administration to determine if Fairfax County would also be able to collect additional transient occupancy tax revenues from the various online travel companies.

New FHWA decision delays extended use of Monument Drive and Stringfellow Road I-66 Slip Ramps

If you have read previous issues of the Herrity Report, you may recall I have been working with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to have the I-66 HOV slip ramps at Monument Drive and Stringfellow Road opened for use outside of HOV hours. Placing a hurdle in the way of my continued pursuit of short term solutions to mitigate congestion on I-66, one of our region's worst corridors, the Federal Highway Administration recently determined that our request to use the ramps outside restricted time periods will require an Interchange Modification Report (IMR). What this means is that instead of a simple change in signage, FHWA is requiring VDOT to treat each of the ramps in this proposal as a new interchange, requiring new studies for each. In other words, FHWA has placed us back at the start.

Both VDOT and I are disappointed in this finding because the of the proposal's merit in terms of safety and mobility. VDOT has promised me it will continue to pursue the proposal as long as it's practical. VDOT's administration is exploring various options to further discussion with FHWA while VDOT staff will assess the IMR to determine the likelihood of a successful outcome. In addition I have requested support from Congressman Frank Wolf who is supportive of both of these efforts. I will continue to push for a positive outcome to this proposal.

I-66 Transit/ Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Study Public Information Meeting

The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) is studying potential short- and medium-term transit and TDM enhancements to increase mobility in the I-66 corridor between Washington D.C., and Haymarket, Virginia.

Improvements could include new bus services such as Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and commuter choices such as carpooling, vanpooling and park and ride lots.

Public information meetings will include a continuous open house with representatives available to provide information on the study corridor and alternatives under consideration. In addition, a presentation will be given twice (at 7 p.m. and 8 p.m.) with an opportunity for questions and answers afterward.

Fairfax County Meeting:
Thursday, May 14, 2009
Oakton High School Auditorium

2900 Sutton Rd.
Vienna, VA 22181

Schedule for Meeting:

6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. – Open House

7:00 p.m. – Presentation and Q&A

8:00 p.m. – Presentation and Q&A

VDOT Mowing Update: Set Low Expectations Due to Funding Constraints

I have met with the NOVA District of the Virginia Department of Transportation several times in the past few months to discuss roadway and roadside maintenance concerns. Due to the scarce amount of funds allotted to maintenance this year (as in years past), you will notice a change in mowing patterns.

VDOT recently started its mowing season (I saw workers mowing and picking up litter on Braddock Road and the Fairfax County Parkway just this morning). As was done last year, there will be three mowing cycles for secondary roads and a higher frequency of mowing in areas where sight-distance issues exist and depending on how much rain we have this season. Due to severe fiscal constraints, what will be different this year is that instead of mowing the entire roadway, VDOT will be mowing only areas directly adjacent to the roadway and most of the medians. There will however, be one full mowing cycle in the fall before the season change. As the rain we have been experiencing continues and the grass keeps growing, feel free to contact my office when you notice tall grass is causing sight distance issues for vehicles or pedestrians; past experience has proven VDOT to be quite responsive to these types of complaints--they really are doing the best they can with the limited money they have.

Monitoring the H1N1 Virus “Swine Flu”

The Fairfax County Health Department is aggressively monitoring the H1N1 virus. For the most up to date information please monitor the Fairfax County Health Department’s website: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/flu/swineflu.htm>.

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.