

# CONNECTION

Reston ♦ Oak Hill Herndon ♦ Chantilly ♦ CENTRE VIEW

## Get Outdoors (Gear)

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It is camping time at Good Wolf Gear in Herndon. The store specializes in new and gently used outdoor gear, apparel, and accessories.

## New Homes and Jets Can They Get Along?

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## Good Things Coming in Herndon

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PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

JANUARY 19-25, 2022

ONLINE AT [WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](http://WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)

# ‘It’s Bad to Allow Residential Development under a Runway.’

## Two public meetings set for county’s airport noise policy.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

Two important online meetings are set for Jan. 27 and 29, and their outcome could affect area residents’ quality of life for years to come. That’s because the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors is contemplating making it easier for developers to construct homes in areas once designated as off limits for residential homes.

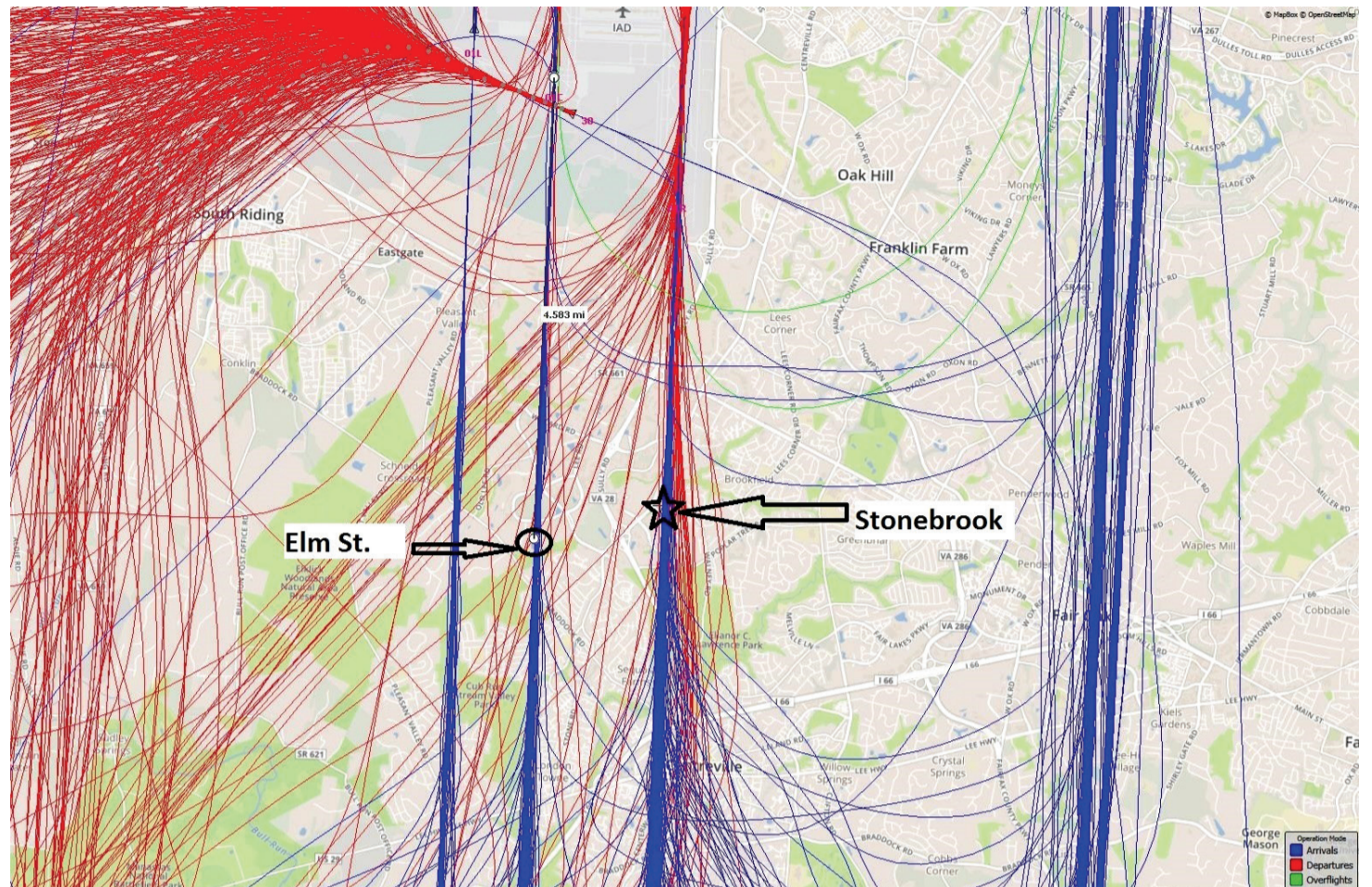
On July 28, 2020, the Supervisors authorized a Comprehensive Plan amendment to consider locating residential uses between the 60-65 decibel-level airport noise contours. They contend that doing so will enable more affordable housing to be built here – even though just a small percentage of residential projects is actually set aside for affordable dwelling units and workforce housing.

The Supervisors’ action was taken over the vehement objections of many residents, land-use and environmental groups and the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA). They objected because the Supervisors were approving developers’ plans to build large, residential communities in Land Unit J – the Westfields area of Chantilly directly underneath noisy and heavily used flight paths of Dulles International Airport.

In 2019, MWAA updated its noise-contour map delineating aircraft-noise decibel levels (DNL) in Westfields. But the Board of Supervisors chose to deny the new map’s existence, thereby giving developers free rein to construct homes there based on MWAA’s outdated map from 1993.

As a result, people considering buying homes, for example, in the Boulevards at Westfields community will be told about their homes’ proximity to the airport and that planes will be flying overhead. Based on the 29-year-old noise contours, the developer is able to say that residents there will be living in an area between the 60-65 DNL noise contours. But according to MWAA, that still doesn’t change the reality that almost all of this project is actually in the 65 DNL contour – which MWAA deems too noisy for human habitation.

In fact, on July 21, 2020 – exactly one week before greenlighting the Comprehensive Plan amendment now under consideration – the Supervisors finally dealt with MWAA’s updated, aircraft-noise contours data. They did so at a meeting of their Land-Use Policy Committee – chaired by Supervisor Kathy Smith (D-Sully) – the supervisor in whose district three developers wanted to build 734 new homes.



Jet airplanes will fly directly over the homes in both the Stonebrook and Elm Street communities, to be built directly underneath Dulles Airport flightpaths. Blue lines are arriving flights; red lines signify departures.



Michael Cooper

BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

But they couldn’t do so if the new contours were adopted – because all three projects are in Land Unit J, which had always been recognized as verboten for residential construction because of its extreme noise levels from the airport. So at that meeting, at Smith’s urging, the Supervisors decided to keep ignoring the updated contours and using the expired ones, instead.

“We ought to adopt the 2019 contours,” said Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield). “To pretend they don’t exist is a mistake.”

But Smith disagreed, and she had enough support from the other supervisors. She also refused to allow the admission of any information which might have changed anyone’s minds.

Although the meeting was online, Michael Cooper, MWAA’s manager of state and local government relations, attended it in person, hoping to shed some light on the issue. Herrity acknowledged his presence and wanted him to speak, but Smith said, “We’re not going to do that...I’m the chairman.”

The county later approved the three, new residential projects in Westfields:

- ❖ Elm Street’s 158 homes will be located directly underneath the main, center runway of Dulles for arriving flights. Said Cooper: “Their frequency is generally 30-60 seconds apart – and this flightpath is just 1,300 feet above [residents’] heads.”

- ❖ Boulevards at Westfield will bring 442

homes to a site where noisy, jumbo jets will fly overhead 24 hours/day, and land every 6-9 minutes.

- ❖ Stonebrook’s 134 homes will have overhead flights lower than 1,000 feet above them.

Regarding Boulevards, Richard Dei Tos, executive director of the Metropolitan Washington Airlines Committee, called placing homes under Dulles flight paths “an unmitigated disaster which is entirely avoidable. It’s simply bad public policy to allow residential development under a runway.”

A 25-year engineer and senior executive at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Clyde Miller said, “The best way to cripple an airport is to allow residential developments to encroach. When that happens, noise-disclosure documents are a flimsy attempt to rectify an obvious mistake, and they fail the test of time.

“Sooner or later, the affected residents grow weary of the noise, pressure grows for the airport to ‘do something,’ and shortsighted politicians find a way to curb airport operations. The FAA has more than 70 years’ experience managing airport-noise impacts on communities. What local jurisdiction would presume superior expertise?”

Stonebrook residents will be the most affected by aircraft noise. Besides townhouses, it’ll have 110,000 square feet of open space – where children will experience the noise full blast from jet planes flying just 950 feet above them, 24 hours/day.

The FAA says homes shouldn’t be built there because MWAA’s updated noise contours place that site clearly inside the 65-70 DNL contour, with a day/night average

decibel noise level of 65 decibels and above. But by using MWAA’s old 1993 contours, the developer can claim it’s below 60 DNL. The homes will supposedly not exceed interior noise levels of 45 DNL, but opponents wonder whether residents will be able to open their windows or enjoy their yards with the constant, low-flying, overhead jets.

Before Stonebrook’s approval, retired Air Force pilot Keith Meurlin, president of the Washington Airports Task Force and former Dulles Airport manager, asked the Supervisors why the county would “invite the ire of its residents when it can be avoided?” He also warned of possible danger, stressing that “The most hazardous phases of flight are right after takeoff and before landing.”

And in Sept. 16, 2020, Cooper wrote to the county Planning Commission that “County staff have been instructed to regard this location as being within the 60-65 DNL noise-contour area when, in fact, it’s within the 65-70 DNL – where the FAA would regard aircraft noise as being ‘highly annoying’ for incoming residents.”

Furthermore, he added, the residents would likely complain to the county to ask the FAA to limit nighttime flight activity at Dulles “to protect residents of homes that were built in noise-sensitive areas where MWAA and the FAA recommended against new residential development.”

“This outcome would certainly adversely affect Dulles and its contribution to the local economy,” continued Cooper. “This would be a significant and unfortunate departure from the county’s longstanding practice of keeping new residential development away

SEE TWO PUBLIC. PAGE 8

## Herndon, a Look-Back and What's to Come

Start of long-delayed downtown redevelopment tops accomplishments.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

2021, a year of challenges, included some significant accomplishments that will benefit Herndon's residents and businesses, said Dranesville Supervisor John Foust (D). Foust represents the Town of Herndon, parts of Greater Herndon, McLean and Great Falls on the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.

Foust paid tribute to past and present mayors and town councils for their vision of the sometimes elusive mixed-use downtown redevelopment project, one that will be an economic driver for the town and county. With the assistance of the Board of Supervisors in economic development money, their combined tenacity led to breaking ground for the project, a partnership between the Town of Herndon and Comstock.

"I think the Comstock project is outstanding. I compliment the current and past mayors and councils for sticking with it and thinking big," Foust said. "I was thrilled that the county was able to step up and kind of give it the last shove it needed financially to get it to closing with a grant from our Economic Opportunity Reserve Fund." In December 2021, the Board of Supervisors approved an additional \$5 million in economic development money needed to launch the new mixed-use project in downtown Herndon that includes a signature arts center.

Foust chairs the Fairfax County Economic Advisory Commission. The \$5 million investment came on top of the \$1.2 million that had already been approved in 2018. Economic analysis commissioned by the town projects that the new development will generate up to \$800,000 in new property and sales tax revenues for the county each year.

Foust said that he had hoped to be talking about COVID "in the rearview mirror," by 2022, but that was not the case. Foust noted that in Herndon, he and others had to stay focused 2021 on COVID because "initially the numbers were bad." There has been a disproportionate impact of COVID on the Latino community.

"We focused like a laser on trying to help those communities that were most severely impacted.



Dranesville District Supervisor John Foust (D) visits the Town of Herndon pre-Covid and talks with future constituents.

At this point, everybody is doing well with their vaccinations. We've pretty much eliminated the imbalance between various communities in the county," Foust said. Foust estimates that 70 to 80 percent of adults have received at least one vaccination.

The nonprofit communities in Herndon, according to Foust, are "champions" and will require continued support in 2022. Their employees and volunteers are helping with food, utilities, and "dealing with the nasty virus and its impact on businesses and people's lives," among other things. "And that's going to be what we are most concerned about going forward-keeping people healthy, keeping them in their homes, keeping them fed, and hopefully supporting schools so that they can keep them in school," Foust said.

The pandemic has impacted many small businesses in the Herndon area that were vital to the local economy. "They got hit hard," Foust said. "So, we've had several programs put in place to help fund them."

As chairman of the county's Economic Initiative Committee, Foust had a hand in designing three programs, including the most recent business recovery program insti-



Dranesville Supervisor John Foust (D).

tuted by Fairfax County, PIVOT. According to the Jan. 10, 2022 announcement by the Fairfax County Department of Economic Initiatives, more than \$16 million in PIVOT grant funds has been awarded to 1,016 Fairfax County businesses adversely affected by the pandemic. Businesses in the most hard-hit sectors of the Fairfax County economy, including hotel, food service, retail and personal services, and arts and culture industries, were targeted and received grants between \$1,500 and \$207,000.

The Microloan program in April 2020 and the RISE Grant program in June 2020 were two other assistance programs. In total, the three programs distributed more than \$70 million to the Fairfax County business community to respond to the economic impacts of the pandemic.

Fairfax THRIVE, focuses on growth and getting businesses to the next level, according to Foust. He said, "Given that amazing support the board has shown for business, the economic recovery, I'm confident it will be approved, but it has not yet been formally adopted," Foust said. THRIVE will be presented in the first quarter of 2022.

SCREENSHOT VIA FACEBOOK

## Peaceful Transfer of Power

BY DEL. KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM

A joint session of the Virginia House of Delegates and State Senate met last Saturday for the purpose of inaugurating the 74th governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia. The event is steeped in tradition. As a member of the Inaugural Committee I was dressed in a formal morning suit of gray with tails. I led the Committee in escorting the Governor-elect from his hotel room to the Capitol and to the Inaugural Stand where he took the oath of office.

Absent from the entire proceeding was any debate of who won the election, any fraud or corruption that may have been committed, or whether the majority should resist giving up the power it held for the past two years. There was no "big lie"! There was a peaceful transfer of power.

At about 6-feet-6-inches tall the new governor is probably the tallest governor of Virginia since Thomas Jefferson held the position. He is new to public service having had a career in business. His position on many issues has not been clear as he had to maneuver past several primary challengers and a strong general election opponent to win the governorship.

The courtesy extended to him as he assumed the office should not be mistaken as any intention on the part of legislators, including myself, to not exercise our responsibilities in the administration of good government.

Already any lack of clarity that may have existed on his position on issues is quickly being filled in with his actions. His early announcements of persons he in-



Plum

tends to appoint to positions in government raise serious questions. His proposed appointment to be Secretary of Natural Resources raises concerns that I addressed last week that we are putting the fox in the chicken coop with a coal industry lobbyist heading natural resource agencies. Equally as concerning are his proposed appointments in the education agencies where the record of his major appointee seems to be mostly anti-public schools.

The new governor showed a lot of zeal as he announced in his inaugural speech that he was going to start to work on day one by signing a number of executive orders. His work on Saturday afternoon after the Inaugural Ceremony made it clear that the next four years are going to be challenging ones. His very first executive order

"restores excellence in public education by ending the use of divisive concepts, including Critical Race Theory, in public education." No one has been able to show where CRT and these other divisive concepts are being taught in public schools, but it certainly was effective partisan rhetoric in the last political campaign. Clearly there are concerns about public schools in the new administration as the new governor's call for more parental involvement in the education of their children got the greatest applause to his speech. His second executive order empowers parents to make decisions on whether their children wear masks at school even as new cases of Covid-19 infection soar.

The basics of democratic government require that there be a peaceful transfer of power. The continuation of democratic government requires that there be a vigorous debate of issues!

## 2022

Most people I talk to view the coming year with a bit of trepidation, but all are glad to have 2021 in the rear-view mirror.

Sadly, the Covid 19 pandemic again took a heavy toll in 2021, although not as heavy in terms of lives lost as the Biden administration ramped up vaccinations. But as 2022 begins, a new variant, aided by anti vaxxers bent on protecting their freedom to spread illness, get sick and even die, is spurring another surge.

In Virginia, Covid 19 hit first responders hard. With no local police departments in the state mandating vaccinations, police deaths soared from 155 in 2019 to 497, 336 (67%) of them from the virus.

Among firefighters, also with no mandates, deaths tripled from 48 to 146, 78 from COVID 19. Call me crazy, but I am cautiously optimistic Covid will fade in 2022.

Late in 2021, Virginia completed redistricting for state legislative and congressional seats in accordance with the new constitutional amendment. However, the bipartisan commission appointed to do the job failed to agree on anything. Thus, the Supreme Court of Virginia took charge. The Court appointed two grand masters (one named by Dems, the other by the ... ) to draw the maps. The masters drew the maps, held public input sessions, revised the maps,

and got Supreme Court approval on the final product. The new maps are more compact, do a better job of following communities of interest (e.g., Reston), and were drawn without knowing the location of incumbents' residences. IMHO this is a promising new start.

But Reston may lose longtime State Sen. Janet Howell. She and Sen. Jennifer Boysko ended up in one new district. It appears Senator Howell will retire, leaving Reston to Boysko.

Speaking of Reston ... our Reston Association still has not completed its search for a new CEO to replace the departed Hank Lynch who never put down roots in or understood Reston. Late in 2021 the RA Board hired a headhunting firm. To my pleasant surprise, it appears the company's agents are conducting a search in Reston as well as more broadly around the country. Seriously, Reston is a special, if not unique, community. At a minimum, it should be helpful to have a new CEO who is effective without a long lag while he/she settles in.

A community task force appointed by Supervisor Walter Alcorn worked all last year analyzing Reston's ex-



John Lovaas

INDEPENDENT PROGRESSIVE

isting Master Plan and drafting a modified plan, hopefully to be adopted a few months from now. Alcorn has worked hard to address community concerns and assure us that change will be limited to a few areas, particularly village centers and the transit station corridor. In fact, there

is likely to be some reduction in the high densities projected for village centers in the old master plan. Golf courses are likely to remain green as Alcorn insists that he won't contemplate a change unless area residents indicate support for it. And I am hopeful that the Supervisor might even be open to some genuine Reston-like innovation, such as looking to vacant office and commercial areas for repurposing to sorely needed affordable housing, for example.

Lastly, there is reason for hope in Lake Anne Village. New condominium association board leadership is moving (guided by the hard-hitting Ernst and Young audit) to clean up administration and improve Condo finances. They are engaged with Supervisor Alcorn for Fairfax County assistance for repairing aging essential infrastructure in exchange for certain considerations, including modernizing the way LARCA manages its mixed residential and commercial condominium operations. Already the county has done a preliminary analysis of critical infrastructure and is considering funding (\$300K) for more in-depth study and examination of how best to market Lake Anne.

Oops, I almost forgot! I really do believe that Metro will actually open the new rail service to Reston Town Center and all the way to Dulles by mid-2022!

### Let Us Know Your View

Connection Newspapers welcomes views on any public issue. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers; we will only print your name and town name. Letters are routinely edited for length, libel, grammar, good taste, civility and factual errors.

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# Local Camping and Outdoor Store Opens

**Good Wolf Gear buys new and used gear and apparel.**

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

**W**ith growing interest in outdoor activities, Good Wolf Gear, which opened late in 2021 in Herndon, could be a go-to resource for local adventurers.

The company, owned by Margaret Kim and Tana Sarntinoranont, specializes in backpacking, camping and hiking equipment and primarily sells new items along with lightly used outdoor gear, apparel, and accessories.

Kim said they chose to open their store in the Town of Herndon because of its dynamic community. "A walk through Sunset Business Park alone will reveal the depth and diversity of the people who live and work here," she said. "Our focus on sustainability was a natu-



A look inside the spacious Good Wolf Gear at 287 Sunset Park Drive in Herndon.

ral extension of our appreciation of the outdoors."

Resellers receive 50 percent of the resale price in store credit or 25 percent of the resale price in cash.

The company's goal is to build a community, one mindful of sustainability, as it seeks to keep equipment out of landfills. Located at 287 Sunset Park Drive Herndon,

store hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday; closed Sunday and Monday.

According to the Good Wolf Gear website, Kim and Sarntinoranont met in the "concrete jungle of New York City" but later relocated to Northern Virginia. Their story tells how they began as "backyard adventurers," enjoying train rides

SEE LOCAL CAMPING, PAGE 8

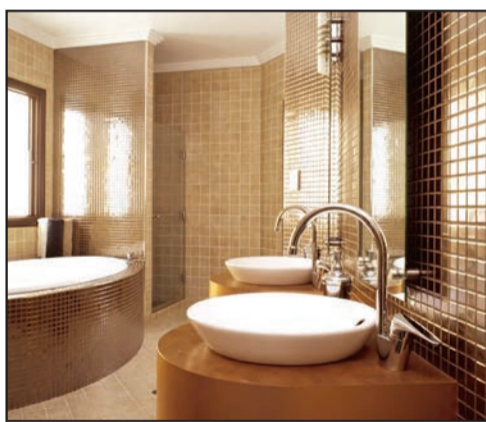


PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

It is camping time at Good Wolf Gear, the new brick-and-mortar store located in Herndon. The store specializes in new and gently used outdoor gear, apparel, and accessories.

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# FCPS Superintendent Releases FY 2023 Proposed Budget



Fairfax County School Board in session on Jan. 13, 2022.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County Schools Superintendent Dr. Scott Brabrand released his Fiscal Year (FY) 2022-23 Proposed Budget on Thursday, Jan. 13, at the Fairfax County School Board Meeting. In total, 86 percent of the \$3.3 billion proposed operating budget for FY23 is allocated to instruction, according to the presentation.



Superintendent Scott Brabrand

“Tonight, I am delivering you a good news budget that will lead Fairfax County Public Schools out of this pandemic,” Brabrand said.

Brabrand described a budget that provides what its students need to learn, grow and flourish. He said FCPS will continue to pursue strong compensation for all of its 24,000 FCPS employees. The budget includes a 4 percent market scale adjustment for all employees and a step increase for eligible employees.

FCPS is one of the largest school divisions in the nation with a workforce of 24,392 full-time employees. With a projected enrollment of 177,570 students, FCPS serves students from 204 countries who speak more than 200 different languages at home. A total of 56,112 students are economically disadvantaged. FCPS also serves 26,828 special education students and 33,806 English learners.

Brabrand’s FY 2023 proposed budget’s expenditures and adjustments focus on three key areas, compensation, opportunity and access, and critical operational needs. Brabrand is requesting an additional \$112 million or about a 5.2 percent additional county transfer to equate to \$2.28 billion. State aid (\$621.4 million), sales tax (\$248.3 million), federal aid (47.1 million), beginning balance (\$21.9 million), City of Fairfax (\$51.2 million), and other (\$24.8 million) complete revenue sources.

Expenditures as itemized in the FY 2023 Proposed Operating Budget, compensation adjustments in the FY 2023 budget represent a net increase of over \$150 million. Over \$55 million is to provide an average step increase of 2.68 percent for eligible employees; \$8 million for health benefits; \$4.4 million for recurring substitute pay; and \$3.3 million for bus driver salaries. All FCPS transportation employees will receive a 2.3 percent increase at the beginning of the year.

Adjustments represent a decrease of \$300 million and 768 positions. The enrollment adjustments include savings of \$88.2 million and 917 positions. The

budget reflects the revised lower enrollment numbers.

Brabrand said that he had additional dollars to restore 33 positions to the staffing reserve and dollars for another 50 positions to the staffing reserve.

Opportunity and Access, the second main area of the budget, represented an increase of over \$68 million and 233 positions. Brabrand included funding in this budget of \$32 million to provide three additional professional development days.

“I have almost \$15 million to put a special education lead teacher full time in every single elementary school,” Brabrand said. “It is long overdue. This will ... allow our special education lead teachers to lead best practices and special education instruction and provide timely and tailored monitoring of special education in all of our elementary schools.”

There was also \$10 million for anticipated requirements from the Virginia General Assembly, given over 1,100 bills have been introduced. The county must monitor the unfunded mandates to be as prudent and fiscally responsible as possible.

The budget also provides, Brabrand said, nearly \$3 million and 26 positions to implement FCPS’ second of its third year plan for Advanced Academic Program Phase II.

It includes a full-time twice-exceptional (2e) specialist and 20 additional school-based positions so that 40 more elementary schools can have local level for advanced academic programs.

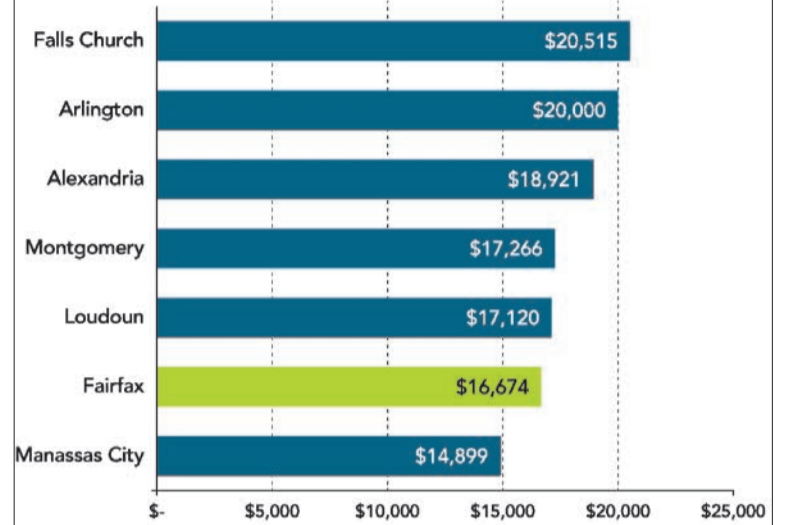
Critical Operational Needs is the third area which totaled \$13.6 million and 87 positions. Highlights include \$8 million for assistant principals and \$900,000 to extend high school assistant principal positions to 12 months. There is \$700,000 for 13 half middle school flexible office positions. They also have \$1.4 million to enhance the HR staffing support to respond to increased demands by the pandemic, \$0.9 million and five positions to provide cybersecurity upgrades, and \$300,000 for two additional planning positions to help with data analysis.

FCPS will continue to collaborate with the Board of Supervisors and County Executive during the county budget process.

A public hearing on the budget will be held on Jan. 24, and work sessions will be held in January and February by the Fairfax County School Board. On Feb. 24, the Board will vote on the FY23 Advertised Budget.

## FCPS COST PER PUPIL

FY 2022 WABE Comparison to Other School Divisions<sup>1,2,3</sup>

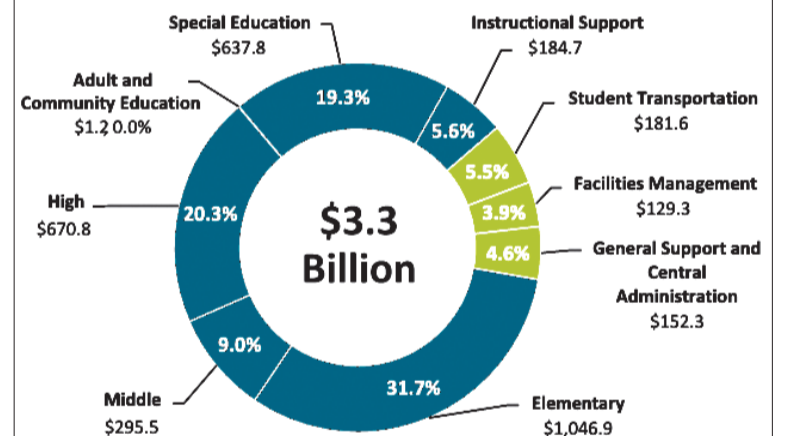


<sup>1</sup> Source: FY 2022 Washington Area Boards of Education (WABE) Guide.  
<sup>2</sup> Uniform formulas were developed by the WABE committee for consistency area wide. These numbers are comparable; however, the cost per pupil reported here may differ from that reported in individual districts' budget documents or other reports.  
<sup>3</sup> Data not available at time of compilation for Prince George's County, Prince William County, and Manassas Park City.

FCPS Cost per Pupil.

## Where It Goes—Expenditures by Program\*

FY 2023 Proposed School Operating Fund (\$ in millions)

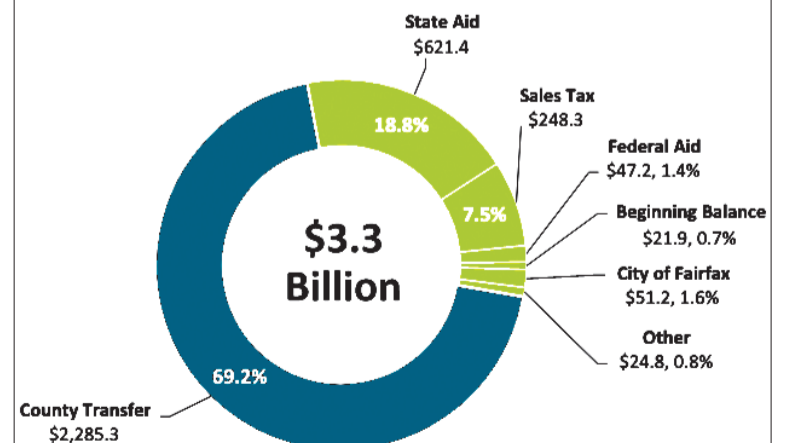


\*Does not add due to rounding.

Expenditures by Program.

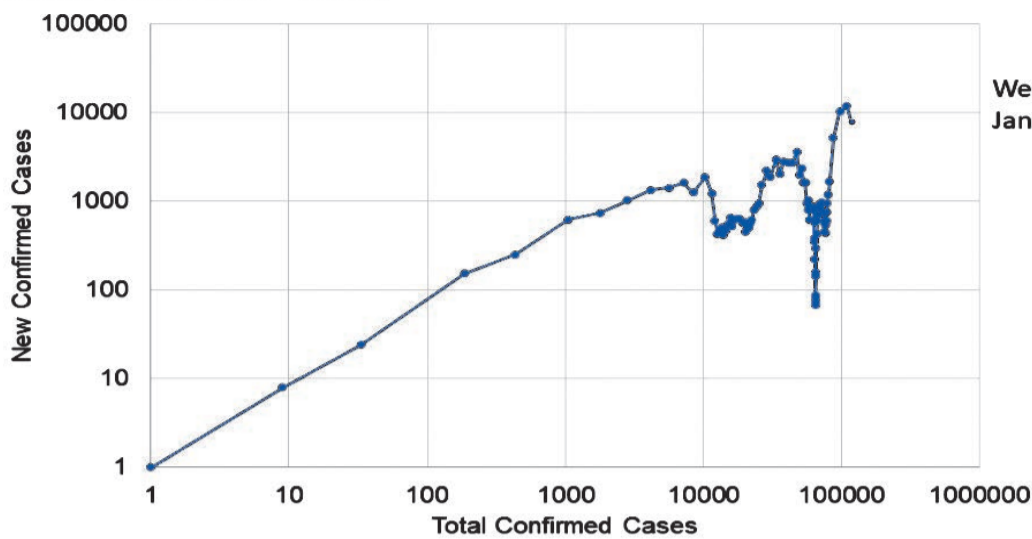
## Where It Comes From—Revenue

FY 2023 Proposed School Operating Fund (\$ in millions)



Revenue Sources.

Current Week 2: (Jan 9 – Jan 15)



Week 1: Jan 1 – Jan 8

SCREENSHOT FAIRFAX COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Covid-19 Case Data for Fairfax Health District, Trajectory of Cases for Fairfax County.

# New Governor Revokes Mask Mandate for Schools

FCPS says masks requirement remains in effect.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION



Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin (R)

Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin (R) signed Executive Order Number Two on his Inauguration Day, Saturday, Jan. 15, to fulfill his promise “to empower Virginia parents in their children’s education and upbringing by allowing parents to make decisions on whether their child wears a mask in school.” The Order states that masks are not the only method to reduce transmission of COVID-19. It lists mitigation measures, including improvements to indoor air quality in school facilities.

Fairfax County Public Schools issued a reminder that its policy on wearing masks has not changed. FCPS would continue to follow recommendations from local and national experts instead, requiring all students and staff to wear masks, except at times and on occasions already designated in (eating). Arlington Public Schools and Alexandria City Public Schools also announced masks would stay on.

FCPS Superintendent Scott Brabrand sent a message to parents: “As we return to school after the holiday weekend, we want to let you know that FCPS will continue universal masking for all students and staff ... in alignment with CDC guidance. Our layered prevention strategies have proven effective in keeping transmission rates low in our schools. We know our students are best served by in-person instruction. Adhering to our layered prevention strategies, especially universal masking, keeps our schools open and safe places for students to learn.”

According to Virginia Senate Bill (SB) 1303 effective July 1, 2021, each school board is to offer in-person instruction to students enrolled in the local school division “in a manner in which it adheres, to the maximum extent practicable, to any currently applicable mitigation strategies ... to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 that have been provided by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.”

Fairfax Sen. Chap Petersen, co-author and lead Democratic sponsor of the bill to reopen schools, said: “The law gives flexibility to local School Boards to open schools in a safe way while reflecting the practice of our community.”



Masked students enter the FCPS’ Great Falls Elementary School.

cal realities of educating children. It does not require School Boards to follow any certain COVID protocols, such as mandatory masking for all children, nor does it preclude it.”

But Petersen added that schools should have a plan to phase out mandatory masking in the “next few weeks or months. Mandatory masking should not be a permanent feature of public education.”

John Cook, former member of the Board of Supervisors, said on Twitter: “If we are concerned about parents’ rights, do I have the right as a parent not to have the government compel my child to sit next to a maskless person all day?”

FCPS as of Jan. 14, 2022, reported 620 cases of COVID-19 for the month of January. That number might be lower than actual cases because schools were closed from Dec. 20, 2021 to Jan. 10, 2022 for winter break and then winter weather, according to an FCPS spokesman.

The Fairfax County COVID-19 Case Data for Fairfax Health District reported on Sunday, Jan. 16, the highest number of new confirmed COVID-19 cases to date, slightly over 10,000 for Week 1: Jan. 1-8 according to its Trajectory of Cases in the county.

FILE PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS



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The pandemic has been a bear, financially and otherwise. Revenue plummeted at the beginning in 2020. Some beloved advertisers have stayed the course supporting us throughout, and many more have done what they can. In the fall of 2021 we saw the return of some advertising for events and Grand Openings, but now omicron clouds the horizon in so many ways. Revenue still remains short of expenses despite our greatly curtailed costs.

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# Two Public Meetings Set for County's Airport Noise Policy

FROM PAGE 2

from areas impacted by excessively high levels of aircraft noise."

But both Meurlin's and Cooper's words fell on deaf ears – as did the objections of other groups and individuals – and in November 2020, the project got the go-ahead. And now, if the new Comprehensive Plan amendment is approved, it would enable even more homes to be built in similar areas, throughout the county.

The Connection contacted Smith for this story, asking her to explain why, as Sully Supervisor, she believes the county's new amendment should be adopted and would be beneficial to the county. She did not.

Instead, she replied: "Most [U.S.] localities, including [Fairfax and] Loudoun County, allow residential uses in the 60-65 LDN noise contours with noise mitigation and notification procedures. Although [this] would be a county policy, the only adopted noise

contours are for Dulles Airport. By adopting a change to the Comprehensive Plan, this language would be implemented county-wide."

However, Loudoun's supervisors don't share her views on the newer noise contours. In February 2021, they unanimously approved a plan to redraw that county's noise zones around Dulles Airport, since they guide Loudoun's development policy and real-estate disclosures.

The news website "Loudoun Now," reported that, "Based on the airport's updated noise contours, Loudoun County is amending its Comprehensive Plan to update policies related to [its] Airport Impact Overlay District."

"The new contours are driven by science, by where the noise is currently and where it's projected to be as the airport grows," said Supervisor Matt Letourneau (R-Dulles). "We do this so we don't have issues down

the road." Loudoun is expected to approve the new, airport-noise maps this May.

Meanwhile, on Monday, Jan. 17, the Sully District Council/West Fairfax County Citizens Assn. (WFCCA) Joint Land-Use Committee approved a resolution to be sent to Fairfax County.

The committee again stated its strong opposition to "further delays by the Supervisors in adopting MWAAs' updated noise contours, while significant land-use applications affected by [these] contours continue to be reviewed and approved, ignoring the best scientific data available, using outdated noise contours from 1993."

The committee also opposes "the further weakening of Fairfax County environmental policies to facilitate approvals of new residential development on inappropriate sites impacted by airport noise." And it requested written disclosures to prospective homebuyers, including potential health and safety

risks, plus a legible diagram depicting flight paths' proximity to [their] development.

The Supervisors have scheduled two virtual Community Open House meetings this month to allow the public to learn more about the amendment and ask questions. To attend either of these meetings and/or comment on the proposed amendment, click on the corresponding Meeting Access Links below to join on the day of the meeting.

❖ The Thursday, Jan. 27, meeting is at 7 p.m. To attend, click on: <https://fairfax.webex.com/fairfax/j.php?MTID=m28a95c4d8a3f3bbc0c3d385f1c8c04eb>

❖ The Saturday, Jan. 29, meeting is at 11 a.m. To attend, click on: <https://fairfax.webex.com/fairfax/j.php?MTID=ma1c1f4d2f96e75e794740a9b80a74bbe>

For details about the proposed amendment, go to <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/plan-amendments/airport-noise-policy>.

## Local Camping and Outdoor Store Opens

FROM PAGE 5

at Burke Lake before graduating to their first tent with the support of friends.

They founded Good Wolf Gear in their friends' honor and anyone

else who wants to share what they have learned with their family and friends. Follow @goodwolfgear on Instagram and Facebook, and visit their website, [www.goodwolfgear.com](http://www.goodwolfgear.com), for more.



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Good Wolf Gear, 287 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. The store specializes in new and gently used outdoor gear, apparel, and accessories.



PHOTO VIA INSTAGRAM.COM/GOODWOLFGEAR

A selection of camping items at Good Wolf Gear in Herndon.

### CALENDAR

#### NOW THRU JAN. 30

Paint & Pen. 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. At Jo Ann Gallery Reston Community Center, Lake Anne, 1609 Washington Plaza N, Reston. Two Artists, One Show with paintings by Angie Magruder and drawings by Bob Biedrzycki. Visit the website: [www.restoncommunitycenter.com](http://www.restoncommunitycenter.com)

#### NOW THRU FEB. 19

New Art Exhibits. At McLean Project for the Arts, 1234 Ingle-side Ave., McLean. Give and Take: Building Form (Emerson Gallery) will feature abstract wood sculpture by Emilie Benes Brzezinski, Rachel Rotenberg, Foon Sham, and Norma Schwartz, while the Atrium Gallery will feature Intersectional Painting: Works by Sheila Crider. Both exhibitions run through Feb. 19, 2022. Visit [www.mpaart.org/](http://www.mpaart.org/) or call 703-790-1953 for gallery hours.

#### NOW THRU FEB. 12

Traveling While Black: Virtual Reality Experience. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingle-side Ave., McLean. In "Traveling While Black VR," the immersion of 360° footage draws viewers into living history lessons told around a booth in Ben's Chili Bowl. The Washington, D.C. restaurant has been a mainstay of the African American community since 1958, bearing witness to significant Civil Rights milestones that are woven into the film in powerful snippets of footage. The Traveling While Black VR experience/film was directed by Academy Award-winning director Roger Ross Williams.

#### JAN. 18-FEB. 1

Mah Jongg Lessons. 6:30-9:30 p.m. At Temple Rodef Shalom, 2100 Westmoreland Street, Falls Church. Mah Jongg beginner class, Jan. 18, 25 and

Feb. 1 6:30-9:30 p.m. \$90. Send non-refundable check to WoTRS, Attention Iva Gresko, Temple Rodef Shalom, 2100 Westmorland St, Falls Church, VA 22023. Include email address, home address, and telephone numbers. Check is your registration. Enrollment limited. Masks required.

#### THURSDAY/JAN. 20

Performing Arts Documentary. 1 p.m. At McLean Community Center, McLean. Learn a little about the performing arts through this one-hour (or so) documentary. Safety permitting, join Performing Arts Director Sarah Schallern Treff for a discussion after.

#### JAN. 21 THRU FEB. 6

"The Dinner Party." Presented by Vienna Theatre Company. At Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St., SE, Vienna. Performance Dates and Times: 8 p.m.: Fridays and Saturdays: January 21, 22, 28, 29; Feb 4, 5; 2 p.m.: Sundays: Jan 30, Feb 6. In Neil Simon's farcical take on love, marriage, divorce, and what comes after, six strangers are invited to a mysterious dinner party. They do not know who the other guests will be or why they have been invited. Tossed together in a private dining room, they have a sneaking suspicion that this unorthodox dinner party will forever change their lives. Visit [www.viennatheatrecompany.org](http://www.viennatheatrecompany.org) for more details or email [vtcshows@yahoo.com](mailto:vtcshows@yahoo.com).

#### JAN. 21 TO FEB. 13

"Every Brilliant Thing." At NextStop Theatre, 269 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. Guided by an unnamed narrator, the audience is drawn into the story of a young boy who tries to cure his mother's depression by creating a list of all the most wonderful things in the world. Visit [www.NextStopTheatre.org](http://www.NextStopTheatre.org).

#### SUNDAY/JAN. 23

D'DAT Native American Fusion Music. 4 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingle-side Ave., McLean. The band will perform an eclectic mix of original, traditional and popular tunes. Tickets are \$15, 10 for MCC district residents. D'DAT is a multicultural group that mixes the uniquely American musical traditions of the native southwest, jazz and hip-hop. National touring artist Def-i's intelligent, poetic lyrics and hip-hop style blend with the hard-driving instrumental fire of trumpet player Delbert Anderson, the deep funk of drummer Nicholas Lucero and the explorative and expanding groove of Mike McCluhan on bass. Visit: [www.aldentheatre.org](http://www.aldentheatre.org) or contact Patron Services Manager Evelyn Hill at [evelyn.hill@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:evelyn.hill@fairfaxcounty.gov) or 571-296-8385.

#### TUESDAY/JAN. 25

Author Jessica Stone. 7 p.m. At Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Ave. E, Vienna. Rescheduled from Jan 11. The author will speak about her book, *Crossing the Divide: 20 Lessons to Help You Thrive in Cross-Cultural Environments*. Books available for sale and signing. Website: <https://librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov/event/8778154>

#### FRIDAY/JAN. 28

Old Firehouse Center 5th & 6th Grader Party A Snowy Shindig. 7-9:30 p.m. At Old Firehouse, Mclean. Old Firehouse 5th and 6th Grader Parties are themed and decorated accordingly. Free catered food and beverages will be distributed to participants. Parties feature a DJ, an open dance floor and a variety of activities. Pre Registration is recommended. Visit [www.mcleancenter.org](http://www.mcleancenter.org) or call 703-790-0123, TTY: 711.





Josephine Johnson discusses the new school with guests at the groundbreaking ceremony held Tuesday, Nov. 9.

# Celebree School to Open in Reston

## Franchise for early childhood education and childcare.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

Before spring 2022, a new Reston infant to kindergarten daycare and early childhood education center plans to open less than a mile from the Wiehle-Reston East Metro Station.

Edward and Josephine Johnson have purchased two Celebree child care franchises, one of which will be located at 11109 Sunset Hill Rd., in Reston.

Celebree provides infant and toddler care, preschool, before and aftercare, and summer camp programs for children ages six weeks to 12 years old and is open from 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. The Johnsons already have a location in Ashburn, (703-879-2452) where they live. All Celebree establishments are locally-owned and operated.

At the groundbreaking ceremony held on Tuesday, Nov. 9, to mark the ongoing build-out of the existing warehouse-sized space, Josephine Johnson said she has a degree in education and a doctorate in economics. By profession, Edward Johnson is a patent attorney and trained as a chemical engineer.

When asked why they chose Reston, Edward Johnson said that reports indicated “12,000 children in this area could be eligible” to attend the school. “It seemed like there was a definite need for quality early education and childcare,” Josephine added.

Maddy White, Fairfax County staff for U.S. Rep. Gerry E. Con-



The Johnson Family breaks ground at the site of their Reston-based Celebree School, taking applications in February and anticipated to open during the first quarter of 2022.

nolly (D-VA), attended the groundbreaking. White said she understood the importance of quality childcare and early education.

“Having [Celebree] here allows more people to go to work, thrive, and grow our economy ... along the Dulles Corridor.”

According to Josephine Johnson, they hope to offer daycare to qualifying families in need through a childcare voucher system. “Especially women who are single mothers and who want to return to work,” Josephine said.

See [www.celebree.com/](http://www.celebree.com/)

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PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Submit civic/community announcements at [ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar](http://ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar). Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before the event.

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### Employment

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Apply at: <https://www.amazon.jobs/en/> referencing Job ID: **1842431**

### Legals

#### ABC LICENSE

HGA Franklin Farms LLC trading as Hashtag Gaming Arena, 13320 Franklin Farm Road, Unit G, Herndon VA 20171. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Mixed Beverage on Premises license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Drew Crowder, Owner. NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at [www.abc.virginia.gov](http://www.abc.virginia.gov) or 800-552-3200.

### Employment

Cloud Engineer, Hitachi Vantara, LLC, Herndon, VA. Deploy, automate, maintain, and coordinate cloud native systems in Amazon Web Services. To apply, please e-mail your resume to ATTN: Bhavna Vara, [apply@hitachivantara.com](mailto:apply@hitachivantara.com). Please refer to Job# 864.1040

### Legals

### Legals

#### Wellness Services Manager

Fairfax County (Herndon)

My Dr's Pharmacy LLC is a community pharmacy looking for a Manager for the Wellness and Nutrition Services area. The Wellness Services Manager will manage and coordinate the daily operation of all nutrition and wellness services. The Wellness Services Manager will analyze business operations and trends to identify areas of growth; develop and maintain clinical nutrition operational policies and procedures; and prepare reports to support business decisions. The Wellness Services Manager will gather and analyze data to measure success on wellness programs and incentives. She/he will manage and analyze the results of projects regarding: the integration of new wellness services with existing pharmacy offerings; the participation in the education of the next generation of nutritionists; the implementation of protocols to expand clinical nutrition services; and the establishment of online presence. The Wellness Services Manager will manage and coordinate the publication of an educational blog and of articles in a local magazine. Responsible for the development and delivery of online video series to educate consumers about the basics of good nutritional habits, and of a monthly educational seminar that will be open to the community with the aim of engaging customers in better nutritional habits.

Requirements: Master's Degree in Dietetics or Nutrition from a US University. At least 2 years of operations management analyst experience for the healthcare environment. Certified Nutrition Specialist credential or Registered Dietitian/Nutritionist (RD/RDN) required. Send resume [info@MyDrRx.com](mailto:info@MyDrRx.com) My Dr's Pharmacy LLC

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### SUPPORT GROUPS

Parent Support Partners, a service of the Healthy Minds Fairfax initiative, are all parents who have received training and are qualified to offer education, support and assistance at no cost to families or caregivers. They provide reliable information that families can use in decision-making and are familiar with services and resources that can help families in distress. Visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthymindsfairfax](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthymindsfairfax) or [www.nami-north-ernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html](http://www.nami-north-ernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html).

### ONGOING

STEM Professionals Needed. Volunteers are needed to assist K-12 STEM teachers in northern Virginia as part of the American Association for the Advancement of Science's STEM Volunteer Program, [stemvolunteers.org](http://stemvolunteers.org), during the 2019-20 school year. Contact Don Rea at 571-551-2488 or [donaldrea@aol.com](mailto:donaldrea@aol.com).

Assistance League of Northern Virginia is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that feeds, clothes and provides reading assistance and books to children in need. Assistance League's programs touch the lives of hundreds of children in Fairfax and Prince William Counties and the City of Alexandria. There are many volunteer opportunities for community members to contribute to helping those in need. To learn more, email [info@aln.org](mailto:info@aln.org), or visit [www.aln.org](http://www.aln.org).

Volunteer Adult Mentors Needed. Help assist the Department of Family Services' BeFriendA-Child mentoring program. The mentors provide opportunities for companionship, guidance and support to children who have been abused and neglected, or who are at risk of abuse and neglect. Contact Ibrahim Khalil at [Ibrahim.khalil@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Ibrahim.khalil@fairfaxcounty.gov) or 703-324-4547.

RSVP, a volunteer network for seniors seeking service opportunities in and around Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, offers a wide array of opportunities for volunteers 55 and older. RSVP volunteers enjoy flexible schedules, free accident and liability insurance while serving, optional mileage and meal reimbursement and are invited to volunteer group projects and social gatherings. To sign up for an upcoming orientation, email Carly Hubicki at [chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org](mailto:chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org) or call RSVP at 703-403-5360. To learn more about RSVP, visit [www.rsvpnova.org](http://www.rsvpnova.org).

Master Gardener Training. The Fairfax County Master Gardener Association offers plant clinics, home turf training or speakers for homeowner's meetings. Fees vary. Visit [fairfaxgardening.org](http://fairfaxgardening.org) or call MG Help Desk at 703-324-8556 for more.

Over-40 Softball League. A Fairfax-based league is looking for players. Players must be at least 40 years of age to be eligible. All games are doubleheaders - played on Sundays at Bready Park in Herndon between 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. Email [skeduman@aol.com](mailto:skeduman@aol.com) for more.

# Earning College Credit with Work Experience and Training

Program expansions makes college degree accessible and affordable for many.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE CONNECTION

Now in the 17th year of his career in information technology (IT), Eric Hayes wants to work toward a college degree at Northern Virginia Community College. While he has taken a variety of on-the-job training courses, he believes that a formal education will lead to professional gains. Thanks to the expansion of a program in Virginia called Credits for Prior Learning Portal, Credits-2Careers program, he and other adults can turn life work experiences into college credit.

"The hours of course study will help me continue to grow in my career field," he said. "Course work, group collaboration, and lectures are a part of the responsibility of being an active IT professional," he said. "You can easily get left behind if you

do not keep your eyes and ears open. Constant change can be beneficial because it can quickly solve problems as well as streamline convoluted processes. With that being said, knowing about the change or even being a part of it is much more gratifying."

Adults who are interested in using work and life experience to earn credit at Northern Virginia Community College and other schools in the Virginia Community College System, can create an account on the Credits2Careers website ([www.credits2careers.org](http://www.credits2careers.org)) and list information such as work experience, prior training, certificates or standardized tests. This information is evaluated by the organization's career advisors who will then let the prospective student know how many college credits they are eligible to receive.

"This initiative is predicated on serving the needs of all students from various backgrounds who have a wealth of knowledge and experience," said Jenny Carter, Direc-

tor of Workforce Partnerships and Projects, Virginia Community College System. "Recognizing the expertise that is contained in a student's background is one way of honoring their past efforts and meeting them where they are in their educational journey, in the arc of their career, and most importantly, where they are in life."

A grant from the Lumina Foundation, as part of its All Learning Counts Initiative, provided the funding for the expansion. Professional development, workforce training,

professional certifications, exams and standardized test are examples of the types of experiences that students use to earn college credit while taking fewer classes, says Carter

"By awarding credit for prior learning, students are able to avoid any redundancy in training and save crucial time and money," she said. "Research has shown

that by awarding credit for prior learning, students are ultimately assisted in a meaningful, tangible way to accelerate their pathway to earning a degree or licensure leading directly to a well-paying career. Life is full of rich experiences that deserve to be recognized wherever they align to formal training outcomes."

This path to education is designed to create a level playing field for those who want to access to higher education. "Credit for prior learning is one tool to ensure education is available to all, from students with traditional backgrounds to those who have followed another path," said Emily Jones-Green, Virginia Community College System. "The greatest thing about education, knowledge, skills, and capabilities is that they are not confined to a formal classroom."

Having diverse life experiences enhances the classroom atmosphere and makes the fabric of our society and our workforce stronger."

**"The greatest thing about education, knowledge, skills, and capabilities is that they are not confined to a formal classroom. Having diverse life experiences enhances the classroom atmosphere and makes the fabric of our society and our workforce stronger."**

— Jenny Carter,  
Director of Workforce Partnerships and  
Projects, Virginia Community College System.

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## Immuno-Confused



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I wouldn't say, as a cancer patient, that I'm immuno-compromised, as a CNN news report today, Dec. 24th, described us similarly-diagnosed individuals, but my wife certainly would. Nevertheless, as a cancer patient undergoing treatment, I do realize that I need to be vigilant, especially since I have pre-existing breathing issues because the thyroid cancer I have had long ago moved into my lungs. Moreover, to complicate matters more, the main side effect of the medicine that I'm taking daily to treat my thyroid cancer has as its main side effect: shortness of breath. Having read what I've just written, it sounds likely that if anybody is immuno-compromised, it's someone who has cancerous tumors in their lungs and whose treatment for said tumors has as its primary side effect: shortness of breath. A trifecta of trouble when one considers that covid adversely impacts one's ability to breathe.

When covid first became a thing, my wife, Dina wouldn't let me out of the house. Even after we received our initial two vaccinations, Dina was still cautiously unoptimistic. I was allowed out of the house, but within very strict parameters. I wouldn't say I understand science/medicine, but even I could see the risks of exposure and the likely compounded problems it would present for a cancer patient like me whose lungs are already weakened by the presence of a dozen or more malignant papillary thyroid cancer tumors. And whose body has been negatively affected (I wouldn't say ravaged) by nearly 13 years of non-stop cancer treatment. Not exactly the most challenging host for a semi-incurable respiratory virus.

However, in the past three months or so since I've been boosted, I have returned to some of my pre-covid activities; in moderation, and always wearing a mask. I am out and about running errands as had been my area of responsibility previously. Now however, omicron has become the dominant variant/threat and presented a new level of concern even for fully vaccinated/boosted people like me. Though the side effects, hospitalizations and deaths seem statistically somewhat less than previous variants, still a cancer patient with pre-existing lung/breathing issues seems an attractive host. And not that the variant picks its targets, but its super transmissibility presents challenges/fears for those whose immune systems have already been weakened by years of toxic chemotherapy. As I describe myself, I think I might be the poster child for this disease. If anybody presents with the ideal/worst-case scenario, it's me. I can see the poster now: A picture of me with a black circle surrounding my chest with a black line diagonally across my torso.

Because, if there's anything I understand about my condition, it is that my weakest link is the area where the virus does its most initial damage: the lungs. And given that one's ability to breathe is kind of important, in whatever scheme of things/context one wants to consider, I should probably once again stay in the house and avoid all human contact (at least I would have five cats to keep me company). I mean, who's to say/know really, whether a lung cancer/thyroid patient like me could even survive the most modest of covid symptoms. Which, given my medical history, it's unlikely any symptoms I experienced could be described as moderate. I imagine if the virus found a home in my lungs, it might very well be, as they say in Boston: "Katie bar the door." There's probably no such thing as a moderate impact for a person with cancer/lung issues like me. In fact, if I want to be honest about my cancer/lung history, practically/prudently speaking, I should be disqualified from everything until further notice. I can't afford to take a chance/risk any exposure. I have very little margin for error. My life would be at stake, if I understand the warnings/susceptibility correctly concerning someone with my medical condition.

I suppose if I want to live my life moving forward, I'll have to utilize my sales background and pre-qualify any person with whom I'm possibly having contact/sharing space. I've survived/overcome an initial "terminal" diagnosis of stage IV non-small cell lung cancer with a "13 month to two-year" prognosis to be approaching my 13-year anniversary come the end of February 2022. Given all I've endured in the last 13 years since I felt pain in my left rib cage in late December 2008, it would be irresponsible and stupid for me to get careless and throw away all I've been gained. This is no time to throw caution to the wind. Quite the contrary.

Kenny Lourie is an Advertising Representative for The Potomac Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.

# Herrity: ‘This Park Is Near and Dear to My Heart’

Park Authority Board approves Braddock Park’s revised plan.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

Get ready for a new and improved Braddock Park, now that the Fairfax County Park Authority Board has approved a revision to the park’s Master Plan. While retaining this popular park’s character as a primary destination for adult softball, it also adds new elements to balance the variety of uses there and better serve the community, now and in the future.

Following public meetings, plus a survey and comments from area residents, the Board decided that the revamped park will contain a concessions/refreshments service, central plaza serving as a focal area to include family gatherings and children’s play areas, one-mile walking loop, pickleball court complex, and a potential dog park or community gardens.

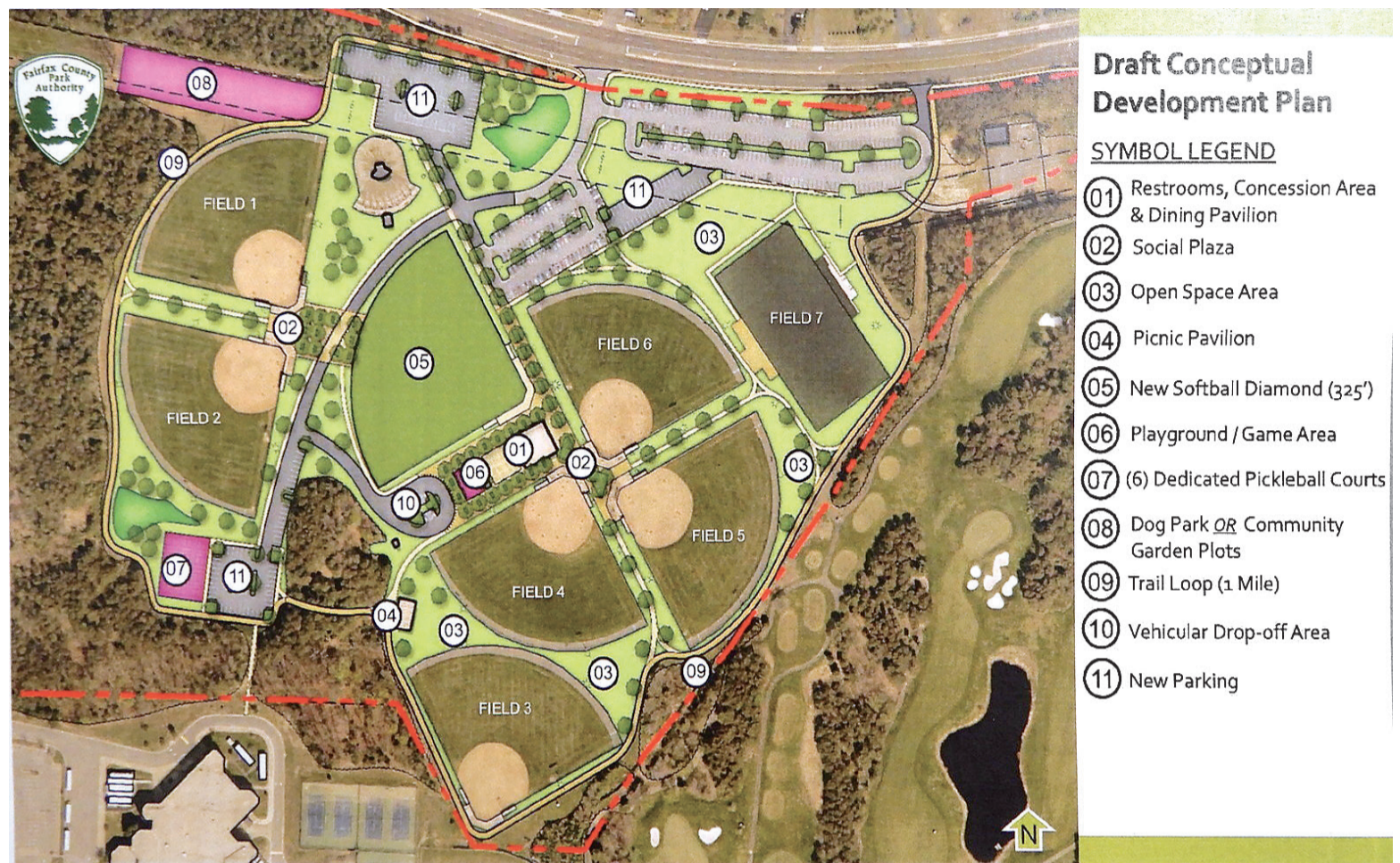
“Braddock Park is an important park, a great softball complex and something people have cared about for a long time,” said Springfield District Park Authority Board member Mike Thompson. “This plan allows us to build on what’s here, look at current trends and expand the uses for the future.”

The 61-acre, district park is at 13451 Braddock Road, bordering both Centreville High and Twin Lakes Golf Course. It currently has six natural-turf softball diamonds; one synthetic-turf rectangular field; a batting-cage area, picnic pavilion and restroom.

The original 1981 Master Plan also contained a social plaza, tot lot, volleyball courts, an area for table games, plus trails for walking and running. But these things were never built, and 5.32 acres of the park are still undeveloped. So the Park Authority collaborated with residents to determine how Braddock Park should be updated. It planned to offer both passive and active recreation there, while preserving the site’s natural resources.

At an in-person meeting shortly before the revised plan was adopted, Park Authority Project Manager and senior landscape architect Doug Tipword gave an overview and summary of this conceptual development plan. He then encouraged the public to comment on it prior to its draft being finalized and approved by the Board.

Also addressing the attendees was Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield). “We’ve been



**Braddock Park Master Plan revision key: 1. Restrooms, concessions, dining pavilion; 2. Social plaza; 3. Open space; 4. Party pavilion; 5. New softball diamond; 6. Playground/game area; 7. Pickleball courts; 8. Dog park OR community garden plots; 9. One-mile trail loop; 10. Vehicle drop-off area; 11. New parking.**

through a long journey, and I thank the Park Authority and all the people involved in it,” he said. “I live in Little Rocky Run, and this park is near and dear to my heart. In the ‘80s, I played rugby there.”

“I think the Park Authority has come up with some good ideas,” continued Herrity. “They’re going to fix the parking, and I’m especially excited about the loop trail. I know that’s one of the things people really like about Burke Lake Park, and I thank you all for participating in this process.”

Now, said Tipword, Braddock Park is “primarily an active-recreation park, and a resource-protection area runs along its western end.” However, big changes are on the horizon. And residents heard about them when Tipword presented details of the new park design incorporating the items requested by the nearly 1,000 park users responding to the Park Authority’s survey.

Passive-recreation elements to be added include dining pavilions, restrooms and concessions in the center; shaded social plazas; a new picnic pavilion with eight or more picnic tables; and an open-space area.

One of the new features for ac-

tive recreation will be a 325-foot softball diamond. It’ll be slightly larger than the existing one, said Tipword, “to provide a premier athletic experience and for tournament play.”

There’ll also be an accessible, ADA-compliant playground and game area; six dedicated pickleball courts in the southwest corner of the site; a dog park or community gardens in the VEP- CO easement area in the northwest part – contingent on resident needs or available funding; and a 1-mile, perimeter trail loop with an ADA path to Centreville High at the park’s western edge.

“The trail will provide circulation not existing today,” said Tipword. And when he told attendees the present dirt trail between the park and school would be paved, several of them applauded.

Also planned are a stoplight at the park’s entrance, plus a secondary right turn in, and right turn out, on the eastern side of the northernmost parking lot. Another parking lot would be added between the two existing lots to create one large parking lot. Furthermore, a parking lot would be placed in the VEP- CO easement area in the north – as well as a

lot in the southwest portion of the site, near the pickle ball courts, so people could easily access the fields in the southern area of the park.

A vehicle drop-off area will be in the center of the park adjacent to the dining/concession/playground area. Tipword said it’ll be beneficial to “ADA vehicles, firetrucks and buses dropping off athletic teams.”

During the meeting’s question-and-answer section, resident Maryann Fellows asked, “Are you going to take down the old concession stand and restrooms and rebuild them?” Tipword replied affirmatively. She also asked if the pickleball courts would always be open, and Park Planning Manager Anna Bentley said the specifics will be determined later.

Joe Maurice, president of Fairfax Adult Softball, asked why the softball field will be 325 feet, instead of 300 feet. “The larger outfield makes for a more competitive experience,” explained Tipword. “Less homeruns, more balls in play.”

Erin Mays, president of Braddock Dogs, said, “I want to put in a plug for the dog park. It would be really nice to have a dog park

that’s easy to get to after work and before nightfall.” Ryan Stewart, chief of long-range planning, told her that guidance from the Park Authority’s newly completed dog-park study would be added into Braddock Park’s plan.

Lastly, Christina Voss, also of Fairfax Adult Softball, asked if field five will be at the same level as fields four and six because “There’s a gully there now.”

“We’ve had several long conversations about the site’s topography,” replied Bentley. “And we’ll look at this issue when there’s funding [to implement the new Master Plan].”

Voss further noted that “It would be nice if there’s a sign with a map of where everything is.”

Answered Tipword: “That’s definitely something to consider – and a very good point.”

However, Park Authority Board member Mike Thompson reminded everyone that “We’re talking about what we envision that park could be in the future. That doesn’t mean we have the money to do it. It could take a number of years. This [plan] establishes the baseline, and your comments to your supervisors will help get this funded.”