

**CAMPAIGN FOR LOUDOUN'S FUTURE
PRIORITIZING PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITY LIST
FOR
COUNTYWIDE TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

The Campaign for Loudoun's Future is a network of residents, neighborhood and community groups, and non-profits from around Loudoun County committed to protecting Loudoun's Future. Our coalition represents a broad set of interests from commuters to cyclists and environmentalists to small business owners. Recognizing the importance of transportation planning, we analyzed the draft Countywide Transportation Plan (CTP) to provide Loudoun's decision makers with feedback as requested during the public outreach process.

We thank the Planning Commission for its hard work and dedication to drafting the CTP. We recognize notable improvements regarding complete streets and bike and pedestrian mobility in particular. Nevertheless, the CTP still proposes an extensive and costly set of projects for which federal, state and local resources will be very limited. Since these projects will compete with the needs of existing residents, we recommend setting priorities for more efficient allocation of scarce resources to provide benefits to County residents, sooner rather than later.

We urge Loudoun's decision makers to adopt the following two basic principles and use them to establish a priority ranking of the many projects in this plan:

1) Enhance, Protect and Serve Loudoun's Existing Communities

The County's first responsibility is to meet the needs and desires of existing citizens while protecting the character and quality of life of our existing communities. Highest priority should be given to those projects that address needs in our existing communities and are designed to preserve and protect the resources and aspects of existing communities most valued by residents. Appropriately-sized local roads, traffic-calming measures, increased local interconnections, enhanced east-west corridors and alternative transportation options, safety improvements and educational outreach should have highest priority. Lower or no priority should be given to projects designed to meet other needs; for example, those that induce traffic and encourage future or speculative development. New north-south highways and new roadways in the Transition zone would fuel new development at a scale and in locations beyond that contemplated in the Comprehensive Plan. In addition, some grade-separated interchanges are costly and speculative additions to the plan that do not solve today's problems and will actually encourage unwanted development through their presence in the plan.

2) Retrofit Existing Infrastructure and Use Resources Creatively and Efficiently

Given the current economic conditions, budget shortfall, and very limited long-term federal funding, the funds we do have must be spent wisely and on projects that benefit the greatest number of Loudoun residents. Newer and more creative solutions to transportation concerns can provide overall efficient use of resources and give more bang for the buck. Examples of this approach include:

- Completing parallel west/east collector roads and local road interconnections to solve congestion problems.
- Ensure that new road links through neighborhoods are designed as complete streets, safe for all users and accessible by pedestrians, young, old and disabled and cyclists.
- Retrofitting parallel collector roads to make them safer (maximum of 4 lanes total), neighborhood- and pedestrian-friendly and include bicycle lanes.
- Making at-grade crossings safer and friendlier to pedestrians and cyclists.
- Incentivizing the broad variety of commuter and transit options included in the plan plus others such as bus/transit lanes, HOV lanes, and improved express bus service on major corridors.

With this approach, more residents will get near-term solutions to their daily transportation problems instead of waiting years or even decades for costly new infrastructure to be completed.

The following is a representative sample of priority projects which fit the two principles we recommend, though by no means is it an exhaustive list. We encourage you to consider these priority projects as a useful guide for developing a final and approved priorities list to meet Loudoun's complex and challenging transportation needs.

Completion and interconnection of existing roads

- Complete parallel roads to limited-access east/west highways, but keep widths to a maximum of 4 lanes in the Suburban Area and two lanes in the Transition Area with reduced lane widths and narrower medians to reduce disruption to neighborhoods and include on-road bike lanes. Tall Cedars Parkway is a case-in-point.
- Improve vehicular access to Claude Moore Park from residential areas to the east with a more accessible, and enhanced entrance at the intersection of Juniper Avenue and integrate bicycle and pedestrian access.
- Extend Croson Lane to Belmont Ridge Road.
- Expand Route 606 around Dulles Airport to improve east-west inter-county linkage.
- Complete Waxpool Road and Ashburn Village Parkway intersection.

Traffic safety and congestion reduction

- Provide signage at the top of the mountain on eastbound Route 7 for Bluemont, to direct truck traffic to Clayton Hall Road vs. Snickersville Turnpike.
- Synchronize signals on major roadways.
- Reduce design speeds on parallel and arterial roads to 35 mph (many can currently be driven at 55 mph or more), using narrower lane widths, bike lanes, well-marked pedestrian crossings, etc.

Traffic calming and alternative modes on existing roads

- Incorporate the 3rd roundabout circle at Route 600 (Lenah) onto the CTP to clarify that from Route 600 westward it is more rural and traffic calming, not a place to speed.
- Lower the speed limit on Snickersville Turnpike to 25 mph.
- Complete Algonkian Parkway improvements for safety, congestion and lighting utilizing VDOT study and citizen input to meet needs most successfully and in the least costly way.
- Calm traffic on Tall Cedars Parkway and improve bike and pedestrian access along roadway to keep roadway in harmony with the community.
- Calm traffic through all Loudoun villages with notable needs in Lincoln and Bluemont.

Public transit

- Provide more frequent bus service, additional bus stops, and expanded routes.
- Develop a connected grid-system of bus routes and circulator systems.
- Provide evening west bound flyer bus to identified stop(s) for morning cyclists who need evening transport.
- Create an education and marketing program to encourage bus ridership.
- Explore the possibility of providing bus circulator service from one of the towns to rural events on weekends to lessen traffic on rural roads.
- Identify and construct Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) stations.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Improvements

- Design streets to be "complete streets" that are safe for all users including pedestrians, bicyclists, the disabled, the young and seniors.
- Provide Route 7 crosswalk improvements & access linking shopping with adjacent residential neighborhoods. Critical crossing are at Lakeland Drive, Sterling Boulevard, Campus Drive, Potomac View Road, and Countryside Boulevard. Signal adjustment, signage & striping, etc are low-cost solutions for the near-term.
- Prioritize safety improvements in existing communities identified by the public.
- Ensure that planned facilities align with VDOT standards.
- Complete shared-use trail from W&OD Trail in Purcellville to Round Hill.
- Develop shared-use trail along Business Route 7 from Hamilton to Harmony Intermediate School

- Work with towns to increase trail connectivity between town and county trail networks for commuting purposes.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure Improvements

- Inventory and assess identified priority roadways and linkages and map existing facilities to target bicycle and pedestrian improvements in eastern Loudoun County. Involve the community in this project to quickly provide tangible results with usable information.
- Increase connections to W&OD Trail from adjacent and intersecting roadways, communities & developments particularly in Eastern Loudoun.
- Establish a Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements Coordinator to help manage limited resources effectively.
- Create a Countywide Loudoun Bike/Ped Advisory Committee comprised of citizens and staff.
- Provide adequate parking at park and ride lots and lots for W&OD commuting.
- Create a supportive culture through educational programs, public service announcements, signage and ensure that information is designed to also reach non-English speaking residents.

Planning Projects

- Invest in Safe Routes to School Initiative. Initiate a joint effort with Loudoun County Public Schools, VDOT, appropriate County agencies, and community volunteers to establish one or two School Walk Zone Pilot Projects in the Potomac and Sterling Communities that incorporate safety education with phased physical improvements with a ½ to 2 mile walk zone.
- Work with the community to create a Sterling Blvd Corridor Plan that balances the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, and automobiles and improves the aesthetics of the corridor. Create a “main street” boulevard for Sterling Park, unique from any other major roadway in the county, to provide a strong sense of place.
- Facilitate a comprehensive, sustainable land use strategy for the Route 28 corridor to maximize the economic benefit to the region and eastern Loudoun County.
- Develop a Route 7 Corridor Plan to include gateway design elements, safety and aesthetics, multi-modal transportation, and which facilitates a sustainable land use strategy with revitalization strategies for the eastern portion. Focus on improving safety at Route 7 at Potomac View Road and Sterling Boulevard/Cardinal Glen Circle which were identified as two of the County’s “10 most dangerous intersections in 2007” by the Sheriff’s office.
- Update the Loudoun County Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility Master Plan.

According to our prioritizing principles, projects primarily aimed at serving future development or which are likely to encourage undesired future development should be removed from the plan. This includes:

- Outer Beltway north-south corridors including both east and west alternatives of the Tri-County Parkway, Northstar Boulevard and Loudoun County Parkway.
- Lenah Loop Road
- West Spine Road/Gum Spring Road Extension

Costly and speculative grade separated crossings should also be removed.

- Route 50 grade-separated interchanges are only likely to happen in the foreseeable future with proffers tied to new development which will contribute additional traffic on the roads and not improve life for existing residents.