

Transition Policy Area

Vision

The Transition Policy Area (TPA) is visually distinct from adjoining policy areas, providing expansive open space with publicly accessible recreational opportunities while accommodating a residential development pattern, consistent with the appropriate place types, that promotes environmental protection, housing diversity, quality design, economic growth, and protection of natural, environmental, and heritage resources.

Introduction

The TPA provides a distinct development pattern focused on retaining substantial open space to frame a unique built environment accommodating a variety of communities. The open spaces serve as dominant landscape, providing significant opportunities for public recreation and facilities within the context of an assortment of community designs. TPA communities range from rural estate developments to compact residential neighborhoods that can provide a variety of housing options and protect natural, environmental, and heritage resources.

The *Loudoun County 2019 Comprehensive Plan* proposes that, in order to sustain a healthy economy and to provide greater opportunities for attainable housing, the County seek to accommodate a share of the anticipated regional housing demand. Anticipated high density development in the Urban Policy Area (UPA) will help meet the important multifamily component of the housing demand. The *Loudoun County 2019 Comprehensive Plan* also proposes increased density in areas of the Suburban Policy Area (SPA) and the integration of new residential uses into areas previously planned for commercial or employment uses. These approaches notwithstanding, there is not adequate capacity in these areas to address the County's housing demands. The Towns and Rural Policy Area (RPA) are not anticipated to absorb a significant portion of future housing demand. Infrastructure limits and community desires to maintain small-town community character are the primary constraints in the Towns. The RPA has land, but the limitations of onsite wells and septic systems, country roads, distance to services, and a strong community desire to preserve the rural character of western Loudoun all serve to limit growth capacity.

In light of these constraints, the *Loudoun County 2019 Comprehensive Plan* acknowledges the key benefits of accommodating additional housing in the TPA, including access to central utilities, an improving transportation network, proximity to the services and amenities of the SPA, and large, undeveloped tracts of land that will allow for inclusive community designs. The fundamental goal of this new development pattern will be to accommodate residential products and neighborhoods that will help meet the needs and desires of the County's growing and diversifying populace. Evaluation of new development proposals will focus on design concepts that conserve and incorporate environmental and heritage resources, offer housing that is affordable to a range of incomes, retain significant open space to protect resources, provide space for public and civic facilities and parks, and conceal the intensity of new development within a landscape of forests, hedgerows, and tree stands. Residential developments will be expected to support a continuum of

housing options and prices. Three commercial centers will offer local services and amenities so that the TPA will become a more self-sustaining community. Natural open spaces will continue to be the predominant visual element and create a contiguous network of green spaces.

The *Loudoun County 2019 Comprehensive Plan* reaffirms a growth boundary (GB) beyond which central water and wastewater systems are not allowed. Beginning in the north, the GB follows the SPA boundary to the point where it meets the TPA. The GB then follows the western edge of the TPA to meet the Prince William County boundary line in the south.

Background

Between 1991 and 2001, the Board of Supervisors changed the policy direction for the TPA four times. Until 2001, the area was planned as part of the SPA or a phased expansion of the SPA. In 2001, the Board established the TPA as a separate policy area along with the Suburban, Rural and Joint Land Management Area (JLMA) policy areas:

- In 1991, the area was planned for suburban development that was to be phased with ultimate development expected to occur by 1995.
- In 1993, the Dulles South Area Management Plan added Upper Broad Run to the Dulles South suburban area at densities between 3 and 6 units per acre and added the Upper and Lower Foley and Lower Bull Run areas at densities between 1 and 3 units per acre.
- In 1997, the Dulles South Plan reestablished a suburban development phasing boundary west of Northstar Boulevard. The phasing area was then subject to the policies of the RPA until the County chose to expand the SPA.
- In 2001, the TPA became a distinct policy area in the *Revised General Plan* between the SPA and RPA. Six subareas of the TPA were established, each with density and open space requirements.
- In 2004, the Board of Supervisors amended the *Revised General Plan* and extended central water and wastewater systems throughout the TPA, establishing the western edge of the TPA as the County's Urban Growth Boundary¹.

Although the TPA is predominantly residential, the *Loudoun County 2019 Comprehensive Plan* designates limited areas for industrial development in the northern portion of the TPA in close proximity to planned improvements to Sycolin Road and existing industrial land south of the Leesburg JLMA. Limited retail commercial development can be found along John Mosby Highway (Route 50) and the Board of Supervisors previously approved other retail space along Braddock Road (Route 620).

Important drinking water resources are located within the TPA, and watershed protection extends across significant portions of the Goose Creek and the Beaverdam Reservoir to help protect these resources. Conservation easements, proffered open space, and development setbacks provide a

¹ In the *Revised General Plan*, the Urban Growth Boundary represented the full extent of central sewer and water service except to resolve an existing public health issue. The *Loudoun County 2019 Comprehensive Plan* uses the term "growth boundary" for the same purpose.

300-foot buffer adjoining Goose Creek (see Chapter 3: Natural, Environmental, and Heritage Resources, Action 2.5.A). Loudoun Water owns the land surrounding Beaverdam Reservoir, while the County and NOVA Parks own parkland adjacent to the reservoir.

Development Approach

While continuing to focus growth in the UPAs and SPA, the *Loudoun County 2019 Comprehensive Plan* acknowledges the limited amount of land available for development in the SPA and proposes new approaches in the TPA to accommodate some of the County's needs. These needs include accommodating additional housing to support the County's economic development goals, ensuring high quality community design, preserving open space, and maintaining a quality of life that hinges on a healthy and vibrant natural environment. There are several factors that enable the County to accommodate new growth in the TPA while protecting key environmental resources and protecting the RPA from encroachment of suburban development.

A number of existing neighborhoods along the western side of the TPA and rural villages just west of the TPA have already established a low density development pattern with significant areas of permanently protected open space, which creates a distinct edge to the TPA. Future TPA developments will still be required to preserve large open space areas that are a hallmark of the TPA's character and distinguish it from the SPA, where the Plan does not anticipate as much land dedicated as open space. The open space requirement will also require a more compact development pattern, resulting in smaller single family lots and a combination of detached and attached residential products.

Transportation projects in the eastern TPA, including improvements to Ryan Road (Route 772) and Sycolin Road (Route 625), and the completion of Shreveport Drive (Route 621 relocated) and Creighton Road (Route 774), will provide better connections to the east without necessarily adding to the congestion of Route 50. The *Loudoun County 2019 Comprehensive Plan* proposes to concentrate future development proximate to existing and planned transportation improvements where capacity exists. Large tracts of undeveloped and underdeveloped land south of Braddock Road and east of Northstar Boulevard are in close proximity to the SPA immediately to the north, yet are separated by several miles from the RPA farther to the west. This southeast portion of the TPA is also adjacent to Prince William County across the Bull Run to the south and Fairfax County to the east. The principal constraining factor in this area is the current lack of traffic capacity on existing roads and, while major roads are planned, new development will need to be timed to occur in conjunction with the availability of additional road capacity.

The 2004 extension of central water and wastewater utilities throughout the TPA enabled more compact development than previously planned, when the TPA was only served by wells and septic systems. Select areas of higher intensity development interspersed among lower density projects and with substantial open spaces that offer screening, separation, and recreation can be compatible with existing development.

The *Loudoun County 2019 Comprehensive Plan* examined specific areas of the TPA that were not already developed or committed to development. The potential for redevelopment was not considered in the development forecasts for the area. Areas subject to environmental constraints,

such as conservation easements, steep slopes and floodplain, were excluded from development potential. Two areas of the RPA were added to the TPA because of the increasingly intense development that is occurring around them.

Policies, Strategies, and Actions

Unless otherwise specified, the following Policies, Strategies, and Actions apply only within the TPA.

TPA Policy I: Ensure that the Transition Policy Area retains the visual character established by extensive natural open space by using compact development concepts with substantial open space requirements, and low profile construction to minimize visual intrusion into the natural environment.

Strategy

- 1.1 Accommodate new more affordable and innovative residential communities in compact development patterns, while preserving open space, natural, environmental, and heritage resources, and other valued features that may exist on site.

Actions

- A . Encourage a variety of housing within individual developments by permitting small and large lot single-family detached, duplex, triplex, quadruplex, accessory dwelling, and other housing unit types to expand housing options and thus affordability opportunities, and support the lifestyle preferences of a diverse community.
- B . Develop zoning regulations and design standards to accommodate Transition Community Centers and Transition Compact Neighborhood Place Types to expand housing diversity and improve commercial viability.
- C . Require new development to connect to Loudoun Water’s central water and wastewater systems and encourage existing development to connect.
- D . Continue to define the TPA by six subareas to implement the Transition Large Lot Residential Neighborhood development pattern as identified on the Transition Policy Area Place Types Map.
- E . Continue to support agriculture-related businesses including equine uses, agritourism, commercial nurseries, and similar uses throughout the TPA.
- F . Continue to define the western edge of the TPA as the full extent of central sewer and water and the western edge of the growth boundary, pursuant to 15.2-2232.
- G . Ensure that open space within developments creates or enhances the following:
 - i. The 300-foot buffer and 200-foot transitional area along the Bull Run in the Upper and Lower Foley and Lower Bull Run subareas,
 - ii. The 300-foot buffer and 1,000-foot voluntary open space area along the Goose Creek, Goose Creek Reservoir, and Beaverdam Reservoir in the Lower Sycolin and Middle Goose subareas,

- iii. A contiguous network of green spaces to supplement the natural and heritage resources connecting communities and natural resource areas, and
 - iv. A public trail and park network to destinations throughout the area.
- H. Continue to perform watershed management plans to determine appropriate water quality and quality controls.
- I. Consider adoption of reservoir protection overlay districts that provide buffering and storm water quality controls.

TPA Policy 2: Offer safe and accessible parks and recreation opportunities that provide diverse activities for all ages, interests, and abilities.

Strategy

- 2.1 Provide a network of protected open space that maintains natural, environmental, and heritage resources and reinforces the TPA's unique character.

Actions

- A. Develop a Master Plan for parks, open space, and trails in the TPA that: 1) builds on and links current planned shared-use trails and park areas, and 2) places greater emphasis on quality, connected, usable, and publicly accessible open space.
- B. Protect the drinking water resources of the Occoquan, Beaverdam, and Goose Creek Reservoirs with natural stream and reservoir buffers, improved stormwater management, and other means.
- C. Retain 50 percent open space throughout the TPA, unless otherwise called for by the applicable place type or in the Lower Bull Run subarea where 70 percent open space is required for residential development to protect drinking water source watersheds, and seek to reserve publicly usable, accessible, and interconnected open space.
- D. Establish programs and regulatory mechanisms to increase publicly accessible open space, consistent with County facilities plans, through easements, land dedications, and purchase.
- E. Require Open Space Plans with individual development applications to illustrate proposed use, public accessibility, resource protection, and connection with other open space.
- F. Take advantage of existing or planned parks, stormwater ponds, and stream valley corridors, particularly the Goose Creek and Bull Run corridors, to create a linear park network linking larger park facilities and destinations.
- G. Pursue connected linear trails, parks and open space accessible to the public when considering development applications.

TPA Policy 3: Target specific areas of the TPA for higher density residential and mixed-use development to create affordable and diverse housing opportunities in compact communities reflective of the historic development pattern of villages and towns in Loudoun.

Strategy

- 3.1 Establish guidelines to accommodate compact communities that provide sustainable and affordable housing.

Actions

- A. Create new Community Plans and other appropriate plans which address the particular needs and guide development within the Transition Policy Area.
- B. Support Transition Compact Neighborhoods in areas specified on the Transition Policy Area Place Types Map provided they comply with the Place Type standards and incorporate the following features:
 - i. A combination of housing types, including detached, duplex, triplex, quadruplex, and/or accessory units.
 - ii. Housing units that are smaller and more affordable and that address the County's unmet needs.
 - iii. Discernible variations in lot shape and building setbacks along residential street frontages, in a manner reflective of traditional villages and towns, to visually differentiate individual residential structures.
 - iv. Design concepts within units and neighborhoods that allow residents at different stages of their lives to remain in the community.
 - v. A walkable community design emanating from one or more community greens with minimal use of cul-de-sac streets and easy access to parks, playgrounds and amenities.
 - vi. Public trails and parks internal to the neighborhood and connecting to adjacent communities and public facilities.
 - vii. Extensive buffers screening the intensity of the development from surrounding roads and communities through the use of dense vegetation, earthen berms, and/or natural topography.

TPA Policy 4: Non-residential uses will include uses that are compatible with resource protection, desired development patterns, and the rural landscape.

Strategy

- 4.1 Provide for development of commercial, employment, and public uses in areas specified on the Transition Policy Area Place Types Map that achieve the desired development patterns and the character of the TPA.

Actions

- A. Require Industrial uses to:
 - i. Be located only in locations consistent with the Place Types Map.

- ii. Be visually concealed from adjacent roads and residential areas by siting buildings and uses to avoid ridgetops and high visibility areas and enclosing buildings and uses within a substantial, undisturbed, vegetated perimeter.
 - iii. Minimize the effects of noise, vibration, and odor.
 - iv. Have access to adequate infrastructure and roads.
 - v. Identify and protect environmental features and to follow, to the extent possible, the natural topography.
 - vi. Enhance water quality protection when near water supply reservoirs and associated streams.
- B. Continue to protect the extractive industry by maintaining a quarry notification overlay zoning district.
 - C. Establish zoning regulations and design standards that ensure new development does not hinder the operation of quarries.
 - D. Support Transition Community Centers in areas specified on the Transition Policy Area Place Types Map provided they are consistent with the Place Type standards and offer the following features:
 - i. Small footprint retail uses and no “big box” commercial retailers with the exception of grocery or drug stores.
 - ii. A compact pedestrian shopping and entertainment environment including active streets featuring relationships between interior and outdoor spaces, outdoor restaurant seating and vendor shopping on the street, complementary ground floor uses (such as retail rather than offices), and a high level of transparency and window space.
 - iii. Convenient and safe pedestrian connections to adjacent neighborhoods and public facilities.
 - iv. Extensive landscaping, particularly at the perimeter, to screen the project intensity from adjacent roads and communities.
 - v. Outdoor activity and community space.

TPA Policy 5: Ensure that adequate infrastructure (e.g., including roads, utilities, and public facilities) and services are available to meet increased demands of new development.

Strategy

- 5.1 Ensure adequate public facilities and services are available as demand is generated by new development.

Actions

- A. Evaluate residential development proposals against the available and forecasted capacity of public schools and other facilities and services through the projected buildout period of the application.
- B. Phase higher density residential development to allow the County to plan for facility and infrastructure needs before the demand occurs, and help direct development to

the areas of the County that offer greater fiscal and economic benefits.

- C. Precede each phase of development with a Comprehensive Plan Amendment or a community planning exercise to determine timing, appropriate land use changes, and/or public facility needs.
- D. Until such time as a subsequent phase is amended by adopting a Comprehensive Plan Amendment or a community planning exercise is completed for areas, as appropriate, all residential areas outside of the Phase 1 area shall be developed under the Transition Large Lot Place Type.
- E. Schedule the phasing in the following sequence unless determined otherwise in a Comprehensive Plan Amendment:
 - i. Phase 1: Lower Sycolin and Middle Goose Creek policy subareas; portions of the Lower Foley policy subarea designated for Transition Compact Neighborhood and Transition Community Center on the Transition Policy Area Place Type Map
 - ii. Phase 2: Upper Broad Run policy subarea
 - iii. Phase 3: Upper Foley and Lower Bull Run policy subareas; remaining portions of the Lower Foley policy subarea

TPA Policy 6: The Board of Supervisors encourages no further expansion of the TPA boundaries beyond that included with the adoption of the Loudoun County 2019 Comprehensive Plan.

Design Guidelines

The Design Guidelines are to build upon our current development patterns in a manner that allows innovative design and new responses to the market. The Design Guidelines are not meant to be prescriptive and are not intended to be treated as a checklist, but are instead meant to provide a framework for how the desired character of the TPA can be achieved, with the acknowledgement that other methods could achieve the intended results. The Design Guidelines do not supersede or otherwise limit the application of adopted zoning regulations, ordinances, building codes, proffers or any other design standards or regulations administered by Loudoun County.

The goals of the TPA Design Guidelines are as follows:

- Development should create attractive places within the TPA by working with existing topography and site features, responding to the local context, and reinforcing the landscape's character, rather than simply attempting to place suburban design onto the landscape.
- Development should use the landscape for benefits such as solar heat gain or shelter from wind.

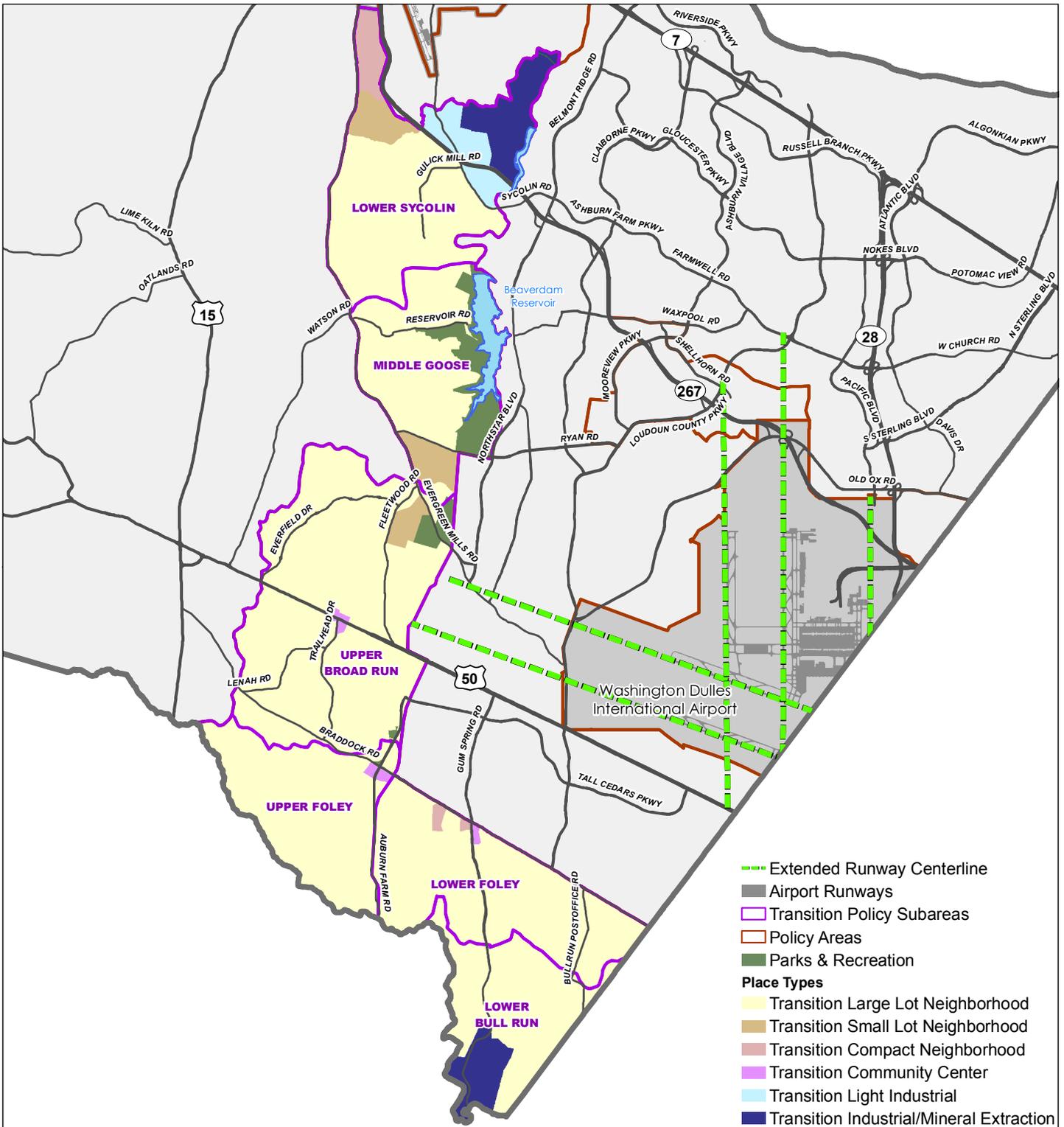
- Buildings should be treated as parts of the landscape and attention given to their form and scale relative to their surrounding environment.

When using the guidelines care should be taken to analyze the impact a potential development may have on the landscape. Considerations should include both appearance and practical considerations such as proximity and quality of connections to utilities, community amenities, jobs, and housing to maximize the use of existing infrastructure and limit travel distances. The County encourages the use of a design process when planning development in the TPA that conserves and incorporates natural, environmental, and heritage resources into the site design. (See Appendix A for Design Guidelines for the TPA)

Place Types

As described in the beginning of this chapter, the following Place Types have been designated for specific locations as displayed on the accompanying map. The Place Types will work in concert with the Design Guidelines and Policies, Strategies, and Actions of the TPA to fulfill the land use patterns and community characteristics intended for the area.

Loudoun County
Transition Policy Area
Place Types
 2019 General Plan



- Extended Runway Centerline
- Airport Runways
- Transition Policy Subareas
- Policy Areas
- Parks & Recreation
- Place Types**
- Transition Large Lot Neighborhood
- Transition Small Lot Neighborhood
- Transition Compact Neighborhood
- Transition Community Center
- Transition Light Industrial
- Transition Industrial/Mineral Extraction

Loudoun County IS NOT LIABLE for any use of or reliance upon this map or any information contained herein. While reasonable efforts have been made to obtain accurate data, the County makes no warranty, expressed or implied, as to its accuracy, completeness, or fitness for use of any purpose.

