

The proposed zoning ordinance is intended to preserve the substance and outcomes of the current ordinance, including established interpretations where appropriate, while improving clarity, organization, and usability. This handout highlights selected proposed substantive changes that may be of particular interest to residents, businesses, property owners, and other community stakeholders. It is not a comprehensive summary of all proposed amendments.

Article A. [General Provisions](#)

- 1. Provides Transitional Provisions and Vesting.** (Proposed Section 10-3-7)
 - a. Establishes standards for properties designated “Maintains Existing Proffers and Entitlements” on the Official Zoning Map.
 - b. Provides that a special use permit approved under the zoning ordinance in effect before the new ordinance’s effective date remains valid and will be treated as a special exception under the new Zoning Ordinance.
 - c. Provides that applications submitted on or after the effective date, as well as applications already under review or otherwise pending on that date, must comply with the new Zoning Ordinance. Council may, however, adopt a resolution at the time it adopts the new Zoning Ordinance to establish a limited grace period during which eligible applicants may elect to comply with either the prior zoning ordinance or the new Zoning Ordinance, subject to applicable requirements of the Code of Virginia

Article B. [Zoning Districts and District Standards](#)

- 1. Establishes a new Official Zoning Map with new zoning districts.** (See also: [Zoning Districts & Zoning Map Handout](#))
- 2. Updates dimensional standards – such as lot area, lot width, building height, and setbacks – for each zoning district.**
 - a. Reduces residential lot area requirements in most instances. (See also: [Residential Lot Area Requirements Engagement Handout](#))
 - b. Reduces residential setback requirements in most instances (See also: [Setbacks Engagement Handout](#))
- 3. Creates the proposed Suburban Neighborhood Residential (R-SN) district as the primary replacement for the current R-1 district.** Like the current R-1 district, R-SN would permit single-family detached dwellings by right. The proposed ordinance would reduce lot area and setback requirements, and also allows property owners to request approval for duplexes and single-family attached

dwelling through the special-exception process. (Proposed Sections 10-3-11 and 10-3-24)

4. **Adds streetscape and parking-location standards in the R-UN, R-ApC, MU-UV, MU-D, and C-NC districts to encourage buildings to relate more directly to public streets.** Depending on the district, these standards would limit or prohibit parking between buildings and streets and would limit rear building façades facing public streets. (Proposed Sections 10-3-13, 10-3-15, 10-3-16, 10-3-17, and 10-3-18)
5. **In the R-AtC district, creates an alternative development-site approach for certain residential development.** Rather than applying minimum lot-area standards to individual residential lots, qualifying development sites could be regulated by an overall density limit of one dwelling unit per 2,700 square feet of site area and by an approved site plan or zoning plan that establishes the development layout and applicable standards. (Proposed Section 10-3-14)
6. **In the MU-UV district, establishes a block-based framework for coordinated mixed-use development.** The framework would regulate block types, the location of certain uses, building frontage and pedestrian design, parking location, street and alley connections, and development phasing. (Proposed Section 10-3-16)
7. **Requires shared-access planning when larger commercially and industrially zoned properties are subdivided.** In the C-NC, C-AU, and I-G districts, a property with at least 200 feet of street frontage that is proposed to be divided into new lots would be required to submit a shared-access plan. The plan would show how the new lots will share driveways and access points to support appropriate entrance spacing, access management, and safer traffic operations. (Proposed Section 10-3-61)
8. **Creates a new Institutional Master Plan (IMP) district to replace the current I-1, Institutional Overlay District.** The IMP district would allow institutional campuses to be governed by an approved master plan addressing items such as development standards, use locations, and parking. (Proposed Section 10-3-21)

Article C. [Use Regulations](#)

1. **Reorganizes permitted uses into tables.** Uses would be organized by Use Classification, Use Category, and specific use. The tables would show whether a use is permitted by right, requires a special exception, or is prohibited, and would link to any applicable use-specific standards. New and updated use definitions are included in Article F.
 - a. See also: [Zoning Districts & Zoning Map Handout](#).
 - b. Use the [Zoning Use Table Comparison](#) to compare permitted uses in your property's current zoning district with those proposed in the draft ordinance.

Select each district from the drop-down menus to view the applicable use tables side by side.

2. **Renames “special use permits” as “special exceptions.”** This is primarily a terminology change. Uses requiring this type of approval would be identified with an “S” in the use tables. (Proposed Section 10-3-23.B)
3. **Defines residential housing types more clearly.** The proposed ordinance identifies and defines residential uses, including single-family detached dwellings, single-family attached dwellings, duplexes, townhouses, and apartment buildings. See Proposed Section 10-3-127, *Definitions*.
4. **A lot containing a single-family detached, single-family attached, duplex, or townhouse use is limited to one principal use and one principal building.** This differs from the current R-3 and B-1 districts, where more than one of these principal residential uses may be located on a single lot. (Proposed Section 10-3-22.B)
5. **Renames “home occupations” as “home-based businesses.”** (Proposed Section 10-3-30)
6. **Updates dwelling-occupancy standards.** The proposed ordinance would establish the following maximum occupancy standards for a single dwelling, unless another ordinance provision applies (Proposed Section 10-3-32):
 - a. R-AtC, R-ApC, MU-D, and C-AU Districts. In the R-AtC, R-ApC, MU-D, and C-AU Districts, occupancy is limited to 1 family, or up to 4 unrelated individuals.
 - b. All Other Districts. In all other districts, occupancy is limited to 1 family plus up to 2 unrelated individuals, or up to 3 unrelated individuals.
7. **Streamlines the review process for townhouse development by allowing townhouse lots without public street frontage.** The proposed ordinance would allow each townhouse lot either to front on a public street or to front on a common area owned and maintained by a property owners’ association, provided the lot has access to a private street, shared drive aisle, or alley. A related proposed amendment to Subdivision Ordinance Section 10-2-42 would create an exception to the general requirement that all lots front on a public street. This change would eliminate the need for a subdivision variation or exception for qualifying townhouse developments. (Proposed Section 10-3-35) (See also [Townhouse Development Review Process Engagement Handout](#))

Article D. [Site Development Standards](#)

1. **Adds standards for outdoor display and sales and outdoor storage,** including location and site-plan requirements. (Proposed Sections 10-3-62 and 10-3-63)

2. **Allows requests for reduced residential side setbacks by special exception in Residential and Mixed Use districts**, expanding an option that is currently limited to the R-8 district. (Proposed Section 10-3-65.A)
3. **Simplifies wall and fence standards**. Applies a general 6-foot maximum height in all yards, with limited exceptions for required screening, utility facilities, and certain security fences. (Proposed Section 10-3-66)

Article E. [Parking and Landscaping](#)

(See also [Parking Requirements Engagement Handout](#))

1. **Reformats vehicle and bicycle parking requirements into a table organized by use.**
2. **Strengthens requirements for shared parking arrangements.** When parking serves more than one lot, the proposed ordinance would require a recorded, perpetual agreement or easement that runs with the land and does not expire. The agreement would remain in effect if one or more of the properties are sold. (Proposed Section 10-3-68.C)
3. **Changes the rounding rule for required vehicle parking spaces.** When a calculation results in a fraction, the required number of vehicle parking spaces would be rounded down to the nearest whole number. Required bicycle parking spaces would continue to be rounded up. (Proposed Section 10-3-69.B)
4. **Updates minimum parking requirements for many uses.** In many cases, the proposed ordinance would reduce minimum vehicle parking requirements. It would also use clearer and more consistent calculation methods, including requirements based on gross floor area (GFA) and, for some uses, gross floor area plus outdoor activity area (GFA + OAA). For some uses, parking would be calculated based on building area rather than operational measures such as staffing levels, shift sizes, or fleet vehicles. (Proposed Section 10-3-69)
5. **Establishes driveway and private residential parking standards.**
The proposed ordinance would establish minimum parking-space dimensions, parking-area setbacks from the street, and maximum driveway widths for single-family detached, single-family attached, duplex, and townhouse dwellings, as well as certain apartment buildings. (Proposed Section 10-3-71)
6. **Moves drive-through and vehicle-stacking standards from the Design and Construction Standards Manual into the zoning ordinance and updates the standards.** The proposed ordinance would establish requirements for stacking-space dimensions, bypass lanes, and the number of stacking spaces required for

uses such as restaurants, pharmacies, banks or ATMs, car washes, fuel pumps, and vehicle service bays. (Proposed Section 10-3-73)

7. **Requires paved, all-weather surfaces for commercial and other nonresidential parking areas.** Parking areas, drive aisles, and driveways subject to the general parking-design standards would be required to have a paved, all-weather surface. Driveways and parking areas serving individual single-family detached, single-family attached, duplex, and townhouse dwellings, and apartments in the R-GN and R-UN districts would be required to have an improved surface such as gravel or stone. (Proposed Section 10-3-70.E and 10-3-71.D)
8. **New, relocated, or reconstructed bicycle parking would need to be installed on an all-weather surface.** (Proposed Section 10-3-72.D)
9. **Reduces the required landscaped border alongside and rear property lines next to parking lots.** Side and rear border requirements reduced from 10 to 5 feet. (Proposed Section 10-3-74.H)
10. **Removes the current shared-parking calculation option.** The current zoning ordinance Section 10-3-26 (b) allows certain developments with two or more uses to reduce required vehicle parking through a binding shared-parking agreement and a time-of-day parking calculation. The proposed ordinance would remove this calculation option because it has been used only once.

Article F. Signs

1. **Amends definition of “roof sign.”** A sign mounted on a pitched roof that does not extend above the roof ridgeline would be treated as a wall sign rather than a roof sign. (Proposed Section 10-3-26)
2. **Classifies sign permits as zoning permits.** Under the proposed ordinance, a zoning permit would generally be required before a sign may be displayed, unless the sign is specifically exempt. (Proposed Section 10-3-77)
3. **Adds an exemption for nonilluminated signs up to 3 square feet and 9 feet in height for parking space signs.** Small signs associated with individual parking spaces would not require a zoning permit and would not count against the sign allowance for the lot (Proposed Section 10-3-78.B)
4. **Moves sidewalk-sign regulations from the zoning ordinance to the City’s encroachment regulations.** The current sidewalk-sign provision for the B-1 district would be removed from the zoning ordinance. Proposed City Code amendments to Section 10-9-1, *Encroachments*, would instead regulate sidewalk signs and would allow them in the MU-D district.

Article G. Floodplain Overlay Regulations

1. No substantive changes.

Article H. [Development Review Procedures](#)

1. **Establishes clearer procedures for processing development applications.** The proposed ordinance would provide standard procedures for submitting complete applications, amending or withdrawing an application, administratively closing incomplete applications, and postponing a public hearing when appropriate. (Proposed Section 10-3-98)
2. **Updates and clarifies administrative approval requirements.** The proposed ordinance would clarify when a zoning permit, building permit, site plan, floodplain development permit, certificate of occupancy, or certificate of zoning compliance is required. It would also integrate zoning permit review with site plan and building permit applications to avoid duplicate applications. (Proposed Sections 10-3-96, 10-3-99, 10-3-100, and 10-3-101) (See also: [Administrative Approvals Engagement Handout](#))
3. **Updates plan-submittal and site-verification requirements for development approvals.** (Proposed Sections 10-3-99, 10-3-100, and 10-3-101) (See also [Administrative Approvals Engagement Handout](#))
 - a. Zoning-permit applications would require plans sufficient to show compliance with the ordinance. For many projects, plans would need to be prepared and certified by a Virginia-licensed design professional; limited residential additions and accessory structures could continue to use hand-drawn sketches with an existing certified foundation location survey or plat.
 - b. Before a certificate of occupancy could be issued for a new building or structure—or for an addition or alteration that changes an existing building’s footprint—the applicant would generally need to submit a foundation location survey prepared and certified by a Virginia-licensed land surveyor. Residential additions and accessory structures, as well as projects for which an acceptable as-built survey has already been submitted, would be exempt.
4. **Establishes deadlines for submitting proffers with rezoning applications.** Proffers intended for Planning Commission consideration would need to be submitted before the first public-hearing notice is published. After the Planning Commission hearing, new proffers could be submitted before publication of the City Council hearing notice. City Council could consider amended proffers after that point only before closing its public hearing and would determine whether changes are material enough to require another public hearing. (Proposed Section 10-3-105.D)

Article I. Board of Zoning Appeals

1. No substantive changes.

Article J. Nonconformities

1. No substantive changes.

Article K. Administration and Enforcement

1. **Distinguishes between zoning verification letters and zoning determinations.**
(Proposed Section 10-3-114)
 - a. A zoning verification letter would provide factual information from City records, such as the property's zoning district, recorded zoning conditions or approvals, and pending applications or violations. It would be informational only and would not interpret the ordinance or establish vested rights.
 - b. A zoning determination would be a formal written interpretation of how the ordinance applies to a specific property, use, or development proposal. It could address matters such as whether a use is permitted, how a use is classified, or whether a proposed development complies with ordinance standards. Determinations would be appealable to the Board of Zoning Appeals and may establish vested rights where applicable under Virginia law.
2. **Establishes a process for obtaining inspection warrants when necessary to enforce the zoning ordinance.** If access to a property is needed for an inspection and cannot otherwise be obtained, the Zoning Administrator could submit a sworn affidavit to a magistrate or court with jurisdiction to request an inspection warrant.
(Proposed Section 10-3-116)
3. **Criminal and Criminal Penalties.** Incorporates applicable Virginia Code provisions addressing criminal violations of the zoning ordinance and associated penalties.

Article L. Definitions and Rules of Construction

1. **Adds standardized rules for measuring lots, yards, setbacks, building height, and other dimensional requirements.** The new section would define how lot lines, front/side/rear yards, lot area, lot width, street frontage, setbacks, building height, and street-facing façades are measured. (Proposed Section 10-3-123)
2. **Updates and expands ordinance definitions.** The proposed ordinance revises existing definitions and adds new terms to improve clarity and reflects updated zoning standards and use classifications.