

THE JOURNEY THROUGH HALLOWED GROUND

May 27, 2021

Dear Chairwoman Randall,

We are writing to ask urgently for a brief virtual meeting on Friday, May 28 or Tuesday, June 1. Specifically, we **respectfully request that the Route 15 North Phase 2 CPAM be removed from the list of top priorities for County staff's work plan.** We just learned that the Planning and Zoning Director is scheduled to present the draft plan to you on June 1.

We recommend removal of the project from the county priorities for the following reasons:

1. The Route 15 four-laning projects will cost nearly a half-billion dollars of taxpayer money that is needed for critical infrastructure projects needed to ensure the success of Loudoun's Metro stations and other Eastern Loudoun transportation needs. Phase 1 (to Montresor) costs now are upwards of \$110 million; Phase 2 (four-laning to Lucketts and restricted access further north) will cost Loudoun taxpayers (according to VDOT) at least \$300 million more—with little tangible gain.
2. As currently designed, this will be a faster and less safe road. County staff have rejected all modifications common to scenic byways that we have suggested.
3. Federal and state authorities have rejected funding for Phase 2, and the county [removed federal funding](#) for Phase 1. This has placed a substantial burden on Loudoun taxpayers, and the allocation of substantial local funding to this multiphase project is coming at the cost of critical infrastructure needs in eastern Loudoun including much-needed investments in better multimodal access to Loudoun's Metro Stations, which are key to economic development in the county.
4. With the help of consulting transportation experts we have been able to demonstrate significant shortcomings with the project, and offered cost saving alternatives which would improve safety and performance of Route 15 at much lower cost. They have not been acknowledged or incorporated.
5. The Route 15 widening will create new problems and demand even greater expenditures. For example, it simply moves the bottleneck to a new location, which will prompt the county staff to seek funding for further widening up to the river. (Maryland has told Loudoun staff it has no plans to widen the Potomac River Bridge or build a new one.) The karst terrain and unstable mountainside close to the river will add to the risk and costs. Second, we believe that an impetus for the project is to open up more land in rural Loudoun to increased development (expressed in one county funding application), which will mean more demands for public infrastructure, and more traffic flowing into eastern Loudoun.

We hope that we can meet with you briefly to share additional background and answer your questions. We cannot take up your valuable time to delve deeply into problems with the Route 15 North project's structure, outreach, its foreordained conclusion and advancement of development industry goals long desired for the corridor, but a case study is [available](#)).

Thank you,



William Sellers
President and CEO

Cc: Stewart Schwartz, Executive Director, Coalition for Smarter Growth
Al Van Huyck, Chair, Loudoun County Preservation and Conservation Coalition
Gem Bingol, Land Use Officer, Loudoun County, Piedmont Environmental Council
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