Town of Herndon

2027 General Assembly Legislative Priorities and Advocacy Positions

PRIORITIES

Preserve Local Land Use and Planning Authority

Support legislation that preserves local authority over land use, zoning, development approvals, urban design, and community planning.

Oppose legislation that:

- Mandates by-right development without meaningful local review.
- Preempts local zoning authority.
- Imposes statewide housing production mandates.
- Eliminates local discretion regarding development standards, site design, density, parking, or infrastructure adequacy.

Local elected officials are best positioned to balance housing needs, transportation capacity, public facilities, environmental protection, and neighborhood compatibility.

The 2026 General Assembly continued a trend toward increasing state involvement in local housing and zoning decisions, including by-right affordable housing provisions. We can expect this trend to continue in 2027.

Advocacy Actions

- Support retention of local zoning authority.
- Support flexible tools for affordable housing implementation.
- Oppose additional state preemption of local land-use decisions.

Preserve Local Government Workforce Flexibility – Collective Bargaining

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Herndon supports good-faith collective bargaining where locally adopted, but opposes any statewide structure that treats a 25,000-person town the same as Fairfax County, Virginia Beach, or a large school division.

Support the ability of local governments to recruit, retain, and fairly compensate employees while preserving local budget authority, management rights, and operational flexibility.

Support legislation that maintains collective bargaining as a locally adopted option and recognizes the substantially different capacity of smaller municipalities. For any statewide public-sector collective bargaining framework, support an exemption, opt-in structure, delayed implementation, or modified compliance path for municipalities with populations under 50,000.

At minimum, support language that:

- Preserves local ordinances adopted before any statewide framework.
- Allows small localities to define appropriate bargaining units, eligible employee groups, and negotiable subjects.
- Protects local authority over staffing levels, deployment, discipline, management rights, budget preparation, appropriations, and matters controlled by state or federal law.
- Prevents a statewide board from requiring broader bargaining units than those locally authorized.
- Provides state funding, technical assistance, and phased implementation for any new administrative, legal, or labor-relations requirements.
- Ensures that dispatch, public safety, public works, and small departments are not swept into one-size-fits-all bargaining models without local governing body approval.

Oppose Unfunded Mandates

Support legislation that provides sufficient state funding whenever new local responsibilities, programs, reporting requirements, staffing obligations, or regulatory requirements are imposed.

Oppose legislation that:

- Creates new local requirements without dedicated funding.
- Transfers state responsibilities to local governments.
- Requires significant local expenditures without state financial assistance.

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Local governments continue to face increasing costs associated with environmental regulation, infrastructure maintenance, housing initiatives, public safety, and labor requirements.

Advocacy Actions

- Require fiscal impact analysis for legislation affecting local governments.
- Seek state funding for all new compliance requirements.
- Support state assumption of costs associated with state-mandated programs.

Support Local Flexibility in Housing Development

Support legislation that expands local tools to encourage housing affordability while preserving local implementation flexibility.

Support:

- Affordable dwelling unit programs.
- Workforce housing incentives.
- Rehabilitation of existing housing stock.
- Housing grants and financing assistance.

Oppose:

- Mandatory statewide or locality housing quotas.
- Development mandates that bypass infrastructure planning.

The Town supports increasing housing opportunities while retaining the ability to address local conditions and infrastructure constraints.

Protect Meaningful Local Review of Major Infrastructure Projects*

Position

Support legislation that preserves local participation in decisions regarding:

- Data centers.
- Utility corridors.
- Transmission facilities.
- Energy infrastructure.

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- Battery energy storage facilities.
- Telecommunications facilities.

Northern Virginia continues to experience significant infrastructure demands associated with economic growth, technological development, and energy consumption.

Local governments should retain meaningful opportunities to evaluate impacts on:

- Neighborhoods.
- Transportation networks.
- Water resources.
- Public facilities.
- Environmental resources.

Advocacy Actions

- Support local notice and review requirements.
- Oppose broad state preemption of local infrastructure oversight.
- Support regional coordination efforts.

**Governor's September 17, 2026 Executive Order*

Support Transportation Safety and Mobility

Position

Support legislation that provides local governments with tools to improve transportation safety.

Support:

- Automated speed enforcement in appropriate locations.
- Pedestrian and bicycle safety initiatives.
- Transit-oriented infrastructure investments.
- Regional transportation funding.
- Local authority to use automated safety tools, including red-light safety cameras, school-zone speed enforcement, pedestrian safety enforcement, and other proven traffic safety measures, with appropriate due-process, signage, privacy, and reporting requirements.

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- Allowing localities to retain revenues from traffic safety programs for transportation safety, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, Safe Routes to School, local systemic safety improvements, and roadway redesign.

Transportation safety remains a priority for residents and businesses, especially in and around Metro stations.

Advocacy Actions

- Support local flexibility in implementing transportation safety programs.
- Preserve local authority regarding traffic management tools.

Protect Local Fiscal Sustainability

Support legislation that:

- Preserves existing local revenue sources.
- Provides revenue options to address growing service demands.
- Ensures equitable distribution of state funding.

Oppose legislation that:

- Erodes local revenues.
- Shifts state costs to local governments.
- Creates fiscal obligations without corresponding resources.

Preserve Local Authority to Protect Community Character and Environmental Resources

Position

Support local authority related to:

- Open space protection.
- Historic Districts
- Tree canopy preservation.
- Urban forestry programs.
- Environmental stewardship initiatives.

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Local governments should retain flexibility to balance redevelopment objectives and environmental protection goals.

Preserve Local Authority Over Cannabis, Hemp, Tobacco, and Vape Retail Uses

Support a safe, well-regulated cannabis and hemp retail framework that preserves local zoning, business licensing, public safety, code enforcement, signage, distance-separation, and land-use authority.

Support local authority to regulate the location and operation of cannabis, hemp, tobacco, vape, and related retail uses, particularly near schools, parks, day care facilities, residential neighborhoods, and youth-serving uses.

Oppose legislation or regulations that preempt local zoning, eliminate local review, or limit the Town's ability to address public safety, nuisance, signage, odor, hours of operation, clustering, or enforcement concerns.

Support local revenue authority and state enforcement resources sufficient to address inspection, licensing, public education, and illegal-market enforcement impacts.

Protect Local Authority Over Gaming, Casinos, and Skill Games

Oppose legislation authorizing casino gaming, electronic skill games, or other expanded gaming activity in Northern Virginia without meaningful local approval, regional impact analysis, and local authority over zoning, enforcement, public safety, and revenue allocation.

Oppose any casino legislation that designates Fairfax County or a Silver Line-adjacent location as eligible for casino gaming without the support of the affected local governing bodies and without analysis of transportation, public safety, economic displacement, problem-gaming, and community impacts.

If the General Assembly considers regulating electronic skill games or creating a consolidated gaming commission, support strong local opt-in/opt-out authority, zoning controls, enforcement funding, machine caps, public safety protections, and direct local revenue sharing.

Protect Ratepayers and Local Participation in Utility Decisions

Support strong State Corporation Commission review of utility mergers, acquisitions, rate cases, transmission projects, and energy infrastructure proposals that affect local governments, residents, and small businesses.

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Support meaningful public participation, including accessible in-person hearings in affected regions, transparent ratepayer-impact analysis, and protections ensuring that residential customers, small businesses, and local governments do not subsidize infrastructure costs driven primarily by large high-energy users.

Oppose legislation that weakens SCC oversight, limits local participation, or shifts energy, transmission, or infrastructure costs onto local ratepayers without clear public benefit.

Support Practical Transparency and FOIA Compliance

Support transparency measures that improve public access to local government information while preserving workable procedures for small localities.

Oppose unfunded technology, posting, translation, archival, or reporting mandates that impose significant administrative burdens without state support.

Support reasonable flexibility for electronic meetings, advisory bodies, emergency meetings, agenda management, and small-board compliance.

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