

September Community Message from Chairman Jeff McKay

I hope you had a great summer and that if you have kids, their return to school is going well so far. I wanted to provide an update on the County's current economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and to celebrate the vigilance of our community and businesses.

Fairfax County has dedicated more financial resources to small business relief than any other locality in the state and we are proud of that. Over the last year, we distributed millions of dollars to small businesses and nonprofits through a microloan program and four different grant programs. We deliberately targeted businesses that historically don't have access to these types of funding opportunities, including veteran- women- and minority-owned organizations. After seeing the impacts of this pandemic sector by sector, we deliberately targeted the hardest hit industries in our most recent grant programs.

In response to an initiative I brought to the Board last year, I was happy to see that the Virginia General Assembly passed SB 1208 (Senator Barker) this past session, which allows emergency zoning provisions and flexibility to remain in effect up to a year following the declaration of a state of emergency. Having this authority means business owners have additional time to transition operations as we recover from the pandemic. Thanks to this Fairfax County initiative, localities across Virginia can now take advantage of this flexible timeline for emergency provisions brought forward as a response to COVID-19. This ordinance allowed great flexibility to our restaurants and gym facilities, which were able to adapt their services and operations in light of COVID-19 restrictions. As a result of this initiative with the General Assembly and separately, a Board Matter I brought forward to ensure support for our hospitality industry as they navigate through changing best-practices, businesses will be able to take advantage of reduced fees in land development and the permitting process as they shift their day-to-day operations.

Finally, while we have made a lot of progress in Fairfax County with over 71% of our eligible residents 18 and up fully vaccinated, the Delta variant is surging in unvaccinated communities across the country. For the sake of our economic recovery, the re-opening of schools, we need even more people to get vaccinated. In the last year, if you went to the grocery store, went to the dentist, had something delivered, you depended on the care of those workers around you and your community. Getting vaccinated is an act of charity for every frontline worker who stepped up this year and for your customers and employees. Please, if you haven't been vaccinated, now is the time to do so. You can make an appointment here: <http://vaccine.gov/>