

ROUTE 15 CASE STUDY CHRONOLOGY

LOCATION: Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Scenic Byway, U.S. Route 15 from Leesburg to the Potomac River

The following provides a chronology of key events related to this location, with the purpose of identifying key problems (e.g., policies, procedures, open government, public process)

ROUTE 15 PROJECT PREHISTORY: *Green* shows efforts and preservation; *red* shows efforts to advance Outer Beltway highway concept

DATE	KEY EVENT
1987-1988	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Friends of Route 15, composed of Lucketts area citizens, worked with local historians and residents to document the three-century architectural history of the Lucketts area, submitting to the National Register of Historic Places a proposed Catoctin Rural Historic District. A landowner planning to develop his farm and a small local developer mounted a campaign against the designation, falsely claiming that it would impose architectural restrictions and stop improvements to Route 15. The campaign succeeded in preventing the national listing; CRHD is recognized as a Virginia Rural Historic District by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.
1987-1990	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Virginia and Maryland conduct a joint study of eastern and western bypasses of the Washington Metro area. The long-sought outer ring opening up rural areas to development is a goal of the development lobby Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance but is strongly opposed by affected jurisdictions and residents, including in Loudoun County, with its Board of Supervisors voting against a Route 15 or other county Outer Beltway alignment.^{1 2} Friends of Route 15 opposes the project.
1990s	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Residents along Route 50 hire an independent transportation engineer (Ian Lockwood) to lead citizens through a public process to achieve a byway improvement design to counter VDOT's 1994 proposed bypasses around three rural historic villages and Middleburg west of Route 15 (which later leaked VDOT documents show was a precursor to a freeway to West Virginia). Development interests strongly supported the project. The citizen-driven Route 50 Traffic Calming Project is initiated in 1995, supported by its Supervisor, Senators, and Congressman, Middleburg mayor, obtained federal grant, is constructed over the next decade at a fraction of the cost of VDOT's preferred multilane highway project, wins awards, and is enshrined in Loudoun's 2002 General Plan as a model for rural arterials elsewhere in Loudoun. https://www.route50.org/
1998-2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lucketts area citizens successfully seek reduction of speed limit from 55 to 45 mph on Route 15 north of Leesburg, following string of fatalities.• VDOT study, recommends constructing a wider, flatter, faster freeway-like road, removing roadside fences, trees, houses, and farm buildings, with a 60-mph design speed, and constructs a first phase up to White's Ferry Road.• Loudoun Transportation Director advises BOS that continuing the first phase's 5-lane width of pavement further north will result in more speed and more accidents. Catoctin Supervisor Sally Kurtz releases an internal VDOT memo confirms the expected speed increases.• In 2002 Friends of Route 15 counters with a more modest plan for improved shoulders, rumble strips, improved access, better enforcement, and using Federal Highway Administration AASHTO "Flexibility in Highway Design" guidelines to allow retention of roadside features intrinsic to the scenic byway instead of a "high-speed expressway" design. (copy available upon request)• A VDOT budget crisis prevents subsequent phases from being constructed.
2003-2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In 2003 Virginia General Assembly passes resolution encouraging VDOT to construct more roundabouts.• Lucketts area citizens successfully petition Rep. Frank Wolf for a \$3 million federal earmark to improve safety on Route 15. Friends of Route 15 (which soon thereafter became the Catoctin Coalition) raised funds to engage Route 50 designer Ian Lockwood to survey Route 15. He suggests combining intersections with roundabouts and created a traffic calming plan for Lucketts. Wolf meets with the group and endorses the plan. Loudoun executed an agreement to remove VDOT from initial process to spearhead a community responsive redesign.

- Following election of a developer-friendly BOS, the county declined to invite Lockwood's firm to bid on the project and directed its chosen contractor Kimley Horn to use VDOT's original road-widening design. **Kimley Horn's Lucketts Project provided little traffic calming or added safety** for vehicles or pedestrians. It was a suburban-development style design for a historic village, with even wider pavement in the village center of homes, an elementary school, commercial buildings, firehouse, and a community park. Citizens objected and the project was never funded or built.

2004-2007

- VDOT proposes **"spot safety improvements" for a 2.6-mile section of Route 15 with four intersecting roads** south of Lucketts, removing fencelines and trees and adding 8-foot paved shoulders and turn lanes. At citizens' request, Supervisor Kurtz **requested that VDOT instead study combining the two sets of intersections with roundabouts (New Valley Church with Spinks Ferry, Limestone School with Montresor)**. VDOT declined to do the study.
 - The **Deputy Secretary of Transportation orders a validation study** of VDOT's project, which resulted in modifications to the plan (reduction in design speed from 60 to 45 mph, guardrails instead of mature tree removal, use of part-paved, part stabilized grass shoulders, etc.). It was built.
 - **Developer interests launch a failed attempt to get the BOS to kill the Route 50 Traffic Calming Project.**
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2006-2009

- **In January 2008 at its first meeting the new smart-growth-friendly Board of Supervisors votes to support JTHG, one of the last jurisdictions in the three-state region to do so.** County never initiates coordinated program with Visit Loudoun (then the Loudoun Visitors and Convention Bureau) or JTHG to capitalize on the new designation.
 - **In 2008 George W. Bush signs into law the JTHG National Heritage Area and National Scenic Byway**, which encompasses the Route 15 corridor in Loudoun. The **JTHG Corridor Management Plan is completed** several years later.
 - **Additional guardrails are installed** south of the bypass split after teenaged siblings die after their Jeep leaves roadway.
 - **In 2007 the Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance submits a map for an 8-mile-long 6-lane bypass with a new river crossing on the east side of Route 15**, and a map for Route 15 south of Leesburg, which the county inserted into the new draft Countywide Transportation Plan without consultation with Maryland and after public comment period ended. It would have gone through historic properties and farms. It (and a similar bypass proposed for Hillsboro) were removed after citizen uproar over transparency and process issues.
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2012-2013

- Secretary of Transportation Sean Connaughton attempts to get the **Commonwealth Transportation Board to illegally vote on a new "river-to-river" corridor, which would include redesignating Route 15 as a Corridor of Statewide Significance.** The Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance director says in a radio interview on the project that elected leaders to "have to stop listening to voters!" The Loudoun BOS approves a resolution opposing the CSS. The initiative eventually failed.
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ROUTE 15 PHASES 1 AND 2 PROJECT HISTORY	NOTES, PROBLEMS, IMPACTS
<p>2016 October Lucketts area citizens (Catoctin Coalition) petition Chair Phyllis Randall to make a priority of renewal of the National Scenic Byway of Route 15 north of Leesburg (with a unified, context-sensitive design to address safety, congestion, and access) in the Comp Plan rewrite.</p> <p>JTHG advises DTCI to follow JTHG Corridor Management Plan to guide Route 15 project.</p>	
<p>Loudoun County Department of Transportation and Capital Infrastructure (DTCI) engages consultant Kimley Horn on Route 15 project.</p> <p>Department of Transportation and Capital Infrastructure invites JTHG President Bill Sellers to a meeting discuss Route 15. He urges use of Corridor Management Plan (CMP).</p>	<p>No RFP process; given to on-call county consultant specializing in urban/suburban projects and with no experience in Scenic Byway projects.</p>
<p>2017 February County publishes <i>Envision Loudoun Foundations Report</i> (initiating Comp Plan revision process), which erroneously describes Route 15 as a Corridor of Statewide Significance (p. 63). Reference is removed following citizen query.</p>	<p>Designation of Route 15 as a CSS was an unsuccessful 2011-12 campaign (see above) to initiate an Outer Beltway project, favored by development interests.</p>
<p>2017 March Envision Loudoun Stakeholders Committee named. Seventeen of its 26 members represent/are employed by development interests. Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance is one of them.</p>	
<p>2017 May 8 On May 8 Lucketts citizens (Catoctin Coalition, others) make presentation to Randall requesting a unified, context-sensitive Route 15 design that balances safety, access, and flow on the Lucketts community’s Main Street and Loudoun’s National Scenic Byway. See Appendix A, letter and presentation “Goal for Route 15 North of Leesburg: A unified, context-sensitive design that balances safety, access, and flow on the Lucketts community’s Main Street and Loudoun’s National Scenic Byway.”</p>	<p>Specific asks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commit to a corridor-long redesign. • Engage an independent designer with a track record of context-sensitive redesign in similar environments. • Establish a stakeholders committee: County staff, Coalition members and coordinating organizations such as Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership, school and residential representatives, local business owners. • Explore grant funding for a demonstration project.
<p>2017 May On May 10 Kimley-Horn’s scope of work letter to the county notes that “The previous Countywide Transportation Plan (CTP) had proposed corridor capacity improvements, however, these were removed before the plan was adopted.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter references the 2007 “Catoctin bypass” pushed by the road lobby Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance; therefore, the county presents development interests’ road expansion plans as a county goal. • Letter includes no mention of National Scenic Byway, Corridor Management Plan, or tourism.

	On May 18 the BOS directs County staff to study safety and operational issues on Route 15 from Leesburg to the Potomac River.	
2017 June	June 29 BOS Transportation Summit information item states that Route 15 will be 4-laned to Montresor. "...there are plans to revise the CTP to extend the limit of the four lane designation northward to Montresor Road." (p. 9)	Four-laning Route 15 had been decided upon prior to any public engagement and without following the CMP process.
2017 June-July	First round of Route 15 public input meetings and online survey (June 26 Leesburg, July 8 and July 15, Lucketts). 239 attendees, 26 emails, 2,006 responses to online survey.	<p>Format not a facilitated community discussion; adding lanes presented as the only solution to congestion. No educational component (e.g., National Heritage Area designation or its economic value to region), no mention that 80% of traffic is from out of state, no mention of JTHG Corridor Management Plan (CMP), no mention of Comp Plan-endorsed Route 50 Traffic Calming model.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Federal Highway Administration staff member (and Leesburg resident) in attendance notifies the County and Supervisor Higgins that the CMP process is not being followed (and receives no response). • Neither JTHG nor CRHD noted on county map displays, • Issues presented as a zero-sum game: Congestion relief, safety, and access vs. preservation, multi-modal options, and beautification (one could only choose 3, not rank them) • None of the County's online surveys have control questions and were not designed to control for survey bias or abuse. (The County Attorney later declined to provide survey data, claiming it was exempt from FOIA because the consultant only submitted a summary of the data to the county.) Surveys map shows significant responses from locations unlikely to commute on Route 15 (See Appendix B, "Survey Participant Density Map by Zip Code.")
2017 August	Stakeholders Committee holds first meeting on Aug. 1.	<p>Stakeholders committee dominated by new HOAs (12 of 19 seats), leaving two-thirds of rural residents with no direct representation (see Appendix C, "Catocin households with and without Rt. 15 Stakeholder representation").</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not one Lucketts Village resident. No representatives from Visit Loudoun, farm organizations, environmental organizations, business/property owners fronting Route 15, the county preservation planner, or historic structures owners. • Stakeholders told to engage with their "communities," but no educational materials or suggested formats provided; no county

		staff members monitored or attended individual stakeholder group meetings or even asked for details on how stakeholders carried out that directive (many did not engage members meaningfully, regularly, or in some cases, at all).
2017 September	Stakeholder Committee second meeting, Sept. 14.	No discussion of Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan (CMP), tourism, or business economic impact. Focus on congestion reduction.
2017 October	County submits to Washington Metropolitan Council of Government Transportation Planning Board a proposal for air quality study for 4-laning to Montresor. No mention made of JTHG CMP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The county had not mentioned expanding 4-laning further than Whites Ferry with public or Stakeholders (see county survey). • Submission erroneously claims no federal funds (triggering NEPA) will be used, but the BOS had directed DTCl to use remaining Route 15 federal funds. • Submission erroneously claims that project does not involve intersection reconstruction.
	On Oct. 13 Raspberry Falls, Selma, Big Springs, Golf Club and Saddlebrook submit petition to Supervisor Higgins requesting that any attention to Scenic Byway attributes (“nonfunctional design objectives”) be disregarded; asked that the entire highway north of Leesburg be re-designated from a rural to a suburban road; and requested that no roundabouts are used.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents of the HOAs were uninformed of this request by their “representatives.” The stakeholders’ presentation claims that JTHG, the federally designated manager of the byway (which the BOS had endorsed) is a “special interest” in opposition to safety goals.
	On Oct. 19 the BOS votes 9-0 to approve staff coordination with VDOT to implement Phase 1 improvements to Montresor. BOS votes on Item 10: “to coordinate with VDOT to procure the services of an engineering consultant to prepare the design and construction plans for the remaining phased improvements outlined in this item, utilizing the remaining federal and state funds designated for the Route 15 Corridor.”	DTCl staff falsely state to BOS that 76% of citizens surveyed support 4-laning to Montresor. But the survey question asked about 4-laning only to Whites Ferry Road, not the additional 1.6 miles into the farmland and cave conservation area to the north, where historic structures are located. (County later made this false claim in state and regional grant applications; see Appendix D , “Clarifications for the Record on the Route 15 Project.”).
2017 November	Stakeholder Committee third meeting, Nov. 16.	County presents “moon chart” (not statistical) decision matrix on 4-laning to Montresor and roundabouts vs. signals. County claimed that roundabout (RAB) would cost \$8M, but a recently built RAB in Dulles District of similar size, also within the right of way, cost just \$1.9M. No explanation given by county for the \$6.1M difference. Stakeholder request to use VDOT RAB cost calculator declined by County; County claimed signal as safe as RAB; Requests to compare emissions, safety, and flow (LOS) of RAB vs. signal declined by County as “not in purview of study.”
	County prepares Comprehensive Plan Amendment to change designation of Route 15 to Montresor to 4-lane “highly controlled-access” road.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPAM language never presented to Stakeholders group or public prior to release of Dec. 19 packet; public notice

		advertisement omitted “restricted access” language. Notice not posted on Loudoun.gov/route15 webpage.
2017 December	County sends Six-Year Plan submission to Northern Virginia Transportation Authority for 4-laning to Montresor, requesting \$80M.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not shared with public or Stakeholders Committee; not posted on Loudoun.gov/route15 webpage. • Submission states that 4-laning Route 15 to Montresor will reduce cut-through traffic in Waterford and Taylorstown, but has no origin/destination studies to prove it. It is a questionable assertion that adding Route 15 capacity north up to Montresor will reduce instead of increase use of that rural road to points north and west of Leesburg (and cutting through Waterford and Taylorstown). • Submission states that widening 3.5 of the 11 miles of Route 15 north of Leesburg will provide “an improved connection between the two states.”
2018 February	At fourth Route 15 Stakeholders meeting on Feb. 28 NEPA and Section 106 requirements reviewed by Jim Zeller of VDOT. County preservation staff member Heidi Siebentritt discusses historic resources. No mention made of CMP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selma, Raspberry Falls, and several other HOA stakeholders complain about need to assess historic resources and request that federal funding be removed so they can be ignored. VDOT engineer Jim Zeller reacts positively to the suggestion.
2018 March	On March 8 DTCl sends out notice (via social media) announcing second round of public input meetings, March 9 and 10, on <u>Phase 2</u> design (from Whites Ferry to the Potomac River). 247 attendees, 671 online survey responses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grossly insufficient public notice. • March input meetings and survey again prioritize widening Route 15 to Lucketts with a western bypass (first proposed by a developer in the 1990s) around its low-income residential properties (two trailer parks) instead of on the east where better access is needed for businesses, school, community center, and firehouse. (The western route will facilitate more cut-through traffic to and from the west.) Other survey questions ask about roundabouts, berms, fencing, and other new features to add a “historic look.” • Again, online survey contains no control questions and participation was countywide (not limited to those who live or commute on Route 15).
2018 May	On May 4 County releases draft 2040 Countywide Transportation Update. It shows that Route 15 is to become a “Principal Arterial – Expressway” like Route 7 in Sterling. Removed is language endorsing the Route 50 Traffic Calming Project and recommending it for other Loudoun rural arterials (such as Route 15).	Not shared with public or Stakeholders Committee. This document contradicts an emailed statement by DTCl’s Susan Glass that there “are no additional capacity improvements” planned for Route 15 is inconsistent with CTP “expressway” language, which is a Federal Highway Administration definition: “A divided highway facility with partial control of access and two or more lanes for the exclusive use of through traffic in each direction; includes grade separations at most major intersections.”

	May 7, fifth Route 15 Stakeholders meeting held.	Presentation includes a summary of March public input, “Concepts A and B” for 4-laning and restricting access on Route 15 up to St. Clair Lane, and announces NVTA funding submission for Phase 1 (made 5 months before).
	On May 8 County initiates VDOT Smart Scale application to 4-lane Route 15 to Lucketts and restrict access to St. Clair Lane.	Not shared with public/Stakeholders Committee. DTCl’s Susan Glass later told stakeholders (June 12) that there were “No additional capacity improvements north of Montresor Road are proposed with the draft CTP at this time”—contradicted by this application, for which there must be amendments to the CTP.
	On May 19 County sends BUILD grant application, for \$1M for study and design of Route 15 from Montresor Road to the Potomac River (final submission made in July). It states that the project will significantly improve interstate traffic but omits the fact that Maryland has no intention to widen the bridge. The County also states it anticipates it can avoid NEPA requirements.	Not shared with public or Stakeholders Committee. No mention of Corridor Management Plan (CMP). Not mentioned on Loudoun.gov/route15 webpage. While the County notes JTHG National Scenic Byway, it focuses on elimination of access all along the byway as a goal, which is antithetical to the purpose and economic goals of a historic byway. Notes that Leesburg Landing gas station—not yet approved by BOS—is type of development planned in the area.
2018 June	On June 5 BOS approves on the consent agenda (no public discussion) a federal BUILD grant application for 4-laning to Lucketts and restricting access all along the National Scenic Byway.	Application emphasizes congestion relief that the project will achieve for interstate travelers without noting that the bridge and several miles south of it will remain 2-lane. Emphasizes that greater safety will be achieved not by traffic calming but by limiting access for local residents.
	On June 7 Lawyer Amy McDougal makes FOIA request of County for “all correspondence from and to Martha Polkey (Catoclin Coalition), Peter Gustafson (Lucketts Ruritan Club), and Gem Bingol (Piedmont Environmental Council) to any and all Board members and the responses from the board members to these individuals” from June 2015 through June 2018.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County charge for FOIA is \$778.06. Lawyer also requests all supervisors’ contacts lists. • At a Raspberry Falls HOA meeting on Route 15 earlier in the year, a Saddlebrook development resident (who visited RF to play golf, reported that he saw notice of the meeting, and attended) and stated that under discussion was the hiring of a lawyer to ensure RF preferences (no RAB) were secured in the Route 15 project.
	On June 15 the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority announces \$54M in funding for the Phase 1 Route 15 project.	NVTA states that NoVA VDOT has too many projects to administer, and that county itself must administer the project. DTCl later hires VDOT’s Jim Zeller to administer project for county.
	On June 22 Coalition for Smarter Growth ED Stewart Schwartz, JTHG President Bill Sellers, PEC field officer Gem Bingol, and traffic calming designer Ian Lockwood meet with DTCl staff, Supervisor Higgins, and aides, and make presentation on RAB and traffic calming alternatives for Route 15. (Higgins refused request to allow Lockwood to address Transportation and Land Use Committee meeting.)	In this three-hour exchange, Lockwood discusses national trends away from road widening as a solution to congestion, many projects his firm has accomplished that use other approaches, and examples of projects (including the Route 50 project in Loudoun) that provide better alternatives for Route 15. DTCl staff and Kimley Horn staff vocally challenge his approaches.

2018 July	<p>On July 3 BOS votes 7-1 to approve a fourth (and largest in Loudoun, at 14 pumps) gas station along the 4.6-mile stretch of Route 15 from Lucketts to the bridge, 1,500 feet from the Potomac, next to a stream, in a fragile geological formation with vertical fissures that carry surface water down to groundwater.</p>	<p>The action is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • against staff recommendation, • strongly opposed by local residents (who submitted a 400-signature petition), and • taken despite a legally filed appeal to the Board of Zoning Appeals challenging the rezoning. Despite the fact that state code (§ 15.2-2311. Appeals to Board) precludes a vote until the BZA rules on a challenge, the County Attorney advises BOS they may vote.
	<p>On July 17, sixth Route 15 Stakeholders meeting is held.</p>	<p>Revised Concepts A and B are presented to stakeholders. RABs at St. Clair Lane and north and south of Lucketts Village have been removed, the consultant says, because that enhanced safe access for residents and tourists impedes flow (“causes friction”) for commuter traffic. County staff presses stakeholders immediately to vote on a concept—without consulting their constituent members. Several stakeholders resist, and stakeholders are given until August 1 to submit responses.</p>
	<p>On July 30 CC and Lucketts Ruritan Club sponsors a citizen meeting in Lucketts for all unrepresented residents, presents county maps, and discusses a traffic calming alternative.</p>	<p>Hillsboro Mayor Roger Vance attends, describes the Hillsboro traffic calming project, and encourages residents to pursue such a plan for Lucketts and Route 15. After a presentation (see Appendix E, The Future of Route 15: Expressway or Byway?), attendees are provided with the ballot County staff provided to stakeholders, which includes an alternative traffic calming option The two Selma Estates Route 15 stakeholders and a third person taking notes attend (uninvited), and video portions of the event.</p>
2018 August	<p>On Aug. 1 Friends of Route 15 and Ruritan representatives submit 60 handwritten citizen responses to County.</p>	<p>All but three responses call for a traffic calming approach instead of a higher-speed, restricted access expressway.</p>
	<p>Lucketts area resident Fred Schaufeld takes several members of the Board of Supervisors and aides on helicopter ride to survey the function of the Route 15/50 roundabout and the function of the White’s Ferry/Route 15 signal, during August and September.</p>	<p>Supervisors and aides view in real time the better level of service that roundabouts offer at afternoon peak commute.</p>
	<p>On Aug. 6 County submits final VDOT Smart Scale Submission to 4-lane Route 15 to Lucketts.</p>	<p>No public notice. This was submitted nearly 8 weeks before the open house at which citizens were asked to “vote” on a concept.</p>
	<p>On Aug. 9 the Loudoun Rural Economic Development Council submits letter to Board of Supervisors supporting traffic calming instead of adding capacity for all of Loudoun’s rural arterials, and endorsing CTP language endorsing the Route 50 Traffic Calming Project.</p>	<p>“Careful due diligence is however warranted when increased road capacity is recommended, as often times road lane expansion only serves to draw traffic from nearby interstate and express highways to our rural road network. We do consider turning lanes and bike</p>

		lanes (segregated from road traffic) as improvements to be considered where warranted based on safety and need.”
	Email hacking of Catoctin Coalition, Ruritan stakeholders and Piedmont Environmental representatives discovered. Computer hacking of Catoctin Coalition computer, Facebook pages and MailChimp accounts is discovered.	Portions of emails between Martha Polkey, Peter Gustafson, and Gem Bingol are put up on the NextDoor social media site that includes Selma Estates, and allusions are made to others. They are promoted by Selma Estates Route 15 stakeholders and a fake person calling himself “John Locke” (and claiming to live on the same street as one of the two Selma Estates stakeholders). Keystroke-capturing and other spyware is discovered on Martha Polkey’s computer.
	On Aug. 21 A group calling itself “FixRoute15Now” launches a disinformation campaign on Route 15, using a website, Facebook Page, and e-newsletter (via MailChimp), a mischaracterizing traffic calming and other congestion mitigation approaches that don’t rely on adding capacity. It attacks citizens and organizations pressing for a traffic calming alternative, and falsely claims that JTHG is violating its 501(3)(c) status by advocating for a preservation approach.	Those behind FixRoute15Now conceal their identities. “John Locke” announces the new group. Other regional groups backed by the development industry use a similar logo (e.g., “Fix270Now” in Montgomery County, which discloses its development industry backing). Many of Polkey’s personal and professional contacts receive the email; MailChimp is alerted and shuts down the newsletter (it violates MailChimp policies and the federal SPAM Act).
	The Lucketts Ruritan Club publishes a special issue of its quarterly community newsletter focused on Route 15, sent to all households in the Lucketts area.	The issue (“juried” by unbiased readers) details the history of the area, the karst geography and the water quality issues of importance, Route 15’s improvement history, the county’s process, the traffic calming approach, an alternative design, and an endorsement by the former NoVA VDOT District administrator Dennis Morrison of RABs as a good solution for Route 15.
	On Aug. 31 CSG, JTHG, the Southern Environmental Law Center, the Piedmont Environmental Council, and the Catoctin Coalition submit letter, single-lane RAB analysis for Whites Ferry from transportation firm Toole Design, and Ian Lockwood vision paper to each member of the Board of Supervisors.	The analysis shows that a single-lane roundabout at Whites Ferry would function well. The letter requests that time be taken for a true community-based input for a traffic calming plan that captures the community vision for the area’s future, and which would be cheaper and quicker to build.
	After meeting with Selma Route 15 stakeholders group, Del. LaRock asks Supervisor Higgins if the county can make up its own model to justify widening Route 15. He asks why JTHG must be involved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On MWCOG’s future traffic demand model, he asks: “Are we required to use these projections, or can we use other estimates (or build our own model)?” • LaRock: “Please explain the extent and necessity of Journey Through Hallowed Ground involvement in this process; does federal funding they or the project receives make a difference?”
2018 September	JTHG President/CEO Bill Sellers op ed on Route 15 published in Loudoun Now on Sept. 10.	Op ed advocates for traffic calming, preservation approach to congestion and safety issues. https://loudounnow.com/2018/09/10/op-ed-a-better-balance-needed-to-improve-protect-rt-15/

	Save Rural Loudoun, PEC, Waterford Foundation, and a group of local business owners submit letters to the Board of Supervisors calling for a traffic calming approach instead of widening.	Available upon request.
	Supervisor Higgins rejects traffic calming approach which he had expressed support for in June.	(County already had submitted funding application for 4-laning to Lucketts.)
	On Sept. 19 CSG/JTHG/PEC/SELCC/CC coalition submits to County an analysis of the traffic modeling for the Route 15 Phase 1 and 2 widening, “Route 15 North of Leesburg: A Closer Look at Widening.”	This analysis, which corrects Loudoun’s flawed model, shows how much the widening will induce new traffic to Route 15. This is the third such analysis of Loudoun’s (and VDOT’s) faulty modeling, which does not meet federal standards. See Appendix F.
	On Sept. 20 County votes on Phase 1 improvements. BOS votes 9-0 in favor of 4-laning to Montresor, adding a signal at the bypass split, retaining the signal at White’s Ferry, a roundabout at Montresor (with Limestone School realigned with that road), and restricting access along the corridor. Federal funds are removed from project to avoid NEPA and Section 106 processes. Several supervisors state preference for RAB at White’s Ferry intersection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Item’s Staff Report rejects Toole Design roundabout analysis. County staff states that “While some members of the public prefer a roundabout at this intersection, the majority of Stakeholder Committee Members do not.” Fact check: 78% of the public preferred roundabouts over a signal (states county’s public input data). • Results of a FOIA request on the removal of federal funds request includes no documents reflecting the decision. The county’s preservation staff member inquired of DTCI why NEPA was being avoided; she was told to contact Supervisor Higgins’s office. A letter produced from another individual’s FOIA request includes an email chain in March 2016 between VDOT engineers Jim Zeller and Farid Bigdeli, apparently congratulating Zeller on finding a reason for removal of the funds from Phase 1: “I figured you will find a way...thanks.” Appendix G.
	On Sept. 20 Board of Zoning Appeals hears challenge to Leesburg Landing gas station rezoning. It votes not to overturn the zoning.	BZA members noted the substantive concerns presented by the appellant and the geologist, but stated that the county’s (weak) zoning rules were followed and they had no grounds to overturn the change.
2018 September	Third Public input meeting Sept. 27, on Phase 2 Route 15 improvements (from Montresor to the Potomac River bridge) online survey. 102 participants, 1,043 online survey responses	Maps have “sample section” graphics but do not portray increased roadway width, where access will be restricted for property owners and residents, or where land will likely be “taken.”
2018 October	Seventh and final Route 15 Stakeholders Committee meeting, Oct. 22.	• Staff presented September public input results, discussed project timeline. Staff stated that Comp Plan word “Expressway” (a federal definition for a road classification) designation for Route 15 will be changed to “Non-Freeway,” after citizen protest—but all the controlled-access, high-speed characteristics of the new designation will be retained.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selma stakeholder presses county on how many attorneys will be assigned to fast-track securing rights of way and eminent domain proceedings. • Glass stated at the meeting that the 60 omitted Lucketts residents' input must have been "overlooked." But on Nov. 16 she gave yet another reason: The citizen outreach in Lucketts (requested by staff of stakeholders) "was conducted outside the public process for the Route 15 Safety and Operations Study."
2018 November	On Nov. 19 Del. Dave LaRock and Sen. Dick Black hold "Western Transportation Town Hall."	In a pre-election showcase with a highly controlled format (elected officials chose which questions submitted on cards they answered), VDOT staff display long-underway projects for Routes 7, 9, 287, and Business 7, roads "that impact the daily commutes of Western Loudoun residents." No new initiatives. Supervisors Buffington and Higgins attend; no mention of Route 15 project (which also is in the West).
	VDOT/CTB Smart Scale public hearing on Nov. 28 in Fairfax	Del. LaRock and Selma Estates stakeholder rep speak in favor of Route 15 project; eight Lucketts area residents speak against.
	Route 15 project dropped from Smart Scale projects by CTB	"Lack of readiness" is the reason given for rejection.
	VDOT District archaeologist sends letter to Virginia Department of Historic Resources stating that it plans to spend remaining \$1.6 M of federal funds on two splitter islands north and south of Lucketts.	The islands are two elements of the 13-year-old VDOT plan for Lucketts that originally included sidewalks and crosswalks. Higgins tells a small group of citizens invited to see the plans that "Lucketts is going to be redeveloped." Lucketts residents are not informed.
2018 December	Route 15 project application for federal BUILD funding rejected.	
	Leesburg Landing LLC sells approved 14-pump gas station property to Gas Mart LLC for \$1.4 M, t a 937% profit over its purchase price.	Gas Mart LLC filed one of 200 lawsuits following the County's downzoning of the rural west in 2004. Its suit focused on the denied rezoning that was finally accomplished in the County's vote. Citizens learn later that what the Leesburg Landing owner said was going to be a locally owned market is actually going to be a Seven-Eleven franchise.
2019 March	Near the end of the month Supervisor Higgins kicks off Virginia Senate campaign at home of the primary Raspberry Falls Route 15 Stakeholder. He is endorsed by land use lawyer and former Del. Randy Minchew (who secured Leesburg Landing gas station rezoning) and Sen. Dick Black.	Campaign filings show a \$30,000 donation from a SuperPAC following the event. Higgins appoints real-estate-agent wife of alternate RF stakeholder to Loudoun County Board of Equalization (which in Loudoun has a history of drastically reducing real estate assessments on properties that subsequently sell for original assessed rates.
2019 April	Route 15 Phase 2 Safety and Operations Report submitted to County	Public not informed.

2019 May	Supervisor Higgins mentions completion of operations report in his constituent newsletter but does not provide a link to it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report not listed on County’s Route 15 project page. Citizens obtain it from another source. • Report describes an expressway design for the National Scenic Byway. It refers to Route 15 up to Montresor as “an urban roadway.” • It states that Route 15 needs to be widened to “accommodate future development.” • The report falsely claims that environmental groups were included in the stakeholders group.
Supervisor Higgins and Del. LaRock plea for Route 15 expressway funding application before Commonwealth Transportation Board.		Application is not granted.
2019 June	<p>On June 1 County administrator Tim Hemstreet announces to Board of Supervisors that the Phase 2 segment of the project (from Whites Ferry Road to the Maryland state line) will come before the BOS July 18.</p> <p>Supervisor Ron Meyer calls for 4-laning Route 15 up to the 2-lane Potomac River bridge.</p>	Meyer is a strong advocate of the Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance’s planned new bridge across the Potomac (part of its Outer Beltway plan).
On June 19 the BOS votes to approve the new Comprehensive Plan, which converts Route 15 into a Level 3 Expressway.		
2019 July	Board of Supervisors votes 6-2-1 to 4-lane Route 15 to Lucketts and restrict access to St. Clair Lane	With a majority set to approve 4-laning to Lucketts, Higgins suddenly reverses himself and supports limiting 4-laning to Montresor instead, citing the reasons he had rejected up to that point. He is joined by Buffington. Supervisor Buona is absent. Citizens in opposition to widening fill up speaking slots.
2019 September	On Sept. 20 Supervisor Higgins announces two meeting dates in Lucketts for discussion of Spinks Ferry roundabout and Lucketts splitter islands.	Roundabout has been requested by citizens since 2006.
On Sept. 25 County staff and Kimley Horn staff present options for improving safety and access at Spinks Ferry intersection.		Citizens strongly support option of realigning New Valley Church Road with Spinks Ferry Road with a roundabout as the intersection control. (A solution initially recommended by Ian Lockwood in 2003 and promoted by the Catoctin Coalition.)
On September 30 County staff, VDOT staff, and Kimley Horn staff present plan for splitter islands in Lucketts.		Citizens strongly oppose islands as useless in improving safety in the village.
2019 December	BOS votes on Dec. 17 to allocate \$2.7M in county funds toward expediting the construction of a roundabout at Route 15 and Spinks Ferry Road along with the realignment of New Valley Church Road.	Action supported by citizens and business owners.

¹ 1988. *Washington Post*. “New Bypasses Topic of Forum in Leesburg.”

² 1990. Fehr, S. C. “Bypass Could Become the Battle of the Decade.” *Washington Post*, May 14.

Appendices

A. Letter and presentation, “Goal for Route 15 North of Leesburg: A unified, context-sensitive design that balances safety, access, and flow on the Lucketts community’s Main Street and Loudoun’s National Scenic Byway.”

B. “Route 15 Survey Participant Density Map by Zip Code.”

C. “Catoclin Households With and Without Route 15 Stakeholder Representation.”

D. “Clarifications for the Record on the Route 15 North Project.”

E “The Future of Route 15: Expressway or Byway?”

F “Route 15 North of Leesburg: A Closer Look at Widening.”

G Bigdeli-Zeller emails, March 16 2018.