



Save Rural Loudoun

February 15, 2019

Chair Phyllis Randall
Loudoun County Board of Supervisors
1 Harrison Street SE
Leesburg, VA 20175

Chair Randall:

Save Rural Loudoun welcomes and strongly endorses your request for an information item on the reestablishment of the County's Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program. We hope your initiative and leadership will result in a rapid decision by the Board of Supervisors to reestablish this important program and to support it with appropriate funding in the County's annual budget.

Projected by-right development in the County's Rural Policy Area would double our rural population in the northwestern part of the County, fundamentally damaging unique landscapes and venues that residents of all parts of the County value so highly. It would put extreme additional pressure on our already congested rural and urban road systems and destroy hundreds of thriving farm and rural tourism businesses. Avoiding that projected scenario is well worth the County's time, effort, and money.

Some object to using County fiscal resources for rural preservation. This concern needs to be considered in the context of the \$800 million the County is spending on transportation infrastructure under the current Capital Investment Plan. If the rural population doubled again, the County would inevitably have to spend comparable sums to further expand the road infrastructure. As you and other supervisors have noted before, rural preservation is fiscally-positive. Every dollar invested in a PDR program will save County taxpayers much larger infrastructure expenses in the future.

We would like to call your attention to the comments on the draft 2020-2040 Comprehensive Plan that we provided to you in January. They include specific suggestions for incorporating PDR, the Board's recently-approved easements support program, and a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program in the new Plan. The Planning Commission's efforts to delete all these programs from the current draft Comprehensive Plan shows a distressing lack of wisdom and foresight.

It is important to recognize that none of these individual programs will be sufficient in itself to avoid excessive by-right development under current rural zoning rules. To ensure success, the County will need to actively deploy and use all the policy tools at its disposal. For that reason, we urge you to actively support the establishment of a County TDR program. Strong PDR and TDR programs are complementary and, together, will have much greater impact than either of the programs on its own.

Thank you again for your longstanding leadership and support for rural conservation. You are doing a great service for the County's current residents and for our children and grandchildren.

Sincerely,

John Ellis
Chairman, Board of Directors
Save Rural Loudoun