

I am writing in response to the article that appeared in your paper regarding criticisms by at least one Dumfries Town Council member regarding the provision of County services to Town residents. I believe it is necessary and prudent to provide facts about the services Prince William County government provides to all County residents including to the four incorporated Towns.

First some background. Areas ask the General Assembly for Town status because they want the additional self-governance that comes with being a Town. That status brings with it direct responsibilities to town residents that are funded by taxes the town collects from its residents on top of the County Real Estate Tax rate. Dumfries is responsible to its citizens for all road maintenance within the town, for land use decisions (including zoning) within the incorporated town limits, and the requirement to hire a building inspector. The County is responsible for providing town residents with those services for which the town does not have direct responsibility and at the same level they do for all other residents in the County. Unfortunately, there seems to be some confusion about the relationship between Towns and Counties in VA. For example, it was stated that Prince William “refused” to provide Police services to Dumfries when asked. This is simply untrue. The residents of Dumfries *currently* receive the same level of County Police services as all other County residents. The town has the *option* to operate their own Police Department in *addition* to the County department and they have decided to do this with tax money collected from town residents. Other towns in the County have chosen differently. If the Council were to decide to no longer fund this service, the County Police Department would provide the same level of services it does today. The County would not provide a greater level of service to the Town paid for by all citizens.

In another example it was stated that the County refused to provide building inspection services funded by County taxpayers. This is also untrue. Building inspections are not funded by taxpayers, they are funded by the fees paid by the individuals and businesses requesting the inspection. When Dumfries’ building inspector resigned, the Town asked County building inspectors to do the work for them. Since the salaries of County inspectors are paid for by customer fees (not by taxpayers) we have obligations to those customers. The recommendation the County offered for the most timely service for the Town was for it to contract out the work until it is able to hire a replacement. The County simply does not have the staffing levels to take on the Town’s inspection workload without hiring new staff of its own, adversely affecting all the taxpayers of Prince William. Since Dumfries must hire this position, it makes no sense for the County to hire a new person to lay them off in the future.

Dumfries is an important, historical asset to the County and much has been accomplished in partnership over the years to improve the quality of life in the Dumfries area including: widening of Rte. 1, thus improving the southern gateway to the town, purchase and stabilization of Williams Ordinary Historic site in the Town by the County, location of the National Museum of the Marine Corps in close proximity to the town, expansion of

the commuter lot at Rte1/234, ongoing staff assistance with the Town's Comprehensive Plan Update, funding the Possum Point culvert replacement, the Dumfries Neighborhood Library (only one located in a town), Weems Botts Museum funding, sports fields at Dumfries elementary, and advocacy for important economic development projects. Of course residents of the Town get the full range of County services including schools, public safety, human services, etc that all other County residents receive. I will note that Supervisor Caddigan has been instrumental in all of these efforts in her more than 20 years of service along with the rest of the Board of Supervisors. We cannot allow the current confusion to exist about the roles and responsibilities of the town and the County without trying to clarify for citizens. Nevertheless, we expect this strong partnership between the County and the Town will continue in the future and as staff of the County, we look forward to that.