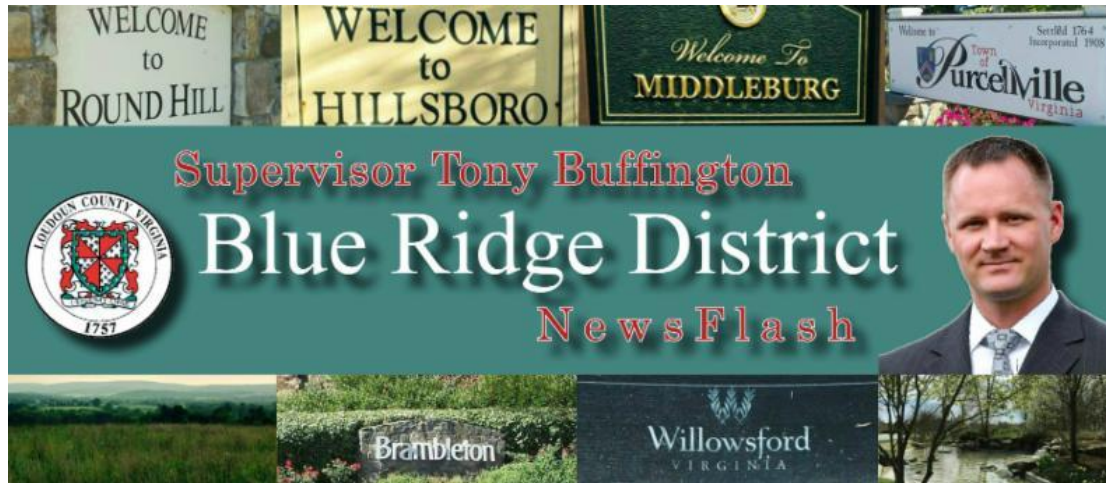


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## Route 9 Safety, Speed Limit Adjustment, & Ongoing Initiative Update

January 8, 2018

I wanted to provide an update regarding safety, proposed speed limit adjustments, and other ongoing initiatives for the Route 9 corridor.

**VDOT Meeting & Joint Route 9 Speed Limit Recommendation Letter  
(Buffington, Higgins, Chapman, Vance)**



On December 11, 2017, myself and Mayor Vance, along with representatives from Supervisor Higgins' office, the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office (LCSO), the Loudoun County Department of Transportation Office, and a Route 9 resident/business owner, met with VDOT to discuss recommended Route 9 speed limit adjustments found within VDOT's, "VDOT Speed Limit Study" approved July 5, 2017.

The meeting went well; however, myself, Mayor Vance, and LCSO did not agree with VDOT recommendations to increase speeds along portions of Route 9. As such, myself, Supervisor Higgins, Mayor Vance and Sheriff Chapman sent the below letter to VDOT recommending speed limit adjustments that we believe are more conducive to increased safety along the corridor. Please note that final decision making authority for speed limit adjustments along the Route 9 corridor rest with VDOT.



Loudoun County, Virginia

[www.loudoun.gov](http://www.loudoun.gov)

Loudoun County Board of Supervisors

1 Harrison Street, S.E., MSC #1, 5th Floor, P.O. Box 7000, Leesburg, VA 20177-7000

Telephone (703) 777-0204 • Fax (703) 777-0421 • [Bos@loudoun.gov](mailto:Bos@loudoun.gov)

January 3, 2018

To: Helen Cuervo, VDOT Northern Virginia District Administrator

Subject: Route 9 Speed Limit Recommendations

Ms. Cuervo,

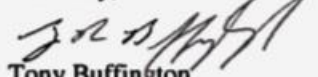
In response to Route 9 speed limit recommendations found within the "VDOT Speed Limit Study" dated May 2, 2017, and subsequently approved by VDOT Engineer Kuttesch on July 5, 2017, Loudoun elected officials Buffington, Higgins, Chapman, and Vance, hereby recommend the following:

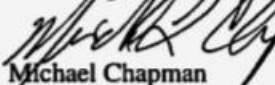
- Maintain 50 mph speed limit from the West Virginia line to Harpers Ferry Road.
- Ensure 40 mph speed limit from Harpers Ferry Road to the Town of Hillsboro.  
Note: there should be appropriate 35 mph deceleration zones on both approaches to the Town of Hillsboro.
- Ensure 25 mph speed limit within Hillsboro's Town Limits (border to border).
- Ensure 40 mph speed limit from the Town of Hillsboro to Route 7.


Please note that several of the above recommendations vary from those made in the "VDOT Speed Limit Study."

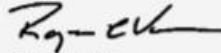
Please consider our recommendations as part of the decision making process for implementation of speed limit adjustments to the Route 9 corridor within Loudoun County.

Sincerely,

  
Tony Buffington  
Loudoun County Supervisor  
Blue Ridge District

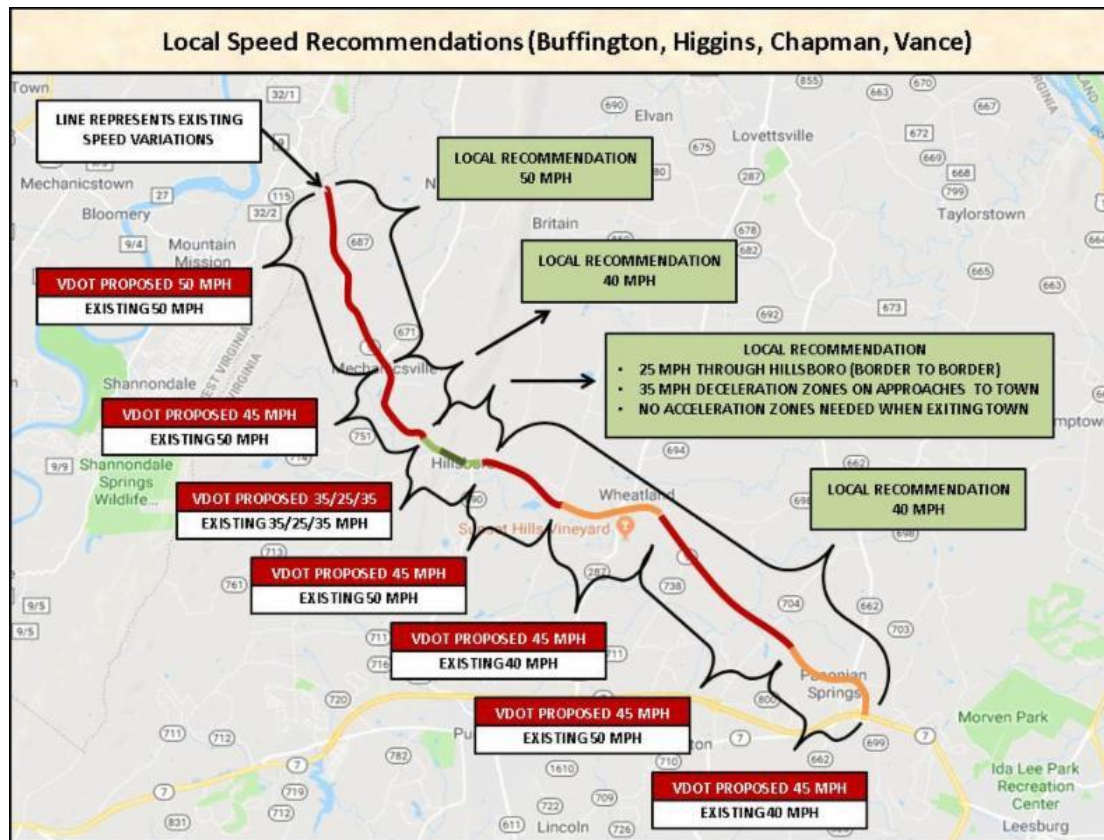
  
Michael Chapman  
Loudoun County Sheriff

  
Geary Higgins  
Loudoun County Supervisor  
Catocin District

  
Roger Vance  
Mayor of Hillsboro

Cc: Phyllis Randall, Loudoun County Supervisor, Chair at Large  
Farid Bigdeli, VDOT Director of Transportation & Land Use, Loudoun County  
Sunil Taori, VDOT Assistant Director of Transportation & Land Use, Loudoun County  
Tim Hemstreet, Loudoun County Administrator  
Joe Kroboth, Loudoun County Department of Transportation and Capital Infrastructure

The below graphic reflects the Route 9 corridor, existing speeds (white boxes), VDOT recommended speed limit adjustments (red boxes), and the alternate speed limit recommendations identified in the above letter (green boxes).



### Increased Sheriff's Office Enforcement

Whether through traffic stops, commercial vehicle inspections, selective enforcement operations, data collection, variable message boards, speed display signs, or decoy police vehicles, the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office has been extremely responsive to our request for increased enforcement along Rt 9 from Rt 7 to the West Virginia line. As such, I want to personally thank Sheriff Chapman and Western Loudoun Station Commander, Captain Greg Ahlemann, for their continued support of our requests for increased enforcement.

The LCSO reports the following recent increased enforcement statistics for Rt 9:

- Traffic stops with tickets: 63



- Commercial Vehicle Inspections: 15

Drivers are encouraged to report all reckless/aggressive driving to: 703-777-1021



**County Funded Route 9 Safety & Operational Study!  
(Board of Supervisors Initiative)**

At the June 29, 2017, County Transportation Summit, staff was directed by the Board to conduct safety and operational studies of the County's primary rural roads to include Route 9, Route 7, Route 50, Route 15, and others. The purpose of the studies will be to identify existing safety and traffic operational issues and to recommend mitigating solutions that can then be considered by the Board.

Since the studies will need to be conducted in a prioritized order, and given the fact that the Route 15 study is already underway, I have spoken with County staff and come to an agreement that the Route 9 study should be next in priority.

Staff is working on this item and hopeful to present it for Board consideration as soon as possible after the FY-2019 budget has been approved (April of 2018). I am

hopeful that my colleagues will support efforts to ensure the Route 9 Study is prioritized and approved as the next in line.

### **Route 9 Area County Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Projects**

**Route 9/Route 287 Roundabout:** This project will remove the traffic signal and construct a roundabout to enhance safety and reduce traffic congestion at the Rt 9/Rt 287 intersection. Design funding was included in the FY16 adopted budget to initiate intersection improvement planning and design. On September 7, 2017, a design contract was issued. The design consultant has completed their traffic counts, initiated field survey work, and began conceptual design for the roundabout. Staff plans to seek Board of Supervisor approval of a design in late Summer of 2018. Based on the current funding plan, right-of-way acquisition will begin in Summer of 2020, utility relocation will occur in Summer of 2021, and construction will begin in Summer of 2022.

**Rt 7/Route 690 Interchange:** This project constructs an interchange at the intersection of Rt 7 and Rt 690. As part of the FY17 budget process I was able to accelerate the County's funding request plan for this project by one year from FY22 to FY21. The Finance Committee approved a design services contract on November 15, 2016. An inspection of the existing Rt 690 Bridge over Rt 7 showed that expansion of the existing bridge would provide insufficient clearance, and that the existing Rt 7 pavement thickness fails to meet current VDOT standards. DTCI and Dewberry have concluded it is more cost effective to replace the bridge than to retrofit it to meet the project and current VDOT standards.

Most recently, this project received full funding via a Commonwealth Transportation Board of Virginia Smart Scale award of \$5.5 million. This is great news as the project is now fully funded; however, this type of funding "federalizes" the project which will result in an 18-24 month delay to project construction now planned to begin in FY23. The delay is due to the additional processes and layers of approval that come with a federalized project. It should be noted that the previous construction schedule, like all projects, was based on anticipated funding from various funding sources - most of which are not under local control - which are awarded on a competitive (and sometimes political) basis, and are never set in stone.

While I am extremely unhappy about the delay, it would be unwise for the County to deny this funding in hopes of another funding source that may not federalize the project being awarded in the next year or so, as that would be highly unlikely. County denial of the funding would also tarnish our reputation with state and federal funding sources and ultimately result in less funding from these sources, which would in turn result in increased pressure to raise local taxes as a means to address traffic congestion concerns throughout the County. As always, I will continue to look for ways to accelerate this project and will keep you informed as additional updates become available.

**Rt 7/Route 287 Interchange:** This is a new project that I was able to have added to the CIP during the FY17 budget process. The project provides for design, preliminary engineering and construction of future improvements to the Rt 7/Rt 287 Interchange in Purcellville. As part of last year's FY18 budget process, I was able to get design funding accelerated from FY22 to FY21. Since then I have continued to work with County staff to consider even further acceleration. My desire is to begin design work in the Summer of 2018 so that construction can begin when planned. Funding for this project will be provided by the Virginia Department of Transportation; therefore, further acceleration is contingent upon their commitment to approve the funding in the timeline we requested. Currently, the project is scheduled to be fully funded (\$11.5 million) using Smart Scale funding in FY 22 and FY23.

**Hillsboro Road (widening of current narrow alternating lane section):** I have been working with VDOT for over a year to identify a solution for widening the short section of Hillsboro Rd where vehicles currently have to stop to allow oncoming traffic to pass due to the lack of two full lanes of traffic over the creek crossing. I was pleased to report in my Fall of 2017 Newsletter that VDOT had identified an approved design and necessary state funding to widen the crossing to one full lane each way so that vehicles would no longer have to yield to oncoming traffic. VDOT previously advised that, weather permitting, the project would be completed prior to January of 2018; however, we are experiencing a delay due to 8 VDOT Emergency Snow Duty activations since December. That said, I remain hopeful that VDOT will complete this project in January or February of 2018.

**Hillsboro Traffic Calming, Pedestrian Safety, Congestion Mitigation and Infrastructure Project:** This project will construct traffic calming and congestion mitigation, pedestrian safety, utility and water/wastewater improvements along Route 9 through the Town of Hillsboro. Improvements will include roundabouts on both sides of Town, traffic calming streetscaping, sidewalks and multi-use trails, safe on-street parking, burial of overhead utility lines, replacement of antiquated water system (main, meters and laterals), and installation of sanitary sewer main and laterals. The goal is to construct all projects simultaneously in order to reduce cost and minimize impacts to traffic, businesses, and area residents.

Last year, my colleagues on the board supported my request for \$4.8 million in FY18 to help fund design of the entire project and construction of the "downtown" section and the project (not including roundabouts), and secured a Transportation Alternatives grant to build the GapWay multi-use trail from Mountain Rd to Hillsboro Rd. As part of this year's FY19 budget process, I will seek Board approval for the additional funds necessary to construct the remaining portions of this project concurrent with the "downtown" portion. Not only would approval of such funding save considerable funds due to the cost of inflation, but it would greatly reduce negative impacts to area traffic, businesses and residents.

This project is being administered by the Town of Hillsboro and the design and construction management contract was awarded to Volkert Engineering last Fall. Volkert has met with Loudoun County Building & Development and VDOT regarding stormwater management strategies. Several citizen meetings were also held, and an environmental assessment for The Gap Way Trail has begun. Final design and final plan submission to the County is anticipated in February and an RFP for construction will be issued in Spring. Construction is expected to begin in the summer.

As always, I will continue to keep you informed as progress continues.

All my best,



Tony Buffington  
Blue Ridge District Supervisor  
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