

LOUISA COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ADDENDUM

Electric Transmission Infrastructure and Corridor Policy

I. PURPOSE AND INTENT

Louisa County recognizes the growing regional demand for electric transmission infrastructure to support economic development, energy reliability, and emerging high-demand uses. At the same time, the County places a high priority on preserving its rural character, protecting agricultural and forestal lands, and minimizing impacts to existing communities.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Establish clear guidance for the siting of electric transmission infrastructure;
- Prioritize the use of existing corridors and previously disturbed areas;
- Avoid and minimize impacts to residential areas, agricultural operations, conservation easements, and natural resources to the greatest extent feasible;
- Provide a consistent framework for evaluating proposed transmission projects;
- Ensure alignment with the County’s broader growth management and land preservation strategies.

II. POLICY FRAMEWORK

A. Recognition of Regulatory Authority

The County acknowledges that the approval and siting of electric transmission facilities is subject to review and approval by the Virginia State Corporation Commission (SCC), and may also involve federal oversight by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

This policy is intended to guide local land use decisions, provide input during state and federal review processes, and ensure that local impacts are fully considered.

III. PRIMARY SITING PRINCIPLE: USE OF EXISTING CORRIDORS

A. Corridor-First Policy

Electric transmission infrastructure shall prioritize the use of existing

transmission corridors, utility easements, and public rights-of-way to the maximum extent practicable.

B. Definition of Preferred Corridors

Preferred corridors include, but are not limited to:

- Existing electric transmission line corridors;
- Utility easements for electric, gas, water, or telecommunications infrastructure;
- Public rights-of-way, including those owned or maintained by:
 - The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT);
 - Other state agencies;
 - Public utility providers;
- Previously disturbed or developed linear infrastructure corridors.

C. Co-Location and Consolidation

The County strongly supports:

- Co-location of new transmission infrastructure within or adjacent to existing corridors;
- Consolidation of infrastructure to reduce the proliferation of new corridors;
- Expansion or upgrade of existing corridors where feasible, rather than creation of new alignments.

IV. AVOIDANCE AND MINIMIZATION OF IMPACTS

A. Residential Areas

Transmission infrastructure should:

- Avoid routing through established residential areas where practicable;
- Maximize distance from homes and community facilities;
- Minimize visual and noise impacts.

B. Agricultural and Forestal Lands

Transmission projects should:

- Avoid bisecting large agricultural parcels;
- Minimize fragmentation of working farms;
- Maintain access for agricultural operations;
- Be aligned along parcel boundaries or existing infrastructure where possible.

C. Rural Character and Scenic Resources

Transmission infrastructure should:

- Minimize visibility from scenic rural roadways;
- Avoid ridgelines and prominent visual features where practicable;
- Maintain the visual integrity of rural landscapes.

D. Environmental Resources

Projects should:

- Avoid sensitive environmental areas where practicable;
- Minimize tree clearing and land disturbance;
- Restore disturbed areas to pre-construction or improved conditions.

E. Conservation Easements

Transmission infrastructure should:

- Avoid impacts to properties under conservation easement where no feasible alternative exists;
- Minimize encroachment on conserved lands when avoidance is not feasible;
- Coordinate with easement holders, including land trusts and public entities, early in the siting process;
- Ensure compliance with the terms and restrictions of recorded conservation easements.

F. Historical and Cultural Resources

Transmission infrastructure should:

- Avoid known historic, archaeological, and cultural resource sites where no feasible alternative exists;
- Minimize impacts to properties listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places;
- Consider locally significant historical and cultural resources identified;
- Coordinate with appropriate state and federal agencies regarding identified resources;
- Incorporate mitigation measures where impacts cannot be fully avoided.

V. EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVES

Applicants proposing transmission infrastructure are encouraged to:

- Evaluate multiple routing alternatives;
- Demonstrate how the selected route minimizes impacts consistent with this policy;

- Provide clear justification when new corridors are proposed instead of using existing corridors.

VI. INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITY IMPACTS

A. Transportation and Public Infrastructure

Transmission projects should:

- Minimize impacts to public roads and infrastructure;
- Coordinate with VDOT and the County on access, construction, and restoration;
- Utilize existing transportation corridors where feasible.

B. Community Engagement

The County supports:

- Early and ongoing engagement with affected property owners;
- Transparent communication regarding project scope, timing, and impacts;
- Coordination with local officials and staff throughout project development.

VII. UNDERGROUNDING POLICY

Louisa County supports the underground placement of transmission infrastructure where it is technically feasible, economically reasonable, and results in a reduction of impacts to the community and environment.

This policy is intended as guidance and shall not be interpreted as a requirement where such placement is not practicable.

VIII. CONSISTENCY WITH COUNTY GROWTH MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

This policy reinforces the County's broader goals to:

- Direct growth into designated growth areas;
- Preserve rural character outside growth areas;
- Protect agricultural and forestal lands from fragmentation;
- Ensure infrastructure investments align with long-term land use planning.

Transmission infrastructure should be planned and sited in a manner that

supports, and does not undermine, these objectives.

IX. IMPLEMENTATION

The policies contained herein shall be implemented through:

- Zoning ordinance provisions, including Conditional Use Permit requirements;
- Review of development applications;
- Participation in state and federal regulatory proceedings;
- Coordination with utility providers and state agencies.

X. POLICY INTERPRETATION

This policy is intended to guide land use decisions and provide a framework for evaluating transmission infrastructure proposals. It shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with applicable state and federal law and shall not supersede the authority of the Virginia State Corporation Commission (SCC) or other governing entities.