



Loudoun County, Virginia

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NEWS RELEASE

Office of the County Administrator, Public Affairs and Communications

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Updated Draft Zoning Ordinance Now Available

The Loudoun County Planning Commission has reached another significant milestone in the ongoing Zoning Ordinance Rewrite project. A new draft of the proposed ordinance was published on May 19, 2023. The updated text incorporates the commission's work to date and results in the first complete draft ordinance in more than a year, that is inclusive of all draft chapters.

The Planning Commission and its subcommittees met for more than 20 work sessions in recent months to consider revisions to the regulations within the ordinance and to direct changes to the text. The commission has received thousands of comments from members of the public, which have informed the process to date. The commission has streamlined the ordinance to produce a more simple, modern ordinance that is intended to be easier to use by the public. The commission continues to work toward final recommended text. The commission's next work session is scheduled for June 5, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.

The May 19, 2023, draft ordinance includes 12 chapters that have been refined by the Planning Commission since its August 30, 2022, and January 24, 2023 public hearings. Currently, the Planning Commission has not recommended any remapping or changes to existing zoning district or overlay district boundaries. Highlights of the draft ordinance updates include:

- **Chapter 1, Introduction:** This chapter clarifies how to apply and interpret the Zoning Ordinance text and map, affirms protections for commercial or industrial property owners in the Route 28 Tax District, and addresses nonconforming uses, lots, and structures.
- **Chapter 2, Zoning Districts:** Zoning District requirements are contained in the chapter and it also implements the new Urban Policy Area in the General Plan; new urban zoning districts have been added; and a property owner may choose to rezone to one of these new urban districts. Other new districts have been added as well. A new Planned Unit Development zoning district offers a new option to create a holistically designed development. Approved projects are protected via Legacy Districts and may continue to build out according to existing approvals.
- **Chapter 3, Uses:** This chapter consolidates uses for all zoning districts into a series of tables, making it easier to find which uses are permitted in which zoning districts.
- **Chapter 4, Use Specific Standards:** Use-specific standards are consolidated in one chapter. To minimize legislative review by the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission, some uses have changed from requiring special exception approval to being permitted by-right with use-specific standards.
- **Chapter 5, Overlay Districts:** The chapter includes revisions to the Mountainside Overlay District to enhance protections for ridgelines and streams.
- **Chapter 6, Natural and Environmental Resources:** This chapter provides enhanced protections for steep slopes and water resources through new River and Stream Corridor Resources standards.

- **Chapter 7, Development Standards:** This chapter includes new standards to incentivize protecting priority open space and promoting adaptive reuse of historic properties.
- **Chapter 8, Signs:** Content-neutral regulations focus on a sign's physical characteristics, such as size, height, setback and lighting, and not on a sign's content, purpose or use.
- **Chapter 9, Attainable Housing:** This chapter focuses on achieving the county's goals for attainable housing.
- **Chapter 10, Procedures:** Procedures are consolidated into one chapter. Flexibility is provided through expanded opportunities for administrative review and approval.
- **Chapter 11, Officials, Boards and Commissions:** This chapter provides updated, clearer membership, terms, duties and meeting protocols for the Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals and Historic District Review Committee as well as powers and duties for the Zoning Administrator.
- **Chapter 12, Definitions:** Definitions have been updated or added to reflect new terms in the draft Zoning Ordinance.

The Planning Commission has directed edits to all chapters of the ordinance, some of which simply restructure the components of the ordinance and simplify the language. The complete text of all chapters of the latest draft ordinance are posted on the county's website at loudoun.gov/ZoningOrdinanceRewrite.

An update to the Zoning Ordinance is necessary following the adoption of the [Loudoun County 2019 Comprehensive Plan](#). The plan includes land use and transportation policies that provide a flexible framework for future development throughout the county. The Zoning Ordinance includes the regulations that implement the vision within the Comprehensive Plan.

The Planning Commission is currently anticipated to forward a recommended ordinance to the Board of Supervisors for consideration this summer. The Board of Supervisors will seek additional input on the draft ordinance from members of the public. The Board may consider additional revisions to the draft ordinance before ultimately adopting a new Zoning Ordinance, which could occur by the end of 2023. The adopted ordinance will replace the current ordinance, which is known as the [Revised 1993 Zoning Ordinance](#).

Comprehensive project information is posted on the county's website:

- Review the complete text of the May 19, 2023, draft zoning ordinance.
- View the Planning Commission's schedule and meeting materials.
- View comments submitted by members of the public.
- Submit comments to the Planning Commission through an online form.
- Sign up for text and email updates on the project.

For this information and more about the ongoing Zoning Ordinance Rewrite project, visit loudoun.gov/ZoningOrdinanceRewrite.

Once adopted by the Board of Supervisors, the county's new Zoning Ordinance will be posted online. The final ordinance will include all relevant links, including to the Code of Virginia.

Additionally, the ordinance will be housed in the county's online, searchable database, which will facilitate the easy use of the ordinance by members of the public.

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