



Policy Priorities for 2020

1. Uniform Rural Zoning

Action: Apply the current zoning regulations for rural “cluster subdivisions” in the AR-2 zoning district (southern rural Loudoun) to cluster subdivisions in the AR-1 district (northern rural Loudoun). This would, among other things, establish a uniform maximum density of one residence per 15 acres throughout the entire Rural Policy Area.

Results: A significant reduction in the number of farms and the area of rural land that will be lost to residential development over the next two decades. While many new homes could still be built in rural Loudoun, the maximum future “build out” will be reduced. This will, in turn, limit future traffic congestion throughout the County, promote farming and rural tourism, reduce the burden on County taxpayers to build new roads, schools and other public infrastructure, and improve citizens’ quality of life.

2. Purchase of Development Rights

Action: Re-establish and adequately fund and staff a program through which the County will strategically purchase development rights on properties the Board of Supervisors has identified as critical to the preservation of the rural economy, cultural and historical resources, green infrastructure, or the development of the Emerald Ribbons trail system and other outdoor recreation priorities.

Results: A significant reduction in the number of farms and the area of rural land that will be lost to residential development, in areas specifically prioritized by the County.

3. Preserve Prime Farm Soils

Action: Establish enforceable regulations to require developers of rural subdivisions to preserve a specified percentage of the available prime soils on contiguous “rural economy lots” for farming.

Results: A significant reduction in the ongoing loss of prime farmland, preserving lots on which property-owners or their lessees can maintain commercially-viable agricultural operations. This will, in turn, sustain local small businesses that service the farming sector and maintain the rural character critical to the survival and growth of Loudoun’s flourishing rural tourism sector.

4. Protect Water Resources

Actions: Require that all rural cluster subdivision applications include professionally-certified: (a) geo-technical tests demonstrating that groundwater will be protected from contamination; and (b) hydrogeologic tests demonstrating that groundwater supplies are adequate both for the proposed new uses and for all existing uses on neighboring

properties. Ensure that the County Health Director's staff includes full-time staff who are professionally qualified to examine and approve the above tests.

Results: The County's clean water resources will be sufficient to sustainably support the County's residential population and its natural biodiversity.

5. *Transfer of Development Rights*

Action: Design and implement a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program whose "sending areas" would include sections of the Transition Policy Area and Rural Policy Area that the County has prioritized for preservation and whose "receiving areas" would be limited to commercial/industrial zones and residential zones in and around the County's Urban Policy Area in which: (a) roads, schools, and other public infrastructure is already well-developed; and (b) the Board of Supervisors considers that it is in the interests of the County to consider developers' requests for "bonus density."

Results: A significant reduction in the total number of new residences that may be built in the TPA and RPA. This will, in turn, limit future traffic congestion throughout the County, promote farming and rural tourism, reduce the burden on County taxpayers to build new roads, schools and other public infrastructure, and improve citizens' quality of life.

6. *Enforce County Land Use Regulations*

Action: Authorize County staff to actively monitor and enforce County zoning, erosion and sediment control, and other land use regulations and provide them with the staffing and other resources needed to effectively perform those duties.

Results: Land use violations are prevented before they cause extensive damage to public and private interests, reducing mitigation costs and limiting both County and private legal expenses. The County will no longer be dependent on citizens to understand the details of the County's land use regulations, identify potential violations, and report them to County officials (the current "complaint-based enforcement" system).

7. *Mitigate Conflict of Interest in Land Use Advisory Bodies*

Actions: Strengthen the County Government's Conflict of Interest rules to: (a) provide that the chairs of the Planning Commission (PC) and Zoning Ordinance Action Group (ZOAG) shall not have a direct private financial interest (including through an employer or immediate family) in the outcome of those advisory bodies' decisions and recommendations; and (b) ensure that the membership of those advisory bodies includes balanced representation between individuals and groups who have an interest in promoting land development and individuals and groups who have an interest in land preservation.

Results: The public will have confidence that the Board of Supervisors is receiving balanced advice on land use decisions that reflects the interests of all affected interest groups and does not disproportionately favor the private interests of members of the PC and ZOAG over any other private interests.