



www.loudounwildlife.org

LOUDOUN WILDLIFE CONSERVANCY

Public Policy Positions on the 2040 Comprehensive Plan

As a fast-growing, educated community, Loudoun County needs detailed, forward thinking policies to sustain and enhance its natural assets, economy, and quality of life. The draft 2040 comprehensive plan's vague policies lack specific, measurable actions and timelines for reaching them. The absence of a holistic approach to land use planning paves the way for an alarming amount of development "flexibility", as presented in the draft plan. Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy believes the plan should address the issues as set out below.

A watershed-based approach to land use

The draft plan eliminates the watershed as the key element around which land use planning should be organized. As the primary unit of green infrastructure, our watershed's irreplaceable network of streams, forests, slopes, meadows, floodplains and wetlands provide valuable functions and benefits. Important overlay districts to protect river and stream corridors, limestone and mountainside areas should be reinstated in the new plan, as should a holistic watershed-based approach to land use planning with actions that include measurable standards and timelines for:

- Water and air quality
- Stream buffers
- Percentage of tree cover, wetlands, meadows
- Identification of key parcels for conservation
- Native plant use and invasive plant removal

Conservation design

The plan should include measurable standards for:

- Allowable percentage of impervious surfaces
- Green building design for county facilities and commercial development
- Dark sky lighting
- Pesticide and herbicide use limits
- Native plant use in landscaping for county facilities, development and redevelopment

Resiliency

The county faces increased water and energy demand due to continued growth and the potential impacts of climate change. The county must act to ensure Loudoun's resiliency, and incorporate an updated Community Energy Strategy with specific metrics into the comprehensive plan.

Integrated management strategies

Natural assets know no political boundaries. The 2040 plan should include actions to ensure that:

PO Box 1892, Leesburg, VA 20177
Phone (703) 777-2575



www.loudounwildlife.org

- Green infrastructure conservation is coordinated between county, regional and state agencies, partnerships, regional alliances and non-profits.
- Natural asset standards set forth in the Chesapeake 2000 Agreement, Migratory Bird Act, Virginia Wildlife Action Plan, Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act are incorporated into the new plan.
- Economic and environmental goals are complementary.
- The county employs a team of natural resource-trained staff in key county departments to make certain the plan's vision and policies are fulfilled.

Land acquisition and funding

The 2040 plan should allow the county the opportunity to explore a wide range of means and incentives for conservation into perpetuity, including public purchase through capital improvement plan funds, stormwater utility fees and bond referendums; proffers, property development rights, density transfers, donations, conservation easements; state, federal and private funding for land acquisition.

Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy asserts that strong green infrastructure policies must be integrated throughout the 2040 Comprehensive Plan in order to sustain our ecosystems, economy, and quality of life for generations to come.

PO Box 1892, Leesburg, VA 20177
Phone (703) 777-2575