

Prince William Board of County Supervisors:
Prince William County Transportation Director:
Prince William County Planning Commission:

THE ISSUE: The recently published Prince William County Pathway To 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update contains a Purcell Road Extension East that would convert Peaks Mill Drive into a four lane highway and construct a new highway connecting Purcell Road to Peaks Mill Drive.

On March 5, 2013, the Prince William County Board of County Supervisors removed the Purcell Road East Extension from the County Comprehensive Plan by amendment because it was determined to not be feasible and not in the best interest of the county and residents. An extension would have created a four-lane highway right through the middle of the Hunters Ridge community of 216 well established homes/properties and due to engineering and environmental restrictions would have been exceedingly expensive to build. Please recognize that this extension must cross Champs Mill Branch which is protected by the 1988 Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act.

Prior to the Purcell Road Extension's removal in 2013, there was an outcry and opposition against the extension, which the county rightfully heard and acknowledged; thus resulting in its removal from the Comprehensive Plan. Nearly 10 years later this very same proposed extension has resurfaced in the County's Pathway To 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update recently released. Clearly this projects inclusion disregards all of the review and public outcry that caused it to be removed in 2013.

Considering adding Purcell Road Extension East back into the PWC Comprehensive Plan 2040 is not only a bad idea, but it ignores the prior deliberations of the Board in determining it would be removed in 2013. This extension is an extremely expensive idea that would not be a prudent and responsible use of taxpayer county revenue, would not solve a legitimate problem, would only add congestion, noise, and speeding vehicles through the middle of the well-established community of Hunters Ridge, while diminishing highway safety, which would be a threat to the Hunters Ridge and Purcell communities.

The following are reasons why the Purcell Road Extension East should not be reconsidered for addition to the PWC Comprehensive Plan 2040:

- It was removed from the Comprehensive Plan in 2013 for a number of good reasons, all of which remain good reasons today and into the future.
- Priority should be given to address Purcell Road in and of itself without considering extending the poor planning and poor road development into other communities such as Hunters Ridge. Purcell Road's poor planning and execution can't be resolved by extending it because the original factors that resulted from its poor planning and execution would still exist.
- Purcell Road was poorly designed and constructed and it has too many curves and changes in terrain making it dangerous. A better solution would be to fix Purcell Road by combination of traffic calming to prevent speeding and revising/improving its design by eliminating the number of curves and terrain transitions. Attempting to fix something that is not broken such as extending it and connecting it to Peaks Mill Drive making Peaks Mill Drive a four-lane highway is a lawed approach. There is no advantage to connecting Peaks Mill Drive to the Prince William County Parkway.
- Designate Purcell a community road for residents only and not a pass-through/cut-through road as residents are more aware of the many curves and terrain transitions and are greater prepared to not drive too fast for its conditions.
- The terrain between Purcell Road and Peaks Mill Drive is environmentally restricted with a multitude of terrain transitions, which make it unsuitable for road and bridge construction.
- An extension does not solve a problem with Purcell Road or a county problem. It makes no sense and would be a total waste of taxpayer funding to build a highway merely for the sake of building a highway. From Manassas to Woodbridge or to Interstate 95 or Route 1, we already have the Prince William Parkway (294) to the north of Purcell Road. Additionally we already have Dumfries Road (234) to the south of Purcell Road and they both are very efficient thoroughfares within Prince William County that effectively and safely move traffic between Gainesville, Interstate 66, Fairfax County, Manassas, Manassas Park, Woodbridge, Occoquan, Dumfries, Interstate 95, and Route 1 (Richmond Highway). These very efficient highway arteries effortlessly and safely move traffic across our county. Let's take a more specific look at this. It makes no sense for someone traveling east or west on the Prince William County Parkway or someone traveling east or west on Dumfries Road to want to get off of a major four-lane highway to have to drive slower on an ill-conceived Purcell Road Extension East to merely get on the parkway or Dumfries Road. A driver would gain nothing, time or mileage-wise, if they are going to the east or west portion of the county. As a matter of fact, it would take them longer to reach their destination. Plus, Hoadly Road already exists for those wishing

to efficiently transition from Dumfries Road to the Prince William Parkway and vice versa. Mapquest states that it takes only 10 minutes to drive on the Prince William Parkway from Hoadly Road to Liberia Avenue and the same time from Hoadly Road to the Prince William Parkway that connects to Liberia Avenue in Manassas. Therefore, a Purcell Road Extension East is unnecessary, especially when there is not a single high-visited point of interest half way between the Purcell community and Hunters Ridge community such as a major hospital or government center in which a Purcell Road Extension East would serve as the sole entry/exit highway to it.

- It does not make “good revenue use nor safety sense” to take a local Purcell Road community issue and destroy another community of Hunters Ridge by creating an unneeded four-lane highway right through the center of Hunters Ridge that increases passenger vehicle and commercial truck traffic, loud noise, and creates speeding through Hunters Ridge, which will likely result in countless safety issues, accidents, and injuries within Hunters Ridge.
- A four-lane highway through the center of Hunters Ridge will have a devastating negative impact on our home/property values. No one wants to live adjacent to a highway with speeding vehicles.
- A Purcell Road Extension will only serve as a cut-through for people who are prone to exceed the speed limit who merely look for a short-cut when there is an accident impeding them, or they are late or are merely inclined or predisposed to speeding. In Hunters Ridge there has always been a 25 mile-per-hour (MPH) speed limit. In the early 2000s the community petitioned county engineers to conduct two speed studies. The speed study’s findings revealed that some vehicles were clocked at over 75 MPH on Coloriver Road, Peaks Mill Drive, and Charles Lacey Drive. Each has a 25 MPH speed limit. Speeding did not subside until the county installed speed tables on Coloriver Road, Peaks Mill Drive, and Charles Lacey Drive. When the speed tables were installed there was a reduction of approximately 75% of the cut-through traffic in Hunters Ridge. The majority of cut-through traffic was comprised of people/drivers who significantly exceeded the posted speed limit.
- To build a Purcell Road East Extension East would be like building a bridge to nowhere as was the case with the famous bridge to nowhere in Alaska. Purcell Road Extension East could become known as the “Road to Nowhere,” likened to the “Bridge to Nowhere.” Concerning the “Bridge to Nowhere,” Wikipedia states, “

*“The **Gravina Island Bridge**, commonly referred to as the “**Bridge to Nowhere**”, was a proposed bridge to replace the [ferry](#) that currently*

connects the town of *Ketchikan, Alaska, United States*, with *Gravina Island*, an island that contains the *Ketchikan International Airport* as well as 50 residents. The bridge was projected to cost \$398 million. Members of the Alaskan congressional delegation, particularly Representative *Don Young* and Senator *Ted Stevens*, were the bridge's biggest advocates in Congress, and helped push for federal funding.^[1] The project encountered fierce opposition outside Alaska as a symbol of *pork barrel* spending and is labeled as one of the more prominent "*bridges to nowhere*".^[2] As a result, *Congress* removed the federal *earmark* for the bridge in 2005.^[3] Funding for the "Bridge to Nowhere" was continued as of March 2, 2011, in the passing of H.R. 662: Surface Transportation Extension Act of 2011^{[4][5][6]} by the House of Representatives, and finally cancelled in 2015."

As elected Prince William County supervisors (officials), it may not be prudent to be associated with a Purcell Extension "Road to Nowhere,"

Properties in Hunters Ridge are currently valued from approximately \$700,000 to over \$1,000,000. While like other county communities, we shoulder and contribute significantly to the county's revenue budget. ***We, the residents of Hunters Ridge strongly urge the Board of County Supervisors not to reconsider adding the ill-conceived Purcell Road Extension East back into the Comprehensive Plan and we strongly oppose it as tax-paying residents/citizens. Fix the Purcell Road community issue, but do not break the Hunters Ridge community by adding an unnecessary highway through the center of our community, which does not solve the Purcell Road problem.***

Sincerely,

//Signed//

Delton Nichols
President, Hunters Ridge HOA