

# Loudoun County Chamber of Commerce

## INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

The Chamber cannot fail to note that the Commonwealth has fallen from its perch as one of the nation's top-ranked business locations in recent years due in large part to inadequate infrastructure. The importance of good infrastructure to attracting and retaining business can hardly be overstated and the Chamber calls on our elected representatives to recognize this problem as a general matter. While most of our specific policies have a focus on Loudoun itself, we call on our representatives in Richmond to recognize the importance of world-class infrastructure to the growth of our state's economy as a whole.

The Loudoun County Chamber supports managed, thoughtful growth in the County. This includes support for well-planned commercial growth and development that will bring additional resources to the County to help address the infrastructure challenges we face. The Chamber supports use of public-private partnerships and other creative initiatives that will increase the availability of resources to invest in critical infrastructure – including schools, transportation, technology, parks and recreational facilities, water and public safety – to meet the needs of today's Loudoun County businesses and residents. The Chamber also supports an open dialogue and improved coordination between the business community, County government and Loudoun's towns and communities on development and infrastructure issues.

### **Transportation:**

The Chamber continues to support sustainable, long-term regional and statewide transportation funding. To ensure new and existing transportation revenues are well invested, the Chamber supports performance-based evaluation and prioritization of projects in the statewide transportation plan focused on existing and new corridors of statewide and regional significance. The plan should include a short list of strategic priorities deemed most essential to the Commonwealth's long-term prosperity, safety, security and quality of life.

At the local/regional level, the Chamber supports construction of a comprehensive regional transportation grid. The Chamber urges the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (the Authority) to be regional in its approach above all else, and to establish regional priorities based upon its adopted performance-based criteria with greater emphasis on congestion relief. The Chamber further urges the Authority to leverage and invest local, regional and state revenues in regional solutions that move the most people in the most cost-effective manner. The Chamber supports use of debt financing at the

state, regional and local levels, accompanied by a dedicated revenue source for debt service, as an important tool to invest in transportation infrastructure. The Chamber also supports continued reforms within the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), use of public-private partnerships, and other innovative financing options.

The Chamber strongly supports the most efficient use of current transportation dollars with greater emphasis on congestion reduction and economic development. The Chamber opposes using revenue from the Transportation Trust Fund for non-transportation purposes. The Chamber also endorses requiring the Highway Maintenance and Operating Fund to be self-sustaining and supports efforts to prohibit transfer of construction funds from the Transportation Trust Fund to make up for maintenance funding deficiencies. The Chamber supports continued future use of some General Fund money for transportation purposes, given the tremendous transportation needs that still face the Commonwealth and the fact that transportation funding is a core government service that is the state's responsibility to fund primarily.

The Chamber supports VDOT certification of Loudoun County officials to perform the duties necessary to proceed with design and construction of transportation projects, OR allocation of new state funding to provide additional staffing for VDOT personnel, preferably located in Loudoun County, to allow for greater efficiency and expediency in getting the much-needed infrastructure projects completed.

The Chamber supports local transit to serve the major businesses and job centers in the County and the use of advanced technology and integrated communications to improve transit accessibility and help alleviate traffic congestion.

Given the decision by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration to reclassify the Leesburg area from "small rural" to "urban cluster," the Chamber supports state funding through the Department of Rail and Public Transportation to offset the resulting loss in transit revenue. The Chamber recognizes that drivers benefit when people are given other options to travel that take them off congested roads but believes that the majority of transit operations should be supported by those who most benefit directly from the service.

***Specific Transportation Projects and Entities:***

- **The Bi-County Parkway:** The Chamber believes that construction of the Bi-County Parkway has been delayed too long. The Chamber supports final design and construction of this project in a manner that mitigates impacts and further, the Chamber supports protection of right-of-way which will extend the Route 234 Bypass (the Prince William County Parkway) from the I-66 corridor to Route 50 and Northstar Boulevard and the Chamber also supports protection of a right-of-way to connect Northstar Boulevard to Route 606. Further, the Chamber supports a process that properly evaluates and compensates property owners around any eminent domain uses connected with the Bi-County Parkway.
- **Western Dulles Airport Access Road:** The Chamber acknowledges the findings of the Western Dulles Access Study conducted by the County in 2015 and encourages the County to prioritize the roadway links that provide the greatest benefit. The Loudoun Chamber strongly urges county and state officials to come to an agreement on these priorities based on the long-term economic development needs of Loudoun businesses, including Washington-Dulles International Airport, as well as the economic and quality of life impacts on surrounding communities and all of Loudoun County. This continues to be critical for economic development, as well as to enable preservation of any necessary right of way.
- **The Metrorail System:** The Chamber acknowledges that the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Metro system is a key part of the future economic growth and success of Loudoun County, if managed properly. The Chamber strongly endorses findings that thorough and significant reform is necessary for Metro in three areas – governance, funding, and operations. Provided that the other necessary aspects of reform will have been accomplished, the Chamber supports funding for Metro that is significant, sustainable, and commensurate with the need to improve and maintain the system at the highest state of good repair and function.
- **Transit:** The Chamber calls on the Virginia General Assembly and Governor to keep transit funding at least at the current level, and address the upcoming drop-off in funding expected by 2019. Public transit is an important option in urban areas of Virginia such as Hampton Roads, Virginia Beach, Richmond, and of course Northern Virginia. This includes Metro, as well as VRE and local jurisdictional bus services.
- **Greenway:** The Chamber continues to support graduated tolling and other tolling options along the Dulles Greenway in order to increase utilization of that existing transportation corridor and reduce use of alternative, congested routes.

- **Potomac River Crossing:** The Chamber supports proper funding for repairs and improvements to the American Legion Bridge. In addition, the Chamber supports the identification of right-of-way for and construction of an additional Potomac River crossing in Loudoun County.

The Chamber also supports:

- Completion of the conversion of Route 28 into an eight-lane limited access freeway between I-66 and Route 7;
- Restoration of the Western Transportation Corridor to the County's Comprehensive Plan and completion of the Draft Environmental Impact Study;
- Completion of upgrades to the Route 606 and Route 50 corridors around Dulles Airport, creating a high capacity "Dulles Loop;"
- Expansion of Route 50, and improvements to the collector road network and interchanges in the Dulles South area;
- Improving the road network around the Town of Leesburg, including completion of the Battlefield Parkway;
- Improving and re-locating portions of U.S. Route 15 between Leesburg and Point of Rocks, and establishing a new location for the future replacement of the Point of Rocks Bridge;
- Improving and re-locating portions of Route 9 to enhance connectivity with Route 7 and divert interstate traffic from the Town of Hillsboro;
- Upgrading Route 7 to a limited access roadway between Leesburg and Tysons Corner;
- Widening of I-66 between the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge and U.S. 15 to include dedicated lanes for tolling, HOV3 and express bus use, and preservation of right-of-way for a future transit extension. The Chamber supports the approved plan of improvements on I-66 within the Capital Beltway.

#### **Loudoun's Airports:**

The Chamber recognizes the positive economic impact that both Washington-Dulles International Airport and Leesburg Executive Airport have on Loudoun County, and in that light, the Chamber fully supports continued infrastructure investment at both airports.

The Chamber supports development of new passenger and cargo services at Washington-Dulles International Airport, including expansion of facilities to provide for further growth. The Chamber supports the Airport's efforts to remain cost competitive, both regionally and nationally. In addition, the Chamber strongly supports maintaining and further developing airport-compatible land uses in the areas surrounding the airport to facilitate aviation development into the future, and access to Washington-Dulles International Airport.

The Chamber also supports continued efforts by the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA) and others to ensure the Authority's transparency and accountability to the citizens of the Commonwealth and the jurisdictions in northern Virginia.

Further, the Chamber supports maintenance of a fully competitive air transportation market place, as well as Federal Air Traffic Control and aviation policy initiatives (including "NextGen" and "Open Skies" bilateral agreements) that enhance the airline and general aviation services available to our region.

The Chamber supports the Town of Leesburg's efforts to support and grow Leesburg Executive Airport by maintaining compatible land uses within the Airport's Area of Influence, in order to protect previous taxpayer investments and maximize the airport's value as an economic development asset. The Chamber also encourages the Town of Leesburg to expand aircraft basing capacity at Leesburg Executive Airport to support economic development activities and support new business arrivals in the Town and the County.

The Chamber fully supports the Town of Leesburg's efforts to implement Customs service at the Airport to support international business operations, as well as their work in support of the Virginia Department of Aviation's Remote Air Traffic Control Towers (rTower) initiative, which will enhance the Airport's attractiveness to business users. The Chamber also supports efforts by the Town to work cooperatively with Loudoun County on taxation and other issues that impact use of Leesburg Executive Airport.

**Technology:**

The Loudoun County Chamber recognizes the ever-expanding role of technology as a critical enabler for economic development throughout northern Virginia. Loudoun County is home to unique resources that distinguish this area from other locations in a variety of technology fields, including biomedical research, satellite, information technology, broadband, data center operations, and cloud computing and others. Therefore, the Chamber supports public policy initiatives that attract and sustain businesses

in these and related industries to fully leverage the opportunities that come with these unique resources.

In recognition of the importance of universal availability of broadband for creating jobs, growing our economy, attracting investment, facilitating telework opportunities, establishing communications infrastructure for public safety, and providing access to educational and training resources, the Chamber supports policies that encourage continued growth of Loudoun's broadband infrastructure. The Chamber encourages investment in the necessary infrastructure to enable cutting-edge wireless and other Internet infrastructure in Loudoun, and supports cooperation between government and commercial interests to maximize deployment of private sector broadband services throughout the County to provide access to all of Loudoun's businesses and citizens.

To encourage an open, vibrant information technology industry and the use of technology in all businesses in Loudoun, the Chamber supports the following specific public policy initiatives:

- Adoption of public policies that encourage continued expansion of private sector broadband services throughout the County, including strategic location of towers to support wireless access (broadband and voice) in the western part of the County;
- State initiatives to develop strategies to enable deployment of broadband in underserved areas of the County;
- Policies that encourage and sustain development and deployment of very high speed connectivity between business parks and Loudoun's core data centers as a strategy for future growth;
- Appropriate consideration of broadband deployment, in terms of infrastructure improvements and broadband's role in encouraging and enabling telework and distance learning opportunities, as an integral part of the County's transportation strategy;
- Creation of measures to enhance capital formation and investment opportunities in Loudoun County;
- Adoption of state legislation to provide adequate deterrents and commensurate punishment for computer and Internet-related crimes in recognition of their detrimental impact on the use of technology in business;

- Development of technology programs and research activities at our colleges and universities to support our region as a global technology center and develop the talent pool necessary to sustain this vital economic engine in Loudoun; and
- Full integration of technology in our community, including increased technology in the schools, and broader use of technology and data analytics to increase efficiencies and lower costs for services.

**Energy:**

Loudoun County has established itself as a global leader for cyberspace and has an economic engine built around communications firms and large-scale data centers, all intensive energy consumers. The County's economic wellbeing is intrinsically tied to affordable and abundant energy, particularly electricity. In addition to insisting upon compliance with all applicable environmental laws and regulations, the Chamber supports maintaining open channels of communication with government agencies, public officials, the media and the public to meet their needs with regard to energy and environmental issues. In addition, the Chamber supports participation with government agencies and others in framing responsible laws, regulations and standards affecting the community, the workplace and the environment in order to continually improve energy diversity, conservation and environmental programs.

Reliable, affordable energy is required to support the needs of business and to sustain the community's high quality of life. The Chamber recognizes that, as the County grows, its energy requirements will increase as well. These additional needs cannot be met by the current sources of energy. The Chamber acknowledges the solution must include a diverse mix of options, including increased conservation and energy efficiency, new sources of conventional and renewable energy, and new transmission and distribution infrastructure. Electricity load growth, particularly for large commercial loads such as data centers, frequently requires rapid infrastructure expansion to meet the energy requirements of these businesses. The Chamber supports a reasonable and timely approval process for such projects.

The Chamber supports the development of statewide goals for energy conservation and renewable energy sources, consistent with the goals outlined in the 2014 Virginia Energy Plan. However, a responsible energy plan for the Commonwealth should emphasize the importance of a reliable energy supply to support the continued development of technology and information-based commerce in Loudoun County, which are so important to our state's economy and future economic growth.

At the local level, the Chamber encourages the implementation of the long-term, County-wide energy plan to include an emphasis on energy generation, transmission and conservation.

While the Chamber supports increased use of economically viable energy efficiency and conservation, it also believes every effort should be made to minimize any additional financial burden that these approaches may impose on both businesses and consumers. The Chamber also believes that every effort should be made to minimize additional financial burdens imposed on businesses and consumers by climate change regulation or legislation. Improperly crafted climate change regulation could have a significant detrimental impact on businesses and consumers alike. The Chamber supports a holistic approach to energy policy, including incentives and proven market-based methodologies, to accomplish the identified goals whenever possible.

The Chamber also supports implementation of the PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) program, which is a bipartisan, voluntary local government initiative that allows property owners to finance energy efficiency and renewable energy projects for their commercial, industrial, and multi-family buildings, simply and with no government subsidies.

**Public Water and Sewer:**

The Chamber believes that access to an affordable water and sanitary systems is important to the recruitment, retention and success of businesses in Loudoun County. Unnecessary extra costs for water and sanitation add to the cost of businesses. To that end, the Chamber supports the following:

- Master planning to help build and maintain water and wastewater infrastructure that is compatible with planned growth and land use policies, including regular evaluation of demographics, land use activities and water system characteristics, such as flows, pressures and demand;
- Sustainably managing water resources in advocacy of health, environment and quality of life;
- Competitive user and availability charges for water and sewer infrastructure to support economic development and the region's ability to attract and retain businesses;
- Policies and outreach programs that promote water efficiency/demand management as crucial to the long-term viability of water assets, helping business and residents realize the value of water while saving money and protecting the resource;



- Innovative, dependable and cost-effective technologies and partnerships for reclaimed water, as well as public-private partnerships, to assist in economic development efforts and support the national reputation of Loudoun County as the heart of data center activity; and
- State incentive funds that recognize water and sewer as a core infrastructure thus qualifying for funds and that recognize reclaimed water as recycling.