



## The LCPCC “SWAT Team”

In February, 2018 – during the peak workload of the Comprehensive Plan Stakeholder’s Committee review – Al Van Huyck proposed to create, *“a SWAT team of a few folks who will agree to immediately review each Chapter . . . publish a “Citizen’s Response” on our website, directly to the Staff and Stakeholders, BOS, newspapers, and to prepare the public for the May [2018] public input sessions.”* Responses of “count me in”

immediately followed, establishing the formal *“New Comprehensive Plan Review Committee of the Loudoun County Preservation and Conservation Coalition.”* The ten-member SWAT Team representing the Coalition’s 50 organizations consisted of expertise ranging from Urban Planning, Finance, Land use and Appraisals, human resources, environmental studies, management consulting, and much more.

Over the next several months, the SWAT Team began to specialize by dividing the Comprehensive Plan chapters by member’s “Subject Matter Expertise:” Gem Bingol and Evan McCarthy for Chapter 2 Urban/Suburban/Transition Policy Areas and Norm Myers for Rural Policy Area; Cheri Conca for Green Infrastructure and Jeff Freeman for Historic Resources for Chapter 3 Natural and Heritage Resources; Al Van Huyck for Chapter 4 Housing; Owen Snyder for Chapter 5 Economic Development and detailed analysis of public input; Dennis Kruse for Chapter 6 Public Infrastructure, Roads and Trails; and Jim Hanna for a detailed Chapter 6 Fiscal Management analysis. The role of the last SWAT member, Maura Walsh-Copeland, was to develop the project plan to keep the review efforts in synch, consolidate input from SWAT, other Coalition member organizations, then create common web and presentation communication for reporting to the Coalition, the public and the Board of Supervisors.

By the Fall of 2018 the Team was as conversant with the Plan Draft as the County Staff. The Team identified and quantified the public’s priorities, summarized the primary issues, points of concern and recommendations for review with each Supervisor and their Aides. At each meeting the information was presented as a *TEAM*, with each SWAT member ready and able to fill in for each other as required. The goal of these meetings was to educate the Supervisors *before* their receipt of the draft from the Planning Commission to help them be prepared to make good decisions based on quantification, facts and awareness of long-term impacts. While the SWAT Team monitored the Planning Commission’s changes to the plan, Gem Bingol led a PEC-mobilized effort to educate the public to be prepared for the next round of input.

By the time the final Draft Plan reached the Board the SWAT Team had coded every Policy, Strategy and Action to quantify and recommend changes in a consolidated “pick this, not that” matrix. The SWAT Team’s efforts inspired many other Coalition organizations and all seven Mayors of the Coalition of Loudoun Towns (COLT) to “get on board” and add to the matrix, representing almost 80,000 residents throughout the entire County. As the matrix was delivered in April, so was a binder of key information for each Board member to reference during their worksessions that included the public’s priorities, chapter summaries and recommendations, and explanation of financial impacts. The SWAT Team continued to provide specific motions for consideration, keeping track of how many were adopted by Staff and the Board. At the June, 2019 Plan final adoption several Board members acknowledged the vital information and assistance provided by the Coalition, with the result that the Coalition has been asked to be a reviewer for the next phase: the 2021 Zoning Ordinance Rewrite (ZOR).