

LORTON VISIONING TASK FORCE COMMUNITY VISION STATEMENT MAY 8, 2023

As members of the Lorton Visioning Task Force, we hereby set forth a vision for updating the Comprehensive Plan with amended text that will establish a context for inspiring innovative approaches to the future of planning for the L2 Lorton-South Route 1 Suburban Center.

Community Vision and Planning Principles

The community vision serves as a foundation for areawide and land unit Comprehensive Plan policies that will celebrate Lorton’s diverse population, distinct neighborhoods, and public places by defining and enhancing a unique sense of place and identity. The community’s vision reimagines the Suburban Center as a vibrant mixed-use community, with the central core of activity defined by livable, enjoyable, and pedestrian-friendly development that will also be sustainable for future generations.

As Lorton continues to grow, the Suburban Center is envisioned as a destination that can offer a range of activities, as well as opportunities for a more diverse housing stock, employment opportunities, and services that provide for and enhance the health, well-being, and quality of life for community members of all ages, ethnic and racial backgrounds, genders, abilities, and income levels. To achieve the community’s vision for Lorton, opportunities for inclusive community engagement must be applied in the processes for policy formation and development review to ensure that the breadth of interests, ideas, and values representative of all members of the community can be heard and considered.

- Create a mixed-use, town center “Core” of the Suburban Center east of Silverbrook Road along Lorton Road, Lorton Station Boulevard, and Richmond Highway, with a secondary core of activity in the area along Richmond Highway at the southern gateway into the County near the Occoquan River, realizing long-standing planning objectives for the Lower Potomac Planning District.
- Designate the Lorton Community Center and Library, Lorton Station Town Center, Gunston Plaza, and Lorton Marketplace as local nodes of activity within the town center core.
- Establish Lorton Road as a local-serving boulevard through streetscape and urban design elements to improve pedestrian comfort and safety that include wider walkways and landscaped medians, improved wayfinding signage and lighting, public art, and street trees that encourages the development of the core as a well-connected destination, rather than a pass-through.
- Ensure the land use pattern is supported by a balanced network of well-maintained roads, pedestrian and biking facilities, and transit systems designed to accommodate safe and convenient access within Lorton.

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- Emphasize placemaking and experiential elements with new development that can provide community gathering spaces and attractions.
- Note that greater development intensities and a more urban form and character are critical to achieving the Core Area activity nodes, which will be established through an appropriate mix of uses, context-sensitive building heights, setbacks, building bulk, and site design, and supporting multimodal transportation infrastructure.
- When considering opportunities for neighborhood consolidation for future changes in land use and density in proximity to the core area, identify transitional areas where development intensities and building heights should be progressively scaled down to minimize encroachment into residential neighborhoods outside of the town center core.
- Minimize chances for displacement by encouraging the preservation of housing affordability and development of additional housing options, including affordable and workforce dwelling units.
- Enhance and develop key gateway locations into Lorton, including the Virginia Railway Express commuter rail and Amtrak Auto Rail stations, Lorton Road, and Richmond Highway south at the Occoquan River and north at Pohick. Recognize the rail stations as key tourist entryways that present unique challenges to public facilities and opportunities for local businesses.
- Identify areas where future growth can be guided at sufficient development levels to support the siting of Lorton's future Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) stations.
- Foster a community-focused climate of investment and economic development that provides the opportunity for all residents and neighborhoods to participate in and to benefit from future growth, development, and improved access to a diverse range of services and resources in the Suburban Center.
- Leverage development that creates opportunities for access to training and apprenticeship programs for the Lorton community so a well-trained and competitive workforce is prepared to support existing businesses and future growth.
- Strengthen the local employment base by exploring opportunities to incentivize redevelopment and repurposing of underutilized industrial sites into innovative technology centers and/or mixed-use sites as appropriate.

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- Prioritize the deployment of modernized, attractive infrastructure that can help build a sense of identity for the Lorton community, green building techniques, and other critical improvements to public utilities and facilities that can attract a diversified pool of employers to remain or establish operations in the Lorton community.
- Promote strategies providing locally grown businesses with opportunities to startup and experience sustained growth and longevity as integral parts of the community fabric in Lorton.
- Identify improvements that can promote linkages between Lorton’s gateways along primary roads and transportation facilities serving commuters, tourists, and other visitors in the Lorton community with local options for retail uses, restaurants, lodging, and similar consumer services.
- Utilize existing undeveloped and open space areas to create pedestrian and bicycle connections within the greater Lorton community. Low impact techniques for trail development should be utilized in environmentally sensitive areas.
- Emphasize the preservation of heritage resources throughout the Lorton community through the adaptive reuse of historical structures, incorporation of public art, or similar initiatives that celebrate the area’s history in placemaking, streetscape, site design and similar elements.
- Celebrate the broader Lorton area’s natural and cultural resources by emphasizing gateways to significant public parks and open spaces on Mason Neck.
- Promote opportunities for learning about and participation in the stewardship of significant environmental assets in the Lorton community.