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Signs of Positive Change for Our Roadways

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- [Tweaks to the County's Retirement System:](#) At the September 11th Board of Supervisors meeting the Board voted unanimously to pass a measure that will affect the retirement system for all new incoming County employees beginning in 2013.
- [Keeping the Parkway from Becoming a Parking Lot:](#) Important information on changes coming to the Fairfax County Parkway and my October 23rd Town Hall meeting on the Parkway's future.
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 - [Bridge Work Begins on Old Keene Mill Road:](#) Work is underway to reconstruct a bridge on Old Keene Mill Road in Springfield that could affect your commute.
 - [Some Upcoming Community Events of Note:](#) Come on out to learn more about [youth drunk driving](#), [shred sensitive documents](#), or help [clean up the Occoquan](#).

Where are all of the Political Signs?

I would like to recognize and thank both the Democrat and Republican candidates and local political parties for refraining from illegally placing campaign signs in the right of way. Typically at this time in the election cycle the roadways are littered with political signs both big and small. This was despite the fact that the signs were illegal to place in the right of way, can be dangerous, obstruct sight distance, distract drivers and I believe are a blight on our community. They are also are costly for the state and county to deal with in these difficult budgetary times.

In December of 2011, in a bipartisan fashion, I began an effort to end the blight of illegal road signs. With the help and support of the Board of Supervisors and Delegate Dave Albo, the law dealing with political signs was changed in the last legislative session to eliminate a Fairfax County exception for removing political signs. Fairfax County is now working with VDOT to sign an agreement that would allow both the county and VDOT to remove illegally placed signs and fine the offender.

In the meantime it appears that all but two candidates, one Democrat, one Republican, have been abiding by the law and respecting our community, if you see signs in the medians I encourage you to call candidates and ask them to remove their signs. To the candidates that have complied, I thank you for your respect of the law and our community. Your compliance is also saving resources at the county and state level that can be better used for more pressing matters.

I would also like to thank VDOT for their support in the effort to end the blight of illegally placed road signs. While they do not have the resources to remove all of the signs they are playing a key role in keeping the medians clear.

Tweaks to the County's Retirement System, First in Twenty Years

Back in March of 2010, the Board passed my motion to perform a study of the County's retirement system and evaluate the pros and cons of adding a defined contribution plan (401(k) plan). As a result of that study some changes were recommended to our current retirement plan. At the September 11th meeting the Board voted unanimously to pass a measure that will affect the retirement system for all new incoming County employees beginning in 2013. The new measure increases the minimum retirement age from 50 to 55, caps unused sick leave at 2,080 hours, and raises the "Rule of 80," which uses age and years of service to determine when an employee can retire, to the "Rule of 85". This is good progress and a step in the right direction to tackle our out of control unfunded retirement benefit liability, but it doesn't go far enough. Over the last 10 years the cost of benefits as a percentage of our budget has outpaced population and inflation by more than 50%, by far the

largest increase in any area of the budget, and I fear that unless we address the fundamental structure of our benefits we will find ourselves no longer capable of keeping our promises.

Two years ago I made my case to the Board that local and state governments had a \$1 trillion gap between what they had promised employees in retirement benefits and what they actually had on hand to pay for them. Continuing on such a course is simply not sustainable, and I asked that the Board look in to switching from a defined benefit pension plan to a defined contribution plan (like a 401(k)) for new regular county employees. The private sector did this three decades ago as it saw the unsustainability of the pension system, and it also allowed them to better predict what their future retirement payouts would be because defined contribution plans set only the level of contribution that an employer and employee have to make to the retirement system, not guarantee specific benefits an employer provides after retirement.

This system is also more attractive to young recruits as it is portable, a lot of younger workers do not follow the same traditional career path of staying with an employer for twenty or thirty years. They often have ten or more different jobs by age forty, and if we want to recruit the best and the brightest in Fairfax County we need to move with the times.

While I am not happy the Board has decided not to consider defined contribution plans, I am happy that we have, at the very least, started a long term conversation of the viability of our current system. I have no doubts that these changes will have a positive impact on the solvency of our retirement system.

Keeping the Parkway From Becoming a Parking Lot

There is an old riddle that goes "Why do we park on driveways and drive on parkways?" Unfortunately the Fairfax County Parkway, one of Fairfax County's "main streets" is quickly becoming a parking lot and challenging this age old riddle. We have had some successes in improving parts of the Parkway but I believe we need to get in front of the problem and establish a vision for its long-term future now. Below is information on a Town Hall meeting on the future of the Parkway that the Springfield District Council and I will be holding on October 23rd - I look forward to your participation.

Improving the Fairfax County Parkway has been one of my priorities since being elected Supervisor. We have had some successes to date including:

- I led the successful effort to have the Parkway reclassified in the state system

from a secondary road to a primary road to make it eligible for more state maintenance and construction funding. As a result the route numbers have changed from 7100 to 286 and from 7900 to 289. [More info here.](#)

- Working with Dominion Power and VDOT, I was able to shave one to two years off the construction schedule for the [Fair Lakes and Fairfax County Parkway grade separated intersection](#) by accelerating utility relocation. Through traffic on the Parkway will be able to cross over this intersection unimpeded by the end of this year. [More info here.](#)
- After several crossover fatalities Delegate Albo and I requested VDOT commission a safety study that will result in safety improvements (including installation of guardrail and median barriers) on dangerous sections of the Parkway. The full study is available on my [website](#) (pdf).
- I led the successful effort to obtain funding for the two-lane North Loop of the Parkway at Rolling Road so traffic travelling from the NGA and continuing northbound on the Parkway doesn't back up onto the main road. The Governor funded the improvements at this critical bottleneck last year. [More info here.](#)
- I was a leader in the effort to make finding the funds for repaving the Parkway you have seen this summer a priority. Hats off to VDOT for creatively securing the funding.
- I worked with VDOT to extend the green time for the Parkway at Popes Head Road. This is reportedly the longest green light in the state.
- The Fairfax County Department of Transportation will be adding an additional lane to the Parkway southbound between 29 and Braddock Road as part of the Board of Supervisors Second 4-Year Transportation Program; construction should begin in Fall 2013.
- VDOT, Federal Highway and the Army are wrapping up construction of the last phase (the Rolling Road interchange) of the missing link of the Parkway.

Even with these improvements, the Parkway is experiencing significant congestion. I believe we need to get in front of the problem and establish a vision for its long-term future now before we wake up and find the Parkway as congested as I-66. That is why, along with the Springfield District Council, VDOT and the Fairfax County Department of Transportation, I will be hosting a **Town Hall Meeting to discuss the future of the Parkway on October 23rd.**

Specifically it will:

- Share the history of the Parkway
- Give current and projected levels of traffic
- Explain improvements that are currently planned
- Discuss possible future solutions and plans that should be considered
- Provide an open forum for residents to give their views and offer their own

visions for the Parkway

The meeting has been set for:

**Fairfax County Parkway Town Hall Meeting
October 23
7 p.m.
James W. Robinson Secondary School
5035 Sideburn Road, Fairfax**

Important Notices

I-95 HOV South Slip Ramp (Lorton) Permanently Closing

Beginning on or about October 1, the I-95 High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) slip ramp from the southbound HOV lanes (south of the Fairfax County Parkway) to the general purpose lanes will close permanently to allow for construction of an additional travel lane for the 95 Express Lanes Project.

Motorists will transition from the HOV lanes to the general purpose lanes using the left exit ramp marked: Route 286 Fairfax County Parkway/Newington/ Ft. Belvoir. The next opportunity to exit the southbound HOV lanes will be at Route 1, Exit 161.

For more information on the 95 Express Lanes Project, go to VAmegaprojects.com. View a [map of the Lorton slip ramp closure](#). The Project is scheduled to be complete in late 2014.

Bridge Work Begins on Old Keene Mill Road

Work is underway to reconstruct a bridge on Old Keene Mill Road in Springfield, according to the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). The \$2.1 million improvement project will be completed next May. The bridge crosses Pohick Creek just east of Huntsman Boulevard.

Motorists can expect one of two lanes to be closed at the following times:

- Mondays through Thursdays - 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 9 p.m. to 5 a.m.
- Fridays - 9 a.m. to noon and 10 p.m. to 8 a.m.
- Saturdays - 8 p.m. to 9 a.m.

- Sundays - 8 p.m. to 5 a.m.

Community Shred Event

Support your local Crime Solvers program while disposing of personal and financial documents securely! Shredding helps prevent identity theft. Donations accepted to benefit Fairfax County Crime Solvers. Swing by and drop off your papers for a suggested donation of \$5 per bag or box. Papers will be shredded on-site. All shredded materials are recycled.

Saturday, October 27, 9:00 a.m. -- 12:00 noon
West Springfield District Police Station
6140 Rolling Road, Springfield 22152

Fairfax County Crime Solvers is a non-profit organization that provides anonymous phone, email and text capabilities for the public to report criminal activity and wanted persons to police. Tipsters and their information are protected under state law. Cash rewards of \$100 to \$1,000 are paid out if a tipster's information leads to an arrest and/or case closure. All funds are raised through donations. Learn more by visiting www.fairfaxcrimesolvers.org

Tip Line: 1-866-411-TIPS(8477)

Text "TIP 187" plus your tip to CRIMES(274637)

Community Forum on Drinking and Driving By Youth and Young Adults

More than 1,900 motor vehicle crashes in Fairfax County (2006-2011) involved an alcohol-impaired driver ages 15-24. Learn more about this problem and join the conversation by attending a community forum at one [of five community forums in October](#). The West Springfield forum is tonight at 7:30 at the West Springfield Government Center, 6140 Rolling Road.

Occoquan River Fall Cleanup Day-Saturday, Oct. 13, 2012 9 to 12 noon

Make a difference and help preserve one of our region's most important natural resources! Come meet other volunteers at one of five sites:

Bull Run Marina-12619 Old Yates Ford Rd., Clifton, VA 20124
John Rothrock 703-887-1124

Fountainhead Park-10875 Hampton Rd., Fairfax Station, VA 22039
Sonia Monson 703-624-7124

Lake Ridge Marina-12350 Cotton Mill Drive, Lake Ridge, VA 22192
Renate G. Vanegas 703-674-6659

Occoquan Regional Park- 9751 Ox Road, Lorton, VA 22079
Alex Vanegas 703-674-7847

Town of Occoquan- 314 Mill Street, Occoquan, VA 22125
Claudia A. Cruise 703-491-1918

Rain Date: Sunday, October 14, 2012

Web: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/springfield

Email: springfield@fairfaxcounty.gov

Phone: 703-451-8873