

2026 State of the Town Q&A

The following are questions and answers from the State of the Town Address held on May 19, 2026.

Q: What can be done to assist owners of contributing structures within the Historic District?

A: The structures in the Historic Overlay District are being discussed as part of the Downtown Early Action Plan, along with broader historic preservation conversations. The Town recently hosted a workshop regarding available historic preservation tax credits and will continue evaluating ways to support property owners while preserving historic resources.

Q: What is being done to address vacant or underutilized properties in downtown Herndon?

A: Conversations are ongoing with downtown property and business owners. The Town is evaluating downtown conditions through the Downtown Early Action Plan process. Discussions are underway regarding vacant properties and opportunities for future activation.

Q: What is the Town's response to a study on the impact of data centers?

A: Town officials noted that there are currently no active data center proposals before the Town and that the Town's zoning regulations prohibit data centers.

Q: Can the Town invest more directly in public education?

A: Mayor LeBlanc emphasized the importance of education. Public schools are operated by Fairfax County Public Schools and governed by the Fairfax County School Board. Interested individuals should contact Robyn Lady, Dranesville District Representative to the Fairfax County School Board.

Q: What is the status of repairs to the trail bridge connection near the Herndon Parkway bridge and Sugarland Run area?

A: Town officials stated that the issue is already under review and that trail inventory and condition assessments are being incorporated into broader transportation and safety planning efforts. Town Manager Dan Hoffman advised the resident they would be in touch.

Q: How are drones being used by the Herndon Police Department?

A: The Police Department uses drones to assist with missing person searches, crime scene documentation, emergency response situations, and investigations. Officials noted that drones can often provide capabilities similar to more expensive resources, like helicopters, while improving officer safety and reducing response costs.

Q: What is being done regarding high-speed e-bikes and motorized bicycles?

A: Chief Pihonak advised that the Herndon Police Department is aware of these higher-speed or motorized bicycles operating on streets and trails. Public education efforts, enforcement options, and state-level policy discussions are continuing.

Mayor LeBlanc asked Delegate Shin if she had any updates.

Delegate Shin indicated conversations around these vehicles are continuing at the state level.

Q: What can we do to address future events to help reduce or prevent heat stroke?

A: The Town goes through a rigorous process with event partners, which includes involving first responders. Events of a certain size are required to have EMTs on site, as well as access to water and shade.

Q: What are the next steps for the Town's housing initiatives?

A: The Town recently adopted interim housing policy guidance. This policy will remain in place while the town works on more detailed planning through the Downtown and Metro Early Action Plans and the Herndon 2050 planning process. The goal is to establish area-specific recommendations while balancing housing opportunities, including community character and long-term planning objectives.

Q: How is the Town's Community Fund being distributed?

A: Nonprofit organizations were invited to apply through an open application process to access the money. Applications are currently being evaluated using criteria approved by the Town Council. If funding remains available after the initial review period, additional application opportunities may be offered.

Q: What environmental sustainability initiatives are underway?

A: Environmental sustainability and economic sustainability are being incorporated into the Herndon 2050 planning process. The Town is also pursuing facility improvements, energy efficiency upgrades, and other projects intended to reduce environmental impacts while modernizing Town infrastructure.

Q: What is being done about excessive vehicle noise?

A: Recent changes in Virginia law provide additional enforcement tools regarding excessive vehicle noise. The Police Department expects to include noise-related enforcement efforts as part of future traffic safety initiatives.

Q: How is the Town addressing concerns about Dominion Energy's vegetation management activities along the W&OD Trail corridor?

A: The Town will continue working with Dominion Energy, NOVA Parks, and community stakeholders to encourage improved coordination and communication. Town Manager Dan Hoffman stated he would follow up directly with NOVA Parks.

Q: Does the Town advocate for authority from Fairfax County or the Commonwealth of Virginia?

A: Herndon regularly works with state legislators, participates in the Virginia Municipal League, collaborates with other Northern Virginia towns (Town Association of Northern Virginia), and engages in regional organizations to advocate for legislative changes and authorities that would benefit local governments.

Q: Why do police vehicles remain idling when officers are stopped or parked?

A: Patrol vehicles contain computers, communications systems, and other equipment that must remain cool to be operational while officers are on duty. Vehicles may remain running to support those systems and allow officers to respond immediately when needed.

Q: What is the status of the red-light camera system?

A: Required engineering studies are currently underway. Potential intersections have been identified, and the Town expects to move forward with vendor selection and implementation after the studies are completed. The goal of the program is to improve traffic safety and reduce crashes.

Q: Why did the annual report show fewer speeding tickets?

A: Police officials explained that some traffic violations may be charged under alternative offenses, such as failure to obey a highway sign. Enforcement efforts remain focused on speeding near crash locations, pedestrian activity areas, and other data-driven safety concerns.

Q: Will the Town increase foot and bicycle patrols?

A: The Police Department recently established a dedicated bicycle patrol unit and indicated that officers on bicycles and foot patrols play an important role in community engagement and neighborhood visibility. Officials expressed support for expanding those efforts as staffing allows.

Q: What privacy protections exist for automated license plate reader systems?

A: Virginia law establishes retention limits, reporting requirements, audit procedures, and other safeguards governing license plate reader data. The Town of Herndon Police Department follows state laws and reporting requirements, as well as **strict adherence to internal policies governing use of the technology.**