



COUNTY OF LOUISA

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Chris Coon, Deputy County Administrator

DATE: May 05, 2026

RE: Comprehensive Plan Addendum – Electric Transmission Infrastructure

Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to present for consideration an addendum to the Louisa County Comprehensive Plan addressing the siting and evaluation of electric transmission infrastructure. This policy establishes a clear, consistent framework to guide local decision-making and regional engagement while aligning with the County's long-term land use, growth management, and rural preservation goals.

Background

Louisa County is experiencing continued growth pressures alongside increasing regional demand for infrastructure to support energy reliability, economic development, and emerging high-demand uses. At the same time, the County has consistently emphasized the importance of protecting its rural character, agricultural base, and existing communities.

The proposed addendum, Electric Transmission Infrastructure and Corridor Policy, is intended to proactively position the County to respond to future transmission proposals by clearly articulating local priorities, expectations, and evaluation criteria.

While recent discussions regarding potential regional transmission projects, including the Valley Link Transmission Line, highlight the relevance of this policy, the need for clear guidance is broader and long-term in nature. This addendum is not tied to any single project, but rather establishes a durable framework applicable to any future transmission infrastructure proposals affecting Louisa County.

Comprehensive Plan Survey Results

The County recently completed a comprehensive community survey with over 2,100 responses, providing clear and consistent direction from residents regarding growth, land use, and infrastructure priorities.

Several key findings directly support the development of this policy:

- **Preservation of Rural Character and Land**
 - 1,811 respondents said preserving farms and forestland is *very important*
 - 1,518 respondents identified rural character as one of the most important aspects of the County
- **Growth Management and Infrastructure Alignment**
 - 1,610 respondents support focusing growth in areas with existing water, sewer, and roads
 - 1,677 respondents support concentrating development in growth areas
- **Concern About Overdevelopment**
 - 1,271 respondents identified overdevelopment as a top concern over the next 10 years
 - 996 respondents cited loss of rural character as a major concern
- **Infrastructure Planning Expectations**
 - 1,237 respondents prioritized infrastructure improvements (roads and utilities)
 - 1,616 respondents support requiring utility usage analysis for projects

These results demonstrate a strong public expectation that:

- Growth and infrastructure should be strategically located,
- Rural lands should be protected from fragmentation, and
- Major infrastructure projects should be carefully evaluated for impacts.

Policy Overview

The proposed addendum establishes several key principles:

1. Corridor-First Approach

- Prioritizes use of existing transmission corridors, utility easements, and public rights-of-way
- Encourages co-location and consolidation of infrastructure

2. Avoidance and Minimization of Impacts

- **Protects:**
 - Residential areas
 - Agricultural and forestal lands
 - Scenic rural landscapes
 - Environmental resources
 - Conservation easements and historic resources

3. Evaluation of Alternatives

- Encourages applicants to:
 - Analyze multiple routing options
 - Demonstrate impact minimization

- Justify creation of new corridors when proposed

4. Community and Infrastructure Coordination

- Supports:
 - Early engagement with property owners
 - Coordination with County staff and agencies
 - Alignment with transportation and infrastructure systems

5. Consistency with Growth Management Strategy

- Reinforces:
 - Directing growth into designated growth areas
 - Preserving rural lands outside those areas
 - Avoiding infrastructure decisions that undermine long-term planning goals

Relevance to Current and Future Projects

The County is aware of increasing regional interest in large-scale transmission infrastructure, including projects such as the Valley Link Transmission Line. These types of projects underscore the importance of having a clearly defined local policy framework.

However, it is important to emphasize:

- This policy is not reactive to a single proposal,
- It is intended to apply to all future transmission projects, and
- It ensures Louisa County can consistently advocate for its residents and land use priorities in state and federal review processes.

Implementation

The policy will be implemented through:

- Zoning ordinance provisions, including Conditional Use Permit (CUP) review
- Development application review processes
- Participation in proceedings before the Virginia State Corporation Commission and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
- Coordination with utility providers and state agencies

Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Review the proposed Comprehensive Plan Addendum;
2. Provide feedback and policy direction; and
3. Consider adoption of the addendum to strengthen the County's ability to guide and respond to future transmission infrastructure proposals.