

Advocacy Priorities for 2021

SRL's priorities for 2021 will sustain our ongoing efforts to promote meaningful changes to the Zoning Ordinance and other "rules of the game" that currently favor rapid rural development over rural preservation. Specifically, we seek to:

1. **Reduce the density of cluster subdivision zoning:** The Zoning Ordinance should be revised to limit the number of houses that may be built in a rural cluster subdivision to no more than the number that is permitted in neighboring counties.
2. **Preserve prime farming soils:** The Zoning Ordinance should be revised to require that prime soils be concentrated within large "rural economy lots" and to prevent them from being destroyed by residential or other construction.
3. **Implement Purchase of Development Rights:** The County should rapidly implement a PDR program in 2021, supported by sufficient County staffing and enough funding to preserve at least 1,000 acres of strategic, high-priority properties in its first year of operation.
4. **Preserve clean water resources:** The County should conduct a comprehensive survey of surface and sub-surface water resources in 2021. The State should strengthen regulatory penalties and procedures so as to establish a credible and meaningful deterrent against developers who violate the Virginia Water Control Law and its implementing regulations.
5. **Ensure road planning is compatible with rural characteristics:** Ongoing plans to improve Route 7, Route 9, Route 15, Route 50 and other rural roads should preserve rural character, provide opportunities for safe outdoor recreation, allow for the safe operation of farm equipment, and minimize water pollution and other environmental impacts in the karst overlay district and other sensitive areas.
6. **Strengthen Zoning Enforcement:** The County should instruct County staff to proactively monitor compliance with County zoning and land use regulations in all parts of the County and provide sufficient staffing and other resources to make those efforts effective. The County should establish penalties for violations of its zoning and land-use regulations that are sufficient to establish a meaningful deterrence against such violations.
7. **Avoid Conflicts of Interest in Land-Use Decision-Making:** The County should rigorously implement State and County Conflict of Interest (COI) policies to ensure that policy advice submitted by its advisory bodies reflects a representative balance of all Loudoun stakeholders' interests and concerns. County staff should be instructed to consider all stakeholders as "customers" in equal standing.