



## MESSAGE FROM THE DESK OF MAYOR TROWBRIDGE M. LITTLETON

2019 Election Issue: Preserving Loudoun County: A Call to Action

2019 is set to be a pivotal year for the Middleburg community, our rural way of life and all of Loudoun County. This November will see a unique election dynamic as we choose our next Delegates, our next Senators, and more importantly, the next Loudoun County Board of Supervisors – all of whom are up for election/re-election. The campaign cycle is getting into full swing and this creates an opportunity for us all to be heard more than normal – by our vote. It is an incredibly important time for us to engage in the political process and ensure that the County representatives we select reflect our vision for our community and our County. Central to this vision will be the direction the Board takes this summer when they vote on the new Comprehensive Plan and how the candidates plan to implement it after the election. Supervisor Ralph Buona, Vice Chair of the Board, was recently asked “what was the most important function the Board serves”. He answered with no hesitation, “It’s not schools, it’s not roads. Without question, it’s land planning. It’s the single biggest thing we do for our residents. It touches everything.”

Supervisor Buona has it exactly right, and the foundation of that land planning is Loudoun’s Comprehensive Plan. It’s the blueprint for our community for the next 20 years. What do we want our County to be? Do we want it to be a sprawling suburb of dense housing developments from east to west, filled with data centers and strip malls? Or, do we want it to be a dynamic, energetic and balanced County with the eastern suburban features that bring diversity and services for residents and a western rural area with a slower paced lifestyle that fosters open spaces, agriculture, tourism and a green economy for all residents and visitors to enjoy. The choice is clear and this plan will be the foundation of the vision.

The central elements to keeping western Loudoun rural will be in the fate of the Transition Policy Area (TPA). The TPA is the battle line, the north/south area in the center of the County that is the buffer zone between east and west (see map attached – TPA outlined in red). During the public input period for the Comp Plan 18 months ago, 80% of the 13,000 respondents stated they wanted NO additional growth in the TPA – a clear message was sent.

Unfortunately, the Loudoun County Planning Commission’s working drafts and fiscal impact studies for the new Comp Plan do not seem to reflect that vision. While we do not yet know what the Planning Commission will recommend in its final submission to the Board of Supervisors, it is clear from their statements and drafts so far that a majority wish to see greater suburban sprawl heading west and a dense suburbanization of the TPA.

Here are some examples which cause enormous concern: From the recently released Fiscal Impact Report of the Planning Commission’s draft, the plan calls for an increase in the number of houses in the TPA of 200%, from 10,000 homes now authorized to nearly 30,000. It also proposes that over 10 million square feet of commercial space and data centers be placed in the TPA to pay for the roads and schools for the 20,000 additional homes. To give a comparison on how big 10 million square feet is, it is like building 3 Pentagons in the thin TPA. The further unhindered growth in the suburban area and the TPA would require the County to build a minimum of 15 new schools – with land costs alone for these schools of nearly \$300 million dollars. This push towards density by the Commission is underscored by the fact that recently two members of the Planning Commission stated to me that

they had wanted to see the TPA dissolved completely, and simply to have been absorbed by the eastern Suburban Policy Area, transforming it from its current state of sparse development to dense housing and commercial such as in Ashburn or Chantilly.

What can be done? The answer is simple – we all need to speak out and engage: often and loudly!! This process is a public one. And, with the forthcoming election, there is the opportunity to let all elected officials know, myself included, how you feel about the plan at each step of the process and that all of us will be held accountable for what the Board adopts. There will be several opportunities for you to engage directly with the Board after they receive the Planning Commission’s draft plan. There will be Public Comment Sessions on April 24<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> – Go to the County’s website and sign up to speak, get your friends and neighbors involved. You can email the Planning Commission now, as well as the Board, with your concerns (emails below). Lastly, and most importantly, engage not only with the Board but with all of the candidates running for the Board to tell them of your concerns and that it will be a strong factor in your voting. Do this until election day. This is not a partisan politics issue – it’s a quality of life and values issue for the future of the special place that Loudoun is to all of us and what we want it to be for future generations.

To email the full Board: [bos@loudoun.gov](mailto:bos@loudoun.gov)

To email the Planning Commission: [loudounpc@loudoun.gov](mailto:loudounpc@loudoun.gov)

To Sign Up to speak to the Board: <https://www.loudoun.gov/4853/About-Board-of-Supervisors-Meetings>

TischlerBise Report Mentioned above:

<https://lfportal.loudoun.gov/LFPortalinternet/0/edoc/317217/Loudoun20204020Comprehensive20Plan20PCWS2002-07-19.pdf>

