



Loudoun County

VIRGINIA

WHERE TRADITION MEETS INNOVATION

Zoning Ordinance Rewrite: Overview of Focus Group Input

Zoning Ordinance Committee

December 2, 2020

Community and Advisory Body Engagement Round One – January thru July 2020

- Completed 30 in-person and remote focus groups
 - ZOAG, DAAR, ADUAB, Loudoun Water, NVBIA, Historic Village Alliance, Loudoun Chamber, LCPC, Heritage Commission, REDC, HDRC, NAIOP, HAB, COLT, Save Rural Loudoun, PC, MWAA, Equine Alliance, PEC, HOA Coalition, Soil and Water District, Dominion Energy, Rt. 28 Advisory Board, Data Center Coalition, Visit Loudoun
- Yielded 918 comments, supplemental input

General Themes from Public Input

Desired Zoning Ordinance

Simple, clear, predictable and applied consistently and equitably

User can conduct own research

User-friendly with graphics and tables

Flexible/room for innovation

Modern/adapts well to trends and new uses

Aligned with other regulatory documents

Focus Group Topics

1. Process
2. Zoning Districts
3. Overlay Districts
4. Uses & Definitions
5. Lot & Building Standards
6. Development Options
7. Performance Standards
8. Landscaping, Screening & Buffering
9. Parking
10. Signs



Like?
Dislike?
Change?

Development Review Process

- Time-consuming, expensive, difficult
- Too much detail expected up-front
- Review process should vary based on scope and intensity of proposal
- More administrative, fewer legislative approval processes
- Notify adjacent property owners, HOAs about applications early
- Request referral comments from HOAs
- Complaint-based enforcement is inadequate
- Review projects during and after construction for conformance with conditions/proffers

Zoning Districts

- Consolidate similar zoning districts
- Provide easy-to-understand table of allowed uses by district
- Provide more flexibility for innovative ideas, minimize zoning modifications
- Allow mixed-use options in more zoning districts

Overlay Districts

- Hard to find what overlays apply to property, associated standards
- Allowed uses in overlays are unclear, too strict/inflexible
- Allow planting in floodplain without analysis, alteration
- FOD, Scenic Creek Valley, Reservoir Protection not consistent
- Consider a River and Stream Corridor Resource/Trail Overlay
- Update VCOD to better accommodate unique village characteristics
- Relax housing restrictions in Airport Impact Overlay
- Route 28 optional overlays too prescriptive

Uses & Definitions

- Allow more uses by-right
- Permissive zoning scheme not working as currently applied (e.g. “If it’s not listed, it’s not permitted”)
- Listed uses too specific, need to generalize uses and definitions
- Expand staff ability to administratively classify unlisted uses based on similar listed uses, improve adaptability to new trends
- Consolidate similar, repetitive uses (e.g. substations, restaurants)
- Exclude zoning requirements from definitions

Lot and Building Standards

- Allow greater flexibility in lot coverage, building height
- Allow smaller lot sizes for attainable housing
- Ensure minimum lot sizes are large enough for intended use, related design standards (e.g. screening/buffering)
- Clarify intent, adequacy of setbacks/yards to reduce mods
- Define, apply building height consistently across ordinances, agencies

Development Options

- Rural subdivision regulations not protecting prime soils
- Open Space:
 - Prioritize natural, usable open space
 - Integrate existing natural areas, vegetation into open space
 - Avoid habitat fragmentation, interconnect open space
- Width of private roads in residential communities too narrow
- Improve interconnectivity between subdivisions
- Base allowed, required amenities for residential communities on size (e.g. feasible to maintain, operate)
- Make it easier for HOAs to change amenities to meet evolving resident needs, preferences...avoid specifying in negotiated proffers

Performance Standards

- Consider standards that promote overall sustainability in design, uses (e.g. renewable energy, water efficiency, reduce impervious surfaces)
- Protect farmland, natural and heritage resources, vistas
- Ensure standards address compatibility, mitigate impacts between uses, neighborhoods (e.g. site access, traffic, parking, noise, lighting/glare)
- Clarify noise regulations and who enforces them
- Address integration of public trails with private/HOA-managed trail systems

Landscaping, Screening, and Buffering

- Apply requirements consistently, equitably for predictability
- Require planting native species, removal of invasive species
- Focus on plant survivability, long-term maintenance
- Strengthen tree canopy, Tree Conservation Area requirements
- Address conflicts between required landscaping and utility easements
- Add flexibility for screening of following:
 - Areas out of public view
 - Areas between buildings on same site
 - Areas between similar uses (e.g. data center and substation)
 - Areas with systems that require airflow (e.g. intakes, chillers, generators)

Parking

- Residential communities *under* parked
 - Exclude garages and driveways when counting required spaces.
 - Residential parking areas must account for snow removal, trash pick-up, and emergency vehicles (current ratios do not)
 - Address commercial vehicle overflow onto residential streets.
 - Provide flexibility for HOAs to add parking as community needs evolve
 - HOA maintained parking should not count towards home day care required parking
- Nonresidential is *over* parked
 - More flexibility is desired for shared parking, parking for building use changes, parking for infill/redevelopment projects, and for adaptive reuse
- Parking, standards needed for bicycles, e-scooters, trail heads

Signs

- Greater flexibility desired
- Sign plans and modifications are costly, time-consuming
- Allowable signage should relate to building, property size
- Area calculation, allowance for project entrance signs should exclude sign wall, related decorative features
- Temporary, interim sales, construction signs should be treated differently than permanent signs

Timeline for Next Steps, Overall Project...

- Dec 2020 TLUC update
- Jan-Mar 2021 Round Two engagement
- Spring 2021 ROIA at BOS
- Summer 2021 Publish Draft Text, 90-day referral review
- Fall 2021 Planning Commission
- Early 2022 Board of Supervisors