



Supervisor Tony Buffington  
**Blue Ridge District**  
*NewsFlash*



**My Opposition to the Greenway's  
Massive Toll Rate Increase Request**

**Metro Connection Bus Routes Resume**

**Rt 9 Safety & Operational Study Input**

**Statewide Commuter Survey**

**Rent & Mortgage Relief Program**

Sent: July 7, 2020



## **My Testimony Against the Greenway's Outrageous 5 Year Toll Increase Request**

Last week I testified against the Greenway's proposal to raise Toll Rates by 30% over the next 5 years!

Below is my testimony from the State Corporation Commission's (SCC) virtual Public Hearing. The case itself is scheduled to be considered by the SCC in August.

**Supervisor Buffington's Comments to State Corporation Commission (SCC) Regarding  
The Greenway's Current 5 Year Toll Rate Increase Request to the SCC**

June 30, 2020

**Good morning & THANK YOU for the opportunity to speak with you today.**

My name is Tony Buffington. I am a Loudoun County resident and serve as Blue Ridge District Supervisor on the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors. I testify in both my personal and professional capacity, and my comments are in **ADAMANT OPPOSITION** to the Greenway's proposed Toll Rate increases over the next 5 years.

Virginia's exemption for the Greenway to prove that its Toll Rate increase requests **DO NOT MATERIALLY DISCOURAGE IT'S USE - HAVE EXPIRED**. Therefore, **THE GREENWAY MUST NOW PROVE TO THE SCC** that its rate increase requests **WILL NOT MATERIALLY DISCOURAGE USE**. However, the data has consistently shown that despite drastic increases in area population, use of the Greenway has steadily decreased as Toll Rates continue to rise. Amazingly, this has occurred regardless of the fact that drivers are resorting to non-Greenway alternatives that actually increase drive and commuting times.

This clearly demonstrates that rising Toll Rates **HAVE MATERIALLY AFFECTED RIDERSHIP**. I therefore have no doubt that the Greenway's current request for historic increases over the next **FIVE YEARS** would materially lower Greenway usage, thus further increasing traffic on non-Greenway alternatives such as Route 7, Route 28, and Route 50, which already suffer from high traffic and poor levels of service.

As a local elected representative and daily D.C. commuter, I'm particularly familiar with the impact of rising Toll Rates, and I can tell you that residents are extremely frustrated. **THEY'VE BEEN PRICED OFF THE GREENWAY** and displaced onto already congested alternatives, which has resulted in significant increases of local and state tax dollars to fund new widening, intersection & interchange, and other **MAJOR** level of service improvements to accommodate those avoiding the Greenway due to rising Toll Rates. The Greenway says that it, "relieves the financial burden of local and state agencies charged with providing transportation..." – **I CAN TELL YOU THAT IS FALSE - IT HAS INCREASED OUR COSTS!**

The Greenway also claims that it, "benefits the local community by alleviating congestion that would otherwise be on surrounding public roads..." – **AGAIN, NOT TRUE. DUE TO OVERWHELMING COSTS – GREENWAY USERS ARE LITERALLY FLOCKING TO NON-GREENWAY ALTERNATIVES.**

As elected members of the state agency with regulatory authority over the Greenway, I implore you to **UPHOLD THE LAW BY DENYING ANY TOLL RATE INCREASE REQUEST THAT WOULD MATERIALLY DISCOURAGE USE OF THE GREENWAY** – as this unprecedented and, in my opinion, outrageous request would undoubtedly do!

Again, I thank you for the opportunity to address you this morning.



## **Loudoun County Metro Connection Bus Routes Have Resumed**

Loudoun County Transit has resumed service for Metro Connection Bus Routes 990 and 992. This comes as Loudoun County moves into Phase Three of the "Forward Virginia" reopening plan, which gradually eases restrictions meant to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Customers are advised of the following schedule changes:

- Route 990 – Morning service from Wiehle-Reston East Metro Station to Loudoun County has been reduced from seven to four trips.
- Route 992 – Afternoon service from Loudoun County to Wiehle-Reston East Metro Station has been reduced from seven to four trips.

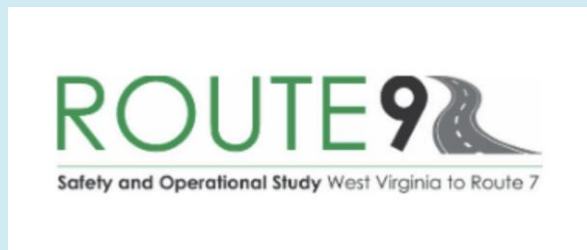
Loudoun County Transit has made operational changes following the guidance of local, state and national health authorities to reduce the risk of COVID-19 exposure on its buses. These changes include compliance with face covering and physical distancing requirements, and additional bus cleaning procedures. Loudoun Transit bus service customers should be prepared to:

- Wear a face covering on the bus and while waiting at bus stops.
- When seated or standing, remain six feet from other passengers who are not in your household.
- Ride for free until August 31, 2020, on all Loudoun Transit buses.

To further reduce the risk of exposure, Loudoun County encourages bus riders to follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, such as avoiding close contact with people who are sick, staying home when

you are sick, avoiding touching your eyes, nose and mouth and properly washing your hands frequently.

Over the coming weeks, Loudoun County Transit will continue to monitor ridership and services for possible additional changes. Stay informed of the latest bus service change information and access schedules at [loudoun.gov/buschanges](https://loudoun.gov/buschanges)



## **Loudoun to Hold Virtual Public Input Meeting on Route 9 Safety and Operational Study**

Loudoun County is hosting an online meeting to gain input from the public on Route 9 in Virginia. The Route 9 public input meeting will be held Thursday, July 16, 2020, from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. Members of the public are invited to attend the virtual meeting to learn about the county's corridor study and to ask questions about this stretch of road, which includes 13 miles along Route 9 from the West Virginia border to Route 7.

Log-in information and materials to review prior to the meeting will be available by close of business Friday, July 10, 2020, at [loudoun.gov/route9](https://loudoun.gov/route9). Meeting materials will include a pre-recorded presentation, detailed corridor diagrams and an online survey. An online form also will be posted to allow members of the public to submit questions in advance and sign up to ask questions at the event. The deadline to complete the form is 12:00 p.m., Wednesday, July 15, 2020.

Loudoun County is conducting the Route 9 Safety and Operational Study to identify safety and traffic operational issues and present recommended solutions for consideration by the Board of Supervisors.

The county is working with the public to ensure any proposed improvements along Route 9 will continue to carry local and commuter traffic safely and efficiently while preserving the unique context of the historical roadway.

For more information about the Route 9 Safety and Operational Study, including a link to sign up for updates, visit [loudoun.gov/route9](https://loudoun.gov/route9)

Those who are signed up for updates will receive notification when meetings materials and other information are available for review.



## Statewide Survey to capture new commuting data

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), in partnership with the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), has launched the Virginia Commuter Survey, a statewide effort to gauge COVID-19 impacts to commuting around the Commonwealth. Anyone that works or lives in Virginia is invited to participate.

This is the first in a series of surveys planned over the next several months. The data will be collected and analyzed by state agencies to assess and determine modifications to transit needs and infrastructure.

The survey will be fielded for at least two weeks and can be accessed here: <https://VAcommuter.metroquest.com>

Survey results will help the state better understand how commuting practices have changed and support ways to identify short- and long-term opportunities and improvements during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.



## **Loudoun and NVFS Administer Virginia Rent & Mortgage Relief Program for Loudoun County Residents**

The Loudoun County government is working with Northern Virginia Family Service (NVFS) to administer the Virginia Rent and Mortgage Relief Program (RMRP) for Loudoun County households experiencing financial instability due to COVID-19.

Governor Ralph Northam launched RMRP this week, which will provide \$50 million in federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding for Virginia households facing eviction or foreclosure due to COVID-19. RMRP will provide short-term financial assistance on behalf of households in the form of rent and mortgage payments. Loudoun County has received \$450,000, which will be administered by NVFS with support from Loudoun County's Information and Referral (I&R) program.

To be eligible, Loudoun County renters and homeowners must meet the following criteria:

- Have a valid lease in their name or other documentation confirming the landlord-tenant relationship, or a mortgage statement in their name;
- Have experienced a loss of income due to the coronavirus pandemic;
- Have a rent or mortgage amount that is at or below 150 percent Fair Market Rate (\$2,560.50 for a two-bedroom unit); and
- Have a gross household income at or below 80 percent of area median income (AMI) based on current month's income (\$79,600 for a household of four).

Applicants will be required to provide documentation showing proof of income as well as a valid lease or mortgage statement or other documentation confirming the landlord-tenant relationship. Financial assistance is a one-time payment with opportunity for renewal based on availability of funding and the household's need for additional assistance and continued eligibility.

For more information, please call Loudoun County's I&R program at 703-777-0420. This process requires a referral from I&R to NVFS. Once referred, NVFS will assist you in the application process.

Virginia Rent and Mortgage Relief Program (RMRP)



[En Espanol](#)

The Virginia Rent and Mortgage Relief Program (RMRP) is designed to support and ensure housing stability across the commonwealth during the coronavirus pandemic. Depending on availability of funds and household need, the RMRP may provide financial assistance for rent or mortgage payments for eligible households. This includes financial assistance for rent or mortgage payments past due beginning April 1, 2020 and onward. Financial assistance is a one-time payment with opportunity for renewal based on availability of funding and the household's need for additional assistance and continued eligibility. Click below to see if you could be eligible for RMRP.

RMRP may be able to provide rent and mortgage relief for households who have experienced a loss of income due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Do any of the below statements apply to you?

- You have been laid off.
- Your place of employment has closed.
- You have experienced a reduction in hours of work.
- You must stay home to care for children due to closure of day care and/or school.
- You have lost child or spousal support.
- You have been unable to find employment due to COVID-19.
- You are unwilling or unable to participate in their previous employment due to their high risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

Yes  No



**Coronavirus - We're in it together, we'll get through it together - Tony**

Be safe!



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