

10-B

MOTION:

**June 3, 2025
Regular Meeting**

SECOND:

Res. No. 25-

RE:

INITIATE AMENDMENT(S) TO THE ZONING ORDINANCE TO ADDRESS SB 992 (2025), SB 1267 (2025), HB 2330 (2025), TO REFER PROPOSED AMENDMENT(S) TO THE SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION, AND INITIATE AMENDMENT(S) TO THE PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS MANUAL AND PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES MANUAL TO ADDRESS SB 974 (2025) AND HB 2660 (2025) – COUNTYWIDE

ACTION:

WHEREAS, in accordance with Virginia Code Sections 15.2-2285 and 15.2-2286, the Prince William Board of County Supervisors (Board) may amend the Zoning Ordinance whenever it determines that public necessity, convenience, general welfare, and good zoning practice require such change; and

WHEREAS, during the 2025 General Assembly session, the General Assembly passed, and the Governor signed SB 992 which, among other things, addresses the abatement or remedying of nonpermitted commercial violation within a period of time specified by the locality after a waiver of trial and admission of liability and alters the appeal period to commence until the statement is given and that the appeal period for the zoning administrator's written order commences when it is sent by registered or certified mail with proof of delivery; and

WHEREAS, the Zoning Ordinance contains civil penalties and appellate procedures, which may need to be altered by the impact of SB 992, including County Code Secs. 32-700.31, 32-900.10, 32-900.20, and 32-1000.03; and

WHEREAS, during the 2025 General Assembly session, the General Assembly passed, and the Governor signed SB 1267, which adds enhanced civil penalties and abatement for certain residential violations; and

WHEREAS, the Zoning Ordinance contains civil penalties that may be amended to reflect the enhanced civil penalties provided in SB 1267, including County Code Sec. 32-1000.03, and possibly elsewhere, to reflect the Virginia Code changes; and

WHEREAS, during the 2025 General Assembly session, the General Assembly passed, and the Governor signed HB 2330, which addresses an affidavit of the mailed notice for certain zoning ordinance amendments; and

WHEREAS, the Zoning Ordinance contains notice provisions such as County Code Sec. 32-700.60, regarding notice requirements for zoning map amendments, and County Code Sec. 32-700.61 regarding notice of zoning text amendments, which may need to be altered to reflect HB 2330; and

June 3, 2025
Regular Meeting
Res. No. 25-
Page Two

WHEREAS, the Board has determined that amending the Zoning Ordinance to address SB 992 (2025), SB 1267 (2025), and HB 2330 (2025) is required by public necessity, convenience, general welfare, and good zoning practice, and is consistent with Virginia Code Section 15.2-2283; and

WHEREAS, the Board may amend the Subdivision Ordinance pursuant to Virginia Code Section 15.2-2253 and County Code Sec. 25-11, by referring proposed amendments to the Planning Commission for its recommendation; and

WHEREAS, during the 2025 General Assembly session, the General Assembly passed, and the Governor signed SB 974 which provides a definition of “designated agent” and relates to the review of plats, site plans, and plans of development, and further relates to actions by the designated agent, and amends Virginia Code Sections 15.2-2201, 15.2-2241, 15.2-2245, 15.2-2254, 15.2-2258, 15.2-2259, 15.2-2260, 15.2-2261, 15.2-2269, 15.2-2270, 15.2-2271, and 15.2-2307; and

WHEREAS, during the 2025 General Assembly session, the General Assembly passed, and the Governor signed HB 2660, which amends Virginia Code Sections 15.2-2259 and 15.2-2260 to address the timeframe, process, and requirements for the review of subdivision plats and site plans; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 25 of the County Code, the Subdivision Ordinance of Prince William County, may require amendment to reflect the impacts of SB 974 and HB 2660; and

WHEREAS, the Board has determined that amending the Subdivision Ordinance to address SB 974 (2025) and HB 2660 (2025) is required by health, safety, public necessity, convenience, general welfare, and the orderly subdivision of land and its development, and is consistent with Virginia Code Section 15.2-2240; and

WHEREAS, the Prince William County Design and Construction Standards Manual (DCSM) was adopted to assist the public in knowing the policies, regulations, and standards that apply to land development in the County; and

WHEREAS, during the 2025 General Assembly session, the General Assembly passed, and the Governor signed HB 2660, which amends Virginia Code Sections 15.2-2259 and 15.2-2260 to address the timeframe, process, and requirements for review of subdivision plats and site plans; and

June 3, 2025
Regular Meeting
Res. No. 25-
Page Three

WHEREAS, the Board finds that initiation of DCSM amendment(s) to address SB 974 and HB 2660 secures and promotes the public necessity, convenience, health, safety, and general welfare of the County and its inhabitants, and is consistent with good planning practices;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Prince William Board of County Supervisors hereby initiates amendments to the Prince William County Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 32 of the County Code, to address SB 992 (2025), SB 1267 (2025), and HB 2330 (2025);

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Prince William Board of County Supervisors hereby refers to the Planning Commission proposed amendments to the Prince William County Subdivision Ordinance, Chapter 25 of the County Code, to address SB 974 (2025) and HB 2660 (2025);

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Prince William Board of County Supervisors hereby initiates an amendment(s) to the Prince William County Design and Construction Standards Manual and the Prince William County Administrative Procedures Manual to address SB 974 and HB 2660.

ATTACHMENTS: Chapter 100 of the 2025 Acts of Assembly
Chapter 171 of the 2025 Acts of Assembly
Chapter 512 of the 2025 Acts of Assembly
Chapter 587 of the 2025 Acts of Assembly
Chapter 594 of the 2025 Acts of Assembly

Votes:

Ayes:

Nays:

Absent from Vote:

Absent from Meeting:

For Information:

Planning Director
County Attorney

ATTEST: _____
Clerk to the Board

CHAPTER 100

An Act to amend and reenact §§ 15.2-2259 and 15.2-2260 of the Code of Virginia, relating to subdivision ordinance; local approvals.

[H 2660]

Approved March 19, 2025

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

- 1. That §§ 15.2-2259 and 15.2-2260 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted:
§ 15.2-2259. Local planning commission to act on proposed plat.**

A. 1. Except as otherwise provided in subdivisions 2 and 3, the local planning commission or other agent shall act on any proposed plat within 60 days after it has been officially submitted for approval by either approving or disapproving the plat in writing, and giving with the latter specific reasons therefor. The Commission or agent shall thoroughly review the plat and shall make a good faith effort to identify all deficiencies, if any, with the initial submission. However, if approval of a feature or features of the plat by a state agency or public authority authorized by state law is necessary, the commission or agent shall forward the plat to the appropriate state agency or agencies for review within ~~10 business~~ *five business* days of receipt of such plat. The state agency shall respond in accord with the requirements set forth in § 15.2-2222.1, which shall extend the time for action by the local planning commission or other agent, as set forth in subsection B. Specific reasons for disapproval shall be ~~contained~~ *provided to the applicant* either in a separate document or on the plat itself. ~~The reasons for disapproval and shall (i) identify all deficiencies in the plat that cause caused the disapproval by reference to referencing specific duly adopted ordinances, regulations, or policies and shall (ii) identify all modifications or corrections as will permit approval of the plat. The local planning commission or other agent shall act on any proposed plat that it has previously disapproved within 45 days after the plat has been modified, corrected and resubmitted for approval.~~

2. The approval of plats, site plans, and plans of development solely involving parcels of commercial or residential real estate by a local planning commission or other agent shall be governed by subdivision 3 and subsections B, C, and D. For the purposes of this section, the term "commercial" means all real property used for commercial or industrial uses, and the term "residential" means all real property used for single-family or multifamily use.

3. The local planning commission or other agent shall act on any proposed plat, site plan or plan of development within ~~60~~ *40* days after it has been officially submitted for approval by either approving or disapproving the plat in writing, and giving with the latter specific reasons therefor. The local planning commission or other agent shall not delay the official submission of any proposed plat, site plan, or plan of development by requiring presubmission conferences, meetings, or reviews. The Commission or agent shall thoroughly review the plat or plan and shall in good faith identify, to the greatest extent practicable, all deficiencies, if any, with the initial submission. However, if approval of a feature or features of the plat or plan by a state agency or public authority authorized by state law is necessary, the commission or agent shall forward the plat or plan to the appropriate state agency or agencies for review within ~~10 business~~ *five business* days of receipt of such plat or plan. The state agency shall respond in accord with the requirements set forth in § 15.2-2222.1, which shall extend the time for action by the local planning commission or other agent, as set forth in subsection B. Specific reasons for disapproval shall be ~~contained~~ *provided to the applicant* either in a separate document or on the plat or plan itself. ~~The reasons for disapproval and shall (i) identify all deficiencies in the plat or plan that caused the disapproval by reference to referencing specific duly adopted ordinances, regulations, or policies and shall (ii) identify, to the greatest extent practicable, modifications or corrections that will permit approval of the plat or plan.~~

In the review of a resubmitted proposed plat, site plan or plan of development that has been previously disapproved, the local planning commission or other agent shall consider only deficiencies ~~it had~~ identified in its review of the initial submission of the plat or plan that have not been corrected in such resubmission and any deficiencies that arise as a result of the corrections made to address deficiencies identified in the initial submission. In the review of the resubmission of a plat or plan, the local planning commission or other agent shall *(i) identify all deficiencies with the proposed plat or plan that caused the disapproval by reference to referencing specific duly adopted ordinances, regulations, or policies and shall (ii) identify all modifications or corrections that will permit approval of the plat or plan. Upon the second resubmission of such disapproved plat or plan, the local planning commission or other agent's review shall be limited solely to the previously identified deficiencies that caused its disapproval.*

All deficiencies identified during a third or subsequent resubmission of any plat, site plan, or plan of development shall be provided concurrently to the applicant and the director of planning or the equivalent official having supervisory authority over the agent. Within 14 days of receipt, such director or equivalent

official shall either:

- 1. Approve the plat, site plan, or plan of development as submitted;*
- 2. Permit the applicant to address any deficiencies deemed minor by the director or equivalent official, and resubmit the plat, site plan, or plan of development for administrative approval. The director or equivalent official shall complete the administrative approval within seven days of receipt of the resubmission; or*
- 3. Disapprove the resubmission, and identify all deficiencies that caused the disapproval by referencing specific duly adopted ordinances, regulations, or policies and identify all modifications or corrections that will permit approval of the plat, site plan, or plan of development.*

The local planning commission or other agent shall act on any proposed plat, site plan or plan of development that it has previously disapproved within ~~45~~ 30 days after the plat or plan has been modified, corrected and resubmitted for approval. The failure of a local planning commission or other agent to approve or disapprove a resubmitted plat or plan within the time periods required by this section shall cause the plat or plan to be deemed approved. *Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, the locality's designated agent, with the concurrence of all applicable local reviewing agencies, may administratively approve any resubmitted site plan or subdivision plat that the designated agent deems to be in compliance with local ordinances and state law.*

Notwithstanding the approval or deemed approval of any proposed plat, site plan or plan of development, any deficiency in any proposed plat or plan, that if left uncorrected, would violate local, state or federal law, regulations, mandatory Department of Transportation engineering and safety requirements, and other mandatory engineering and safety requirements, shall not be considered, treated or deemed as having been approved by the local planning commission or other agent. Should any resubmission include a material revision of infrastructure or physical improvements from the earlier submission or if a material revision in the resubmission creates a new required review by the Virginia Department of Transportation or by a state agency or public authority authorized by state law, then the local planning commission or other agent's review shall not be limited to only the previously identified deficiencies identified in the prior submittals and may consider deficiencies initially appearing in the resubmission because of such material revision.

B. Any state agency or public authority authorized by state law making a review of a plat forwarded to it under this article, including, without limitation, the Virginia Department of Transportation and authorities authorized by Chapter 51 (§ 15.2-5100 et seq.), shall complete its review within ~~45~~ 30 days of receipt of the plat upon first submission and within ~~45~~ 30 days for any proposed plat that has previously been disapproved, provided, however, that the time periods set forth in § 15.2-2222.1 shall apply to plats triggering the applicability of said section. The Virginia Department of Transportation and authorities authorized by Chapter 51 (§ 15.2-5100 et seq.) shall allow use of public rights-of-way dedicated for public street purposes for placement of utilities by permit when practical and shall not unreasonably deny plat approval. If a state agency or public authority authorized by state law does not approve the plat, it shall comply with the requirements, and be subject to the restrictions, set forth in subsection A, with the exception of the time period therein specified. Upon receipt of the approvals from all state agencies and other agencies, the local agent shall act upon a plat within ~~35~~ 20 days.

C. If the commission or other agent fails to approve or disapprove the plat within ~~60 days after it has been officially submitted for approval, or within 45 days after it has been officially resubmitted after a previous disapproval or within 35 days of receipt of any agency response pursuant to subsection B~~ the timeframes prescribed in this section, the subdivider, after ~~10 days'~~ 10 days' written notice to the commission, or agent, may petition the circuit court for the locality in which the land involved, or the major part thereof, is located, to decide whether the plat should or should not be approved. The court shall give the petition priority on the civil docket, hear the matter expeditiously in accordance with the procedures prescribed in Article 2 (§ 8.01-644 et seq.) of Chapter 25 of Title 8.01 and make and enter an order with respect thereto as it deems proper, which may include directing approval of the plat.

D. If a commission or other agent disapproves a plat and the subdivider contends that the disapproval was not properly based on the ordinance applicable thereto, or was arbitrary or capricious, he may appeal to the circuit court having jurisdiction of such land and the court shall hear and determine the case as soon as may be, provided that his appeal is filed with the circuit court within 60 days of the written disapproval by the commission or other agent.

§ 15.2-2260. Localities may provide for submission of preliminary subdivision plats; how long valid.

A. Nothing in this article shall be deemed to prohibit the local governing body from providing in its ordinance for the mandatory submission of preliminary subdivision plats for tentative approval for plats involving more than 50 lots, provided that any such ordinance provides for the submission of a preliminary subdivision plat for tentative approval at the option of the landowner for plats involving 50 or fewer lots. The local planning commission, or an agent designated by the commission or by the governing body to review preliminary subdivision plats shall complete action on the preliminary subdivision plats within ~~60~~ 45 days of submission. However, if approval of a feature or features of the preliminary subdivision plat by a state agency or public authority authorized by state law is necessary, the commission or agent shall forward the

preliminary subdivision plat to the appropriate state agency or agencies for review within ~~10 business~~ *five business* days of receipt of such preliminary subdivision plat.

B. Any state agency or public authority authorized by state law making a review of a preliminary subdivision plat forwarded to it under this section, including, without limitation, the Virginia Department of Transportation and authorities authorized by Chapter 51 (§ 15.2-5100 et seq.), shall complete its review within ~~45~~ *30* days of receipt of the preliminary subdivision plat upon first submission and within ~~45~~ *30* days for any proposed plat that has previously been disapproved, provided, however, that the time period set forth in § 15.2-2222.1 shall apply to plats triggering the applicability of said section. The Virginia Department of Transportation and authorities authorized by Chapter 51 (§ 15.2-5100 et seq.) shall allow use of public rights-of-way for public street purposes for placement of utilities by permit when practical and shall not unreasonably deny plat approval. If a state agency or public authority authorized by state law does not approve the plat, it shall comply with the requirements, and be subject to the restrictions, set forth in subsection A of § 15.2-2259 with the exception of the time period therein specified. Upon receipt of the approvals from all state agencies, the local agent shall act upon a preliminary subdivision plat within ~~35~~ *20* days.

C. If a commission has the responsibility of review of preliminary subdivision plats and conducts a public hearing, it shall act on the plat within ~~45~~ *30* days after receiving approval from all state agencies. If the local agent or commission does not approve the preliminary subdivision plat, the local agent or commission shall ~~(i) set forth in writing the reasons for such denial and shall state what corrections or modifications will permit approval by such agent or commission~~ *all deficiencies in the plat that caused the disapproval by referencing to specific duly adopted ordinances, regulations, or policies and (ii) identify modifications or corrections that will permit approval of the plat.* With regard to plats involving commercial or residential property, as those terms are defined in subdivision A 2 of § 15.2-2259, the review process for such plats shall be the same as provided in subdivisions A 2 and A 3 of § 15.2-2259. ~~However, no commission or agent shall be required to approve a preliminary subdivision plat in less than 60 days from the date of its original submission to the commission or agent, and all~~ *All* actions on preliminary subdivision plats shall be completed by the agent or commission and, if necessary, state agencies, within a total of 90 days of submission to the local agent or commission.

D. If the commission or other agent fails to approve or disapprove the preliminary subdivision plat within 90 days after it has been officially submitted for approval, the subdivider after 10 days' written notice to the commission, or agent, may petition the circuit court for the locality in which the land involved, or the major part thereof, is located to enter an order with respect thereto as it deems proper, which may include directing approval of the plat.

E. If a commission or other agent disapproves a preliminary subdivision plat and the subdivider contends that the disapproval was not properly based on the ordinance applicable thereto, or was arbitrary or capricious, he may appeal to the circuit court having jurisdiction of such land and the court shall hear and determine the case as soon as may be, provided that his appeal is filed with the circuit court within 60 days of the written disapproval by the commission or other agent.

F. Once a preliminary subdivision plat is approved, it shall be valid for a period of five years, provided the subdivider (i) submits a final subdivision plat for all or a portion of the property within one year of such approval or such longer period as may be prescribed by local ordinance, and (ii) thereafter diligently pursues approval of the final subdivision plat. "Diligent pursuit of approval" means that the subdivider has incurred extensive obligations or substantial expenses relating to the submitted final subdivision plat or modifications thereto. However, no sooner than three years following such preliminary subdivision plat approval, and upon 90 days' written notice by certified mail to the subdivider, the commission or other agent may revoke such approval upon a specific finding of facts that the subdivider has not diligently pursued approval of the final subdivision plat.

G. Once an approved final subdivision plat for all or a portion of the property is recorded pursuant to § 15.2-2261, the underlying preliminary plat shall remain valid for a period of five years from the date of the latest recorded plat of subdivision for the property. The five year period of validity shall extend from the date of the last recorded plat.

2. That the Virginia Code Commission shall convene a work group to review existing provisions of the Code of Virginia related to the submission, review, and approval of subdivision plats and site plans, including any amendments adopted during the 2025 Session of the General Assembly. The work group shall consist of representatives from the Home Builders Association of Virginia, Virginia Association for Commercial Real Estate, Virginia REALTORS, Virginia Municipal League, Virginia Association of Counties, Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association, and other relevant stakeholders. The work group shall develop recommendations to (i) organize procedural steps in a clear, logical, and sequential order to enhance ease of reference; (ii) clarify the processes, requirements, and timelines applicable to each type of plat or plan; (iii) standardize terminology to ensure consistency, reduce ambiguity, and minimize misinterpretation; and (iv) identify and eliminate redundant or duplicative provisions to streamline the Code and improve its usability. The Virginia Code Commission shall

submit a report to the Chairs of the House Committee on Counties, Cities and Towns and the Senate Committee on Local Government detailing any recommendations of the work group by November 1, 2025.

CHAPTER 171

An Act to amend and reenact § 15.2-2204 of the Code of Virginia, relating to notice of land use actions.

[H 2330]

Approved March 19, 2025

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 15.2-2204 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 15.2-2204. Advertisement of plans, ordinances, etc.; joint public hearings; written notice of certain amendments.

A. Plans or ordinances, or amendments thereof, recommended or adopted under the powers conferred by this chapter need not be advertised in full, but may be advertised by reference. Every such advertisement shall identify the place or places within the locality where copies of the proposed plans, ordinances or amendments may be examined.

The local planning commission shall not recommend nor the governing body adopt any plan, ordinance or amendment thereof until notice of intention to do so has been published twice in some newspaper published or having general circulation in the locality, with the first notice appearing no more than 28 days before and the second notice appearing no less than seven days before the date of the meeting referenced in the notice; however, the notice for both the local planning commission and the governing body may be published concurrently. The notice shall specify the time and place of hearing at which persons affected may appear and present their views. The local planning commission and governing body may hold a joint public hearing after public notice as set forth in this subsection. If a joint hearing is held, then public notice as set forth in this subsection need be given only by the governing body. In any instance in which a locality has submitted a correct and timely notice request to such newspaper and the newspaper fails to publish the notice, or publishes the notice incorrectly, such locality shall be deemed to have met the notice requirements of this subsection so long as the notice was published in the next available edition of a newspaper having general circulation in the locality. After enactment of any plan, ordinance or amendment, further publication thereof shall not be required.

B. When a proposed amendment of the zoning ordinance involves a change in the zoning map classification of 25 or fewer parcels of land, then, in addition to the advertising as required by subsection A, the advertisement shall include the street address or tax map parcel number of the parcels subject to the action. Written notice shall be given by the local planning commission, or its representative, at least five days before the hearing to the owner or owners, their agent or the occupant, of each parcel involved; to the owners, their agent or the occupant, of all abutting property and property immediately across the street or road from the property affected, including those parcels that lie in other localities of the Commonwealth; and, if any portion of the affected property is within a planned unit development, then to such incorporated property owner's associations within the planned unit development that have members owning property located within 2,000 feet of the affected property as may be required by the commission or its agent. However, when a proposed amendment to the zoning ordinance involves a tract of land not less than 500 acres owned by the Commonwealth or by the federal government, and when the proposed change affects only a portion of the larger tract, notice need be given only to the owners of those properties that are adjacent to the affected area of the larger tract. ~~Notice~~ *One notice* sent by registered ~~or~~, certified, *or first-class* mail to the last known address of such owner as shown on the current real estate tax assessment books or current real estate tax assessment records shall be deemed adequate compliance with this requirement, *provided that a representative of the local planning commission shall make affidavit that such mailings have been made and file such affidavit with the papers in the case.* If the hearing is continued, notice shall be remailed. Costs of any notice required under this chapter shall be taxed to the applicant.

When a proposed amendment of the zoning ordinance involves a change in the zoning map classification of more than 25 parcels of land, or a change to the applicable zoning ordinance text regulations that decreases the allowed dwelling unit density of any parcel of land, then, in addition to the advertising as required by subsection A, the advertisement shall include the street address or tax map parcel number of the parcels as well as the approximate acreage subject to the action. For more than 100 parcels of land, the advertisement may instead include a description of the boundaries of the area subject to the changes and a link to a map of the subject area. Written notice shall be given by the local planning commission, or its representative, at least five days before the hearing to the owner, owners, or their agent of each parcel of land involved, provided, however, that written notice of such changes to zoning ordinance text regulations shall not have to be mailed to the owner, owners, or their agent of lots shown on a subdivision plat approved and recorded pursuant to the provisions of Article 6 (§ 15.2-2240 et seq.) where such lots are less than 11,500 square feet. One notice sent by ~~first class~~ *first-class* mail to the last known address of such owner as shown on the current real estate tax

assessment books or current real estate tax assessment records shall be deemed adequate compliance with this requirement, provided that a representative of the local *planning* commission shall make affidavit that such mailings have been made and file such affidavit with the papers in the case. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed as to invalidate any subsequently adopted amendment or ordinance because of the inadvertent failure by the representative of the local *planning* commission to give written notice to the owner, owners, or their agent of any parcel involved.

The governing body may provide that, in the case of a condominium or a cooperative, the written notice may be mailed to the unit owners' association or proprietary lessees' association, respectively, in lieu of each individual unit owner.

Whenever the notices required hereby are sent by an agency, department, or division of the local governing body, or their representative, such notices may be sent by ~~first class~~ *first-class* mail; however, a representative of such agency, department, or division shall make affidavit that such mailings have been made and file such affidavit with the papers in the case.

A party's actual notice of, or active participation in, the proceedings for which the written notice provided by this section is required shall waive the right of that party to challenge the validity of the proceeding due to failure of the party to receive the written notice required by this section.

C. When a proposed comprehensive plan or amendment thereto; a proposed change in zoning map classification; or an application for special exception for a change in use or to increase by greater than 50 percent of the bulk or height of an existing or proposed building, but not including renewals of previously approved special exceptions, involves any parcel of land located within one-half mile of a boundary of an adjoining locality of the Commonwealth, then, in addition to the advertising and written notification as required by this section, written notice shall also be given by the local *planning* commission, or its representative, at least 10 days before the hearing to the chief administrative officer, or his designee, of such adjoining locality.

D. When (i) a proposed comprehensive plan or amendment thereto, (ii) a proposed change in zoning map classification, or (iii) an application for special exception for a change in use involves any parcel of land located within 3,000 feet of a boundary of a military base, military installation, military airport, excluding armories operated by the Virginia National Guard, or licensed public-use airport then, in addition to the advertising and written notification as required by this section, written notice shall also be given by the local *planning* commission, or its representative, at least 30 days before the hearing to the commander of the military base, military installation, military airport, or owner of such public-use airport, and the notice shall advise the military commander or owner of such public-use airport of the opportunity to submit comments or recommendations.

E. The adoption or amendment prior to July 1, 1996, of any plan or ordinance under the authority of prior acts shall not be declared invalid by reason of a failure to advertise or give notice as may be required by such act or by this chapter, provided a public hearing was conducted by the governing body prior to such adoption or amendment. Every action contesting a decision of a locality based on a failure to advertise or give notice as may be required by this chapter shall be filed within 30 days of such decision with the circuit court having jurisdiction of the land affected by the decision. However, any litigation pending prior to July 1, 1996, shall not be affected by the 1996 amendment to this section.

F. Notwithstanding any contrary provision of law, general or special, the City of Richmond may cause such notice to be published in any newspaper of general circulation in the city.

G. When a proposed comprehensive plan or amendment of an existing plan designates or alters previously designated corridors or routes for electric transmission lines of 150 kilovolts or more, written notice shall also be given by the local planning commission, or its representative, at least 10 days before the hearing to each electric utility with a certificated service territory that includes all or any part of such designated electric transmission corridors or routes.

H. When any applicant requesting a written order, requirement, decision, or determination from the zoning administrator, other administrative officer, or a board of zoning appeals that is subject to the appeal provisions contained in § 15.2-2311 or 15.2-2314, is not the owner or the agent of the owner of the real property subject to the written order, requirement, decision or determination, written notice shall be given to the owner of the property within 10 days of the receipt of such request. Such written notice shall be given by the zoning administrator or other administrative officer or, at the direction of the administrator or officer, the requesting applicant shall be required to give the owner such notice and to provide satisfactory evidence to the zoning administrator or other administrative officer that the notice has been given. Written notice mailed to the owner at the last known address of the owner as shown on the current real estate tax assessment books or current real estate tax assessment records shall satisfy the notice requirements of this subsection.

This subsection shall not apply to inquiries from the governing body, planning commission, or employees of the locality made in the normal course of business.

CHAPTER 512

An Act to amend and reenact §§ 15.2-2209, 15.2-2309, and 15.2-2311 of the Code of Virginia, relating to civil penalties for certain repeat zoning violations in Planning District 23; appeals.

[S 992]

Approved March 24, 2025

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 15.2-2209, 15.2-2309, and 15.2-2311 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 15.2-2209. Civil penalties for violations of zoning ordinance.

Notwithstanding subdivision A 5 of § 15.2-2286, any locality may adopt an ordinance ~~which~~ *that* establishes a uniform schedule of civil penalties for violations of specified provisions of the zoning ordinance. The schedule of offenses shall not include any zoning violation resulting in injury to any persons, and the existence of a civil penalty shall not preclude action by the zoning administrator under subdivision A 4 of § 15.2-2286 or action by the governing body under § 15.2-2208.

This schedule of civil penalties shall be uniform for each type of specified violation, and the penalty for any one violation shall be a civil penalty of not more than \$200 for the initial summons and not more than \$500 for each additional summons. *However, for any violation involving nonpermitted commercial uses in Planning District 23, the penalty shall be not more than (i) \$200 for the initial violation, (ii) \$1,000 for a second violation, and (iii) \$1,500 for a third or subsequent violation, not to exceed an aggregate amount of \$4,200 for all such violations within a 12-month period. For purposes of this section, "nonpermitted commercial uses" means any use devoted to usual and customary business purposes for the sale of goods and services when such use is not authorized or permitted under the locality's zoning ordinance.* Each day during which the violation is found to have existed shall constitute a separate offense. However, specified violations arising from the same operative set of facts shall not be charged more frequently than once in any 10-day period, and, *for violations that do not involve nonpermitted commercial uses in Planning District 23*, a series of specified violations arising from the same operative set of facts shall not result in civil penalties ~~which~~ *that* exceed a total of \$5,000. Designation of a particular zoning ordinance violation for a civil penalty pursuant to this section shall be in lieu of criminal sanctions, and except for any violation resulting in injury to persons, such designation shall preclude the prosecution of a violation as a criminal misdemeanor, provided, however, that when such civil penalties total \$5,000 or more, the violation may be prosecuted as a criminal misdemeanor.

The zoning administrator or his deputy may issue a civil summons as provided by law for a scheduled violation. Any person summoned or issued a ticket for a scheduled violation may make an appearance in person or in writing by mail to the department of finance or the treasurer of the locality prior to the date fixed for trial in court. Any person so appearing may enter a waiver of trial, admit liability, and pay the civil penalty established for the offense charged. Such persons shall be informed of their right to stand trial and that a signature to an admission of liability will have the same force and effect as a judgment of court. *Notwithstanding a court's authority to order the abatement or remedy of a zoning violation, any person who enters a waiver of trial and admits liability shall be required to abate or remedy the nonpermitted commercial violation within a period of time specified by the locality that is no less than 30 days but no more than 24 months from the date of admission of liability.*

If a person charged with a scheduled violation does not elect to enter a waiver of trial and admission of liability, the violation shall be tried in the general district court in the same manner and with the same right of appeal as provided for by law. In any trial for a scheduled violation authorized by this section, it shall be the burden of the locality to show the liability of the violator by a preponderance of the evidence. If the violation remains uncorrected at the time of the admission of liability or finding of liability, the court may order the violator to abate or remedy the violation in order to comply with the zoning ordinance. Except as otherwise provided by the court for good cause shown, any such violator shall abate or remedy the violation within a period of time as determined by the court, but not later than six months of the date of admission of liability or finding of liability. Each day during which the violation continues after the court-ordered abatement period has ended shall constitute a separate offense. An admission of liability or finding of liability shall not be a criminal conviction for any purpose.

No provision herein shall be construed to allow the imposition of civil penalties (a) for activities related to land development or (b) for violation of any provision of a local zoning ordinance relating to the posting of signs on public property or public rights-of-way.

§ 15.2-2309. Powers and duties of boards of zoning appeals.

Boards of zoning appeals shall have the following powers and duties:

1. To hear and decide appeals from any order, requirement, decision, or determination made by an administrative officer in the administration or enforcement of this article or of any ordinance adopted pursuant thereto. The decision on such appeal shall be based on the board's judgment of whether the administrative officer was correct. The determination of the administrative officer shall be presumed to be correct. At a hearing on an appeal, the administrative officer shall explain the basis for his determination after which the appellant has the burden of proof to rebut such presumption of correctness by a preponderance of the evidence. *Altering the order of evidence is a reversible error only if the appellant lodges an objection citing this section and the board subsequently refuses to reorder the hearing.* The board shall consider any applicable ordinances, laws, and regulations in making its decision. For purposes of this section, determination means any order, requirement, decision, or determination made by an administrative officer. Any appeal of a determination to the board shall be in compliance with this section, notwithstanding any other provision of law, general or special.

2. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, general or special, to grant upon appeal or original application in specific cases a variance as defined in § 15.2-2201, provided that the burden of proof shall be on the applicant for a variance to prove by a preponderance of the evidence that his application meets the standard for a variance as defined in § 15.2-2201 and the criteria set out in this section.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, general or special, a variance shall be granted if the evidence shows that the strict application of the terms of the ordinance would unreasonably restrict the utilization of the property or that the granting of the variance would alleviate a hardship due to a physical condition relating to the property or improvements thereon at the time of the effective date of the ordinance, or alleviate a hardship by granting a reasonable modification to a property or improvements thereon requested by, or on behalf of, a person with a disability, and (i) the property interest for which the variance is being requested was acquired in good faith and any hardship was not created by the applicant for the variance; (ii) the granting of the variance will not be of substantial detriment to adjacent property and nearby properties in the proximity of that geographical area; (iii) the condition or situation of the property concerned is not of so general or recurring a nature as to make reasonably practicable the formulation of a general regulation to be adopted as an amendment to the ordinance; (iv) the granting of the variance does not result in a use that is not otherwise permitted on such property or a change in the zoning classification of the property; and (v) the relief or remedy sought by the variance application is not available through a special exception process that is authorized in the ordinance pursuant to subdivision 6 of § 15.2-2309 or the process for modification of a zoning ordinance pursuant to subdivision A 4 of § 15.2-2286 at the time of the filing of the variance application. Any variance granted to provide a reasonable modification to a property or improvements thereon requested by, or on

behalf of, a person with a disability may expire when the person benefited by it is no longer in possession of the modification to such property or improvements provided by the variance, subject to the provisions of state and federal fair housing laws, or the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. § 12131 et seq.), as applicable. If a request for a reasonable modification is made to a locality and is appropriate under the provisions of state and federal fair housing laws, or the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. § 12131 et seq.), as applicable, such request shall be granted by the locality unless a variance from the board of zoning appeals under this section is required in order for such request to be granted.

No variance shall be considered except after notice and hearing as required by § 15.2-2204. However, when giving any required notice to the owners, their agents or the occupants of abutting property and property immediately across the street or road from the property affected, the board may give such notice by first-class mail rather than by registered or certified mail.

In granting a variance, the board may impose such conditions regarding the location, character, and other features of the proposed structure or use as it may deem necessary in the public interest and may require a guarantee or bond to ensure that the conditions imposed are being and will continue to be complied with. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, general or special, the property upon which a property owner has been granted a variance shall be treated as conforming for all purposes under state law and local ordinance; however, the structure permitted by the variance may not be expanded unless the expansion is within an area of the site or part of the structure for which no variance is required under the ordinance. Where the expansion is proposed within an area of the site or part of the structure for which a variance is required, the approval of an additional variance shall be required.

3. To hear and decide appeals from the decision of the zoning administrator after notice and hearing as provided by § 15.2-2204. However, when giving any required notice to the owners, their agents or the occupants of abutting property and property immediately across the street or road from the property affected, the board may give such notice by first-class mail rather than by registered or certified mail.

4. To hear and decide applications for interpretation of the district map where there is any uncertainty as to the location of a district boundary. After notice to the owners of the property affected by the question, and after public hearing with notice as required by § 15.2-2204, the board may interpret the map in such way as to carry out the intent and purpose of the ordinance for the particular section or district in question. However, when giving any required notice to the owners, their agents or the occupants of abutting property and property immediately across the street or road from the property affected, the board may give such notice by first-class mail rather than by registered or certified mail. The board shall not have the power to change substantially the locations of district boundaries as established by ordinance.

5. No provision of this section shall be construed as granting any board the power to rezone property or to base board decisions on the merits of the purpose and intent of local ordinances duly adopted by the governing body.

6. To hear and decide applications for special exceptions as may be authorized in the ordinance. The board may impose such conditions relating to the use for which a permit is granted as it may deem necessary in the public interest, including limiting the duration of a permit, and may require a guarantee or bond to ensure that the conditions imposed are being and will continue to be complied with.

No special exception may be granted except after notice and hearing as provided by § 15.2-2204. However, when giving any required notice to the owners, their agents or the occupants of abutting property and property immediately across the street or road from the property affected, the board may give such notice by first-class mail rather than by registered or certified mail.

7. To revoke a special exception previously granted by the board of zoning appeals if the board determines that there has not been compliance with the terms or conditions of the permit. No special exception may be revoked except after notice and hearing as provided by § 15.2-2204. However, when giving any required notice to the owners,

their agents or the occupants of abutting property and property immediately across the street or the property affected, the board may give such notice by first-class mail rather than by registered or certified mail. If a governing body reserves unto itself the right to issue special exceptions pursuant to § 15.2-2286, and, if the governing body determines that there has not been compliance with the terms and conditions of the permit, then it may also revoke special exceptions in the manner provided by this subdivision.

8. The board by resolution may fix a schedule of regular meetings, and may also fix the day or days to which any meeting shall be continued if the chairman, or vice-chairman if the chairman is unable to act, finds and declares that weather or other conditions are such that it is hazardous for members to attend the meeting. Such finding shall be communicated to the members and the press as promptly as possible. All hearings and other matters previously advertised for such meeting in accordance with § 15.2-2312 shall be conducted at the continued meeting and no further advertisement is required.

§ 15.2-2311. Appeals to board.

A. An appeal to the board may be taken by any person aggrieved or by any officer, department, board or bureau of the locality affected by any decision of the zoning administrator or from any order, requirement, decision or determination made by any other administrative officer in the administration or enforcement of this article, any ordinance adopted pursuant to this article, or any modification of zoning requirements pursuant to § 15.2-2286. Notwithstanding any charter provision to the contrary, any written notice of a zoning violation or a written order of the zoning administrator dated on or after July 1, 1993, shall include a statement informing the recipient that he may have a right to appeal the notice of a zoning violation or a written order within 30 days in accordance with this section, and that the decision shall be final and unappealable if not appealed within 30 days. The zoning violation or written order shall include the applicable appeal fee and a reference to where additional information may be obtained regarding the filing of an appeal. The appeal period shall not commence until the statement is given and the zoning administrator's written order is sent by registered or certified mail *with proof of delivery* to, or posted at, the last known address or usual place of abode of the property owner or its registered agent, if any. There shall be a rebuttable presumption that the property owner's last known address is that shown on the current real estate tax assessment records, or the address of a registered agent that is shown in the records of the Clerk of the State Corporation Commission. The appeal shall be taken within 30 days after the decision appealed from by filing with the zoning administrator, and with the board, a notice of appeal specifying the grounds thereof. The zoning administrator shall forthwith transmit to the board all the papers constituting the record upon which the action appealed from was taken. The fee for filing an appeal shall not exceed the costs of advertising the appeal for public hearing and reasonable costs. A decision by the board on an appeal taken pursuant to this section shall be binding upon the owner of the property ~~which~~ *that* is the subject of such appeal only if the owner of such property has been provided notice of the zoning violation or written order of the zoning administrator in accordance with this section. The owner's actual notice of such notice of zoning violation or written order or active participation in the appeal hearing shall waive the owner's right to challenge the validity of the board's decision due to failure of the owner to receive the notice of zoning violation or written order. For jurisdictions that impose civil penalties for violations of the zoning ordinance, any such civil penalty shall not be assessed by a court having jurisdiction during the pendency of the 30-day appeal period.

B. An appeal shall stay all proceedings in furtherance of the action appealed from unless the zoning administrator certifies to the board that by reason of facts stated in the certificate a stay would in his opinion cause imminent peril to life or property, in which case proceedings shall not be stayed otherwise than by a restraining order granted by the board or by a court of record, on application and on notice to the zoning administrator and for good cause shown.

C. In no event shall a written order, requirement, decision or determination made by the zoning administrator or other administrative officer be subject to change, modification or reversal by any zoning administrator or other administrative officer after 60 days have elapsed from the date of the written order, requirement, decision or determination where the person aggrieved has materially changed his position in good faith reliance on the action of

the zoning administrator or other administrative officer unless it is proven that such written order, decision or determination was obtained through malfeasance of the zoning administrator or other administrative officer or through fraud. The 60-day limitation period shall not apply in any case where, with the concurrence of the attorney for the governing body, modification is required to correct clerical errors.

D. In any appeal taken pursuant to this section, if the board's attempt to reach a decision results in a tie vote, the matter may be carried over until the next scheduled meeting at the request of the person filing the appeal.

CHAPTER 587

An Act to amend and reenact § 15.2-2209 of the Code of Virginia, relating to zoning; enhanced civil penalties; certain residential violations.

[S 1267]

Approved March 24, 2025

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 15.2-2209 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 15.2-2209. Civil penalties for violations of zoning ordinance.

Notwithstanding subdivision A 5 of § 15.2-2286, any locality may adopt an ordinance which establishes a uniform schedule of civil penalties for violations of specified provisions of the zoning ordinance. The schedule of offenses shall not include any zoning violation resulting in injury to any persons, and the existence of a civil penalty shall not preclude action by the zoning administrator under subdivision A 4 of § 15.2-2286 or action by the governing body under § 15.2-2208.

This schedule of civil penalties shall be uniform for each type of specified violation, and the penalty for any one violation shall be a civil penalty of not more than \$200 for the initial summons and not more than \$500 for each additional summons. *However, for any repeat violation on property that is zoned or used for multifamily residential purposes, the penalty shall be not more than (i) \$1,000 for a second violation and (ii) \$1,500 for a third or subsequent violation, not to exceed an aggregate amount of \$6,000 for all such violations within a 12-month period.* Each day during which the violation is found to have existed shall constitute a separate offense. However, specified violations arising from the same operative set of facts shall not be charged more frequently than once in any 10-day period, and, *for violations that do not involve property that is zoned or used for multifamily residential purposes,* a series of specified violations arising from the same operative set of facts shall not result in civil penalties which exceed a total of \$5,000. Designation of a particular zoning ordinance violation for a civil penalty pursuant to this section shall be in lieu of criminal sanctions, and except for any violation resulting in injury to persons, such designation shall preclude the prosecution of a violation as a criminal misdemeanor, provided, however, that when such civil penalties total \$5,000 or more, the violation may be prosecuted as a criminal misdemeanor.

The zoning administrator or his deputy may issue a civil summons as provided by law for a scheduled violation. Any person summoned or issued a ticket for a scheduled violation may make an appearance in person or in writing by mail to the department of finance or the treasurer of the locality prior to the date fixed for trial in court. Any person so appearing may enter a waiver of trial, admit liability, and pay the civil penalty established for the offense charged. Such persons shall be informed of their right to stand trial and that a signature to an admission of liability will have the same force and effect as a judgment of court. *Notwithstanding a court's authority to order the abatement or remedy of a zoning violation for any violation involving property that is zoned or used for multifamily residential purposes, any person who admits liability shall be required to abate or remedy such violation within a period of time specified by the locality that is no less than 30 days but no more than 24 months from the date of admission of liability.*

If a person charged with a scheduled violation does not elect to enter a waiver of trial and admit liability, the violation shall be tried in the general district court in the same manner and with the same right of appeal as provided for by law. In any trial for a scheduled violation authorized by this section, it shall be the burden of the locality to

show the liability of the violator by a preponderance of the evidence. If the violation remains uncorrected at the time of the admission of liability or finding of liability, the court may order the violator to abate or remedy the violation in order to comply with the zoning ordinance. Except as otherwise provided by the court for good cause shown, any such violator shall abate or remedy the violation within a period of time as determined by the court, but not later than six months of the date of admission of liability or finding of liability. Each day during which the violation continues after the court-ordered abatement period has ended shall constitute a separate offense. An admission of liability or finding of liability shall not be a criminal conviction for any purpose.

No provision herein shall be construed to allow the imposition of civil penalties (i) for activities related to land development or (ii) for violation of any provision of a local zoning ordinance relating to the posting of signs on public property or public rights-of-way.

CHAPTER 594

An Act to amend and reenact §§ 15.2-2201, 15.2-2241, 15.2-2245, 15.2-2254, 15.2-2258, 15.2-2259, 15.2-2260, 15.2-2261, 15.2-2269, 15.2-2270, 15.2-2271, and 15.2-2307 of the Code of Virginia, relating to subdivision ordinance; plan review by designated agent.

[S 974]

Approved March 24, 2025

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 15.2-2201, 15.2-2241, 15.2-2245, 15.2-2254, 15.2-2258, 15.2-2259, 15.2-2260, 15.2-2261, 15.2-2269, 15.2-2270, 15.2-2271, and 15.2-2307 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 15.2-2201. Definitions.

As used in this chapter, unless the context requires a different meaning:

"Affordable housing" means, as a guideline, housing that is affordable to households with incomes at or below the area median income, provided that the occupant pays no more than thirty percent of his gross income for gross housing costs, including utilities. For the purpose of administering affordable dwelling unit ordinances authorized by this chapter, local governments may establish individual definitions of affordable housing and affordable dwelling units including determination of the appropriate percent of area median income and percent of gross income.

"Conditional zoning" means, as part of classifying land within a locality into areas and districts by legislative action, the allowing of reasonable conditions governing the use of such property, such conditions being in addition to, or modification of the regulations provided for a particular zoning district or zone by the overall zoning ordinance.

"Designated agent" means any agent employed or authorized by a locality and designated by the governing body to review and act on subdivision plats, site plans, and plans of development. "Designated agent" does not include the local planning commission. However, the local planning commission may serve as the designated agent of any locality with a population of 5,000 or less.

"Development" means a tract of land developed or to be developed as a unit under single ownership or unified control which is to be used for any business or industrial purpose or is to contain three or more residential dwelling units. The term "development" shall not be construed to include any tract of land which will be principally devoted to agricultural production.

"Historic area" means an area containing one or more buildings or places in which historic events occurred or having special public value because of notable architectural, archaeological or other features relating to the cultural or artistic heritage of the community, of such significance as to warrant conservation and preservation.

"Incentive zoning" means the use of bonuses in the form of increased project density or other benefits to a developer in return for the developer providing certain features, design elements, uses, services, or amenities desired by the locality, including but not limited to, site design incorporating principles of new urbanism and traditional neighborhood development, environmentally sustainable and energy-efficient building design, affordable housing creation and preservation, and historical preservation, as part of the development.

"Local planning commission" means a municipal planning commission or a county planning commission.

"Military installation" means a base, camp, post, station, yard, center, homeport facility for any ship, or other activity under jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Defense, including any leased facility, or any land or interest in land owned by the Commonwealth and administered by the Adjutant General of Virginia or the Virginia Department of Military Affairs. "Military installation" does not include any facility used primarily for civil works, rivers and harbors projects, or flood control projects.

"Mixed use development" means property that incorporates two or more different uses, and may include a variety of housing types, within a single development.

"Official map" means a map of legally established and proposed public streets, waterways, and public areas adopted by a locality in accordance with the provisions of Article 4 (§ 15.2-2233 et seq.) hereof.

"Planned unit development" means a form of development characterized by unified site design for a variety of housing types and densities, clustering of buildings, common open space, and a mix of building types and land uses in which project planning and density calculation are performed for the entire development rather than on an individual lot basis.

"Planning district commission" means a regional planning agency chartered under the provisions of Chapter 42 (§ 15.2-4200 et seq.) of this title.

"Plat" or "plat of subdivision" means the schematic representation of land divided or to be divided and information in accordance with the provisions of §§ 15.2-2241, 15.2-2242, 15.2-2258, 15.2-2262, and

15.2-2264, and other applicable statutes.

"Preliminary subdivision plat" means the proposed schematic representation of development or subdivision that establishes how the provisions of §§ 15.2-2241 and 15.2-2242, and other applicable statutes will be achieved.

"Resident curator" means a person, firm, or corporation that leases or otherwise contracts to manage, preserve, maintain, operate, or reside in a historic property in accordance with the provisions of § 15.2-2306 and other applicable statutes.

"Site plan" means the proposal for a development or a subdivision including all covenants, grants or easements and other conditions relating to use, location and bulk of buildings, density of development, common open space, public facilities and such other information as required by the subdivision ordinance to which the proposed development or subdivision is subject.

"Special exception" means a special use that is a use not permitted in a particular district except by a special use permit granted under the provisions of this chapter and any zoning ordinances adopted herewith.

"Street" means highway, street, avenue, boulevard, road, lane, alley, or any public way.

"Subdivision," unless otherwise defined in an ordinance adopted pursuant to § 15.2-2240, means the division of a parcel of land into three or more lots or parcels of less than five acres each for the purpose of transfer of ownership or building development, or, if a new street is involved in such division, any division of a parcel of land. The term includes resubdivision and, when appropriate to the context, shall relate to the process of subdividing or to the land subdivided and solely for the purpose of recordation of any single division of land into two lots or parcels, a plat of such division shall be submitted for approval in accordance with § 15.2-2258. Nothing in this definition, section, nor any ordinance adopted pursuant to § 15.2-2240 shall preclude different owners of adjacent parcels from entering into a valid and enforceable boundary line agreement with one another so long as such agreement is only used to resolve a bona fide property line dispute, the boundary adjustment does not move by more than 250 feet from the center of the current platted line or alter either parcel's resultant acreage by more than five percent of the smaller parcel size, and such agreement does not create an additional lot, alter the existing boundary lines of localities, result in greater street frontage, or interfere with a recorded easement, and such agreement shall not result in any nonconformity with local ordinances and health department regulations. Notice shall be provided to the zoning administrator of the locality in which the parcels are located for review. For any property affected by this definition, any division of land subject to a partition suit by virtue of order or decree by a court of competent jurisdiction shall take precedence over the requirements of Article 6 (§ 15.2-2240 et seq.) and the minimum lot area, width, or frontage requirements in the zoning ordinance so long as the lot or parcel resulting from such order or decree does not vary from minimum lot area, width, or frontage requirements by more than 20 percent. A copy of the final decree shall be provided to the zoning administrator of the locality in which the property is located.

"Variance" means, in the application of a zoning ordinance, a reasonable deviation from those provisions regulating the shape, size, or area of a lot or parcel of land or the size, height, area, bulk, or location of a building or structure when the strict application of the ordinance would unreasonably restrict the utilization of the property, and such need for a variance would not be shared generally by other properties, and provided such variance is not contrary to the purpose of the ordinance. It shall not include a change in use, which change shall be accomplished by a rezoning or by a conditional zoning.

"Working waterfront" means an area or structure on, over, or adjacent to navigable waters that provides access to the water and is used for water-dependent commercial, industrial, or governmental activities, including commercial and recreational fishing; tourism; aquaculture; boat and ship building, repair, and services; seafood processing and sales; transportation; shipping; marine construction; and military activities.

"Working waterfront development area" means an area containing one or more working waterfronts having economic, cultural, or historic public value of such significance as to warrant development and reparation.

"Zoning" or "to zone" means the process of classifying land within a locality into areas and districts, such areas and districts being generally referred to as "zones," by legislative action and the prescribing and application in each area and district of regulations concerning building and structure designs, building and structure placement and uses to which land, buildings and structures within such designated areas and districts may be put.

§ 15.2-2241. Mandatory provisions of a subdivision ordinance.

A. A subdivision ordinance shall include reasonable regulations and provisions that apply to or provide:

1. For plat details which shall meet the standard for plats as adopted under § 42.1-82 of the Virginia Public Records Act (§ 42.1-76 et seq.);
2. For the coordination of streets within and contiguous to the subdivision with other existing or planned streets within the general area as to location, widths, grades and drainage, including, for ordinances and amendments thereto adopted on or after January 1, 1990, for the coordination of such streets with existing or planned streets in existing or future adjacent or contiguous to adjacent subdivisions;
3. For adequate provisions for drainage and flood control, for adequate provisions related to the failure of

impounding structures and impacts within dam break inundation zones, and other public purposes, and for light and air, and for identifying soil characteristics;

4. For the extent to which and the manner in which streets shall be graded, graveled or otherwise improved and water and storm and sanitary sewer and other public utilities or other community facilities are to be installed;

5. For the acceptance of dedication for public use of any right-of-way located within any subdivision or section thereof, which has constructed or proposed to be constructed within the subdivision or section thereof, any street, curb, gutter, sidewalk, bicycle trail, drainage or sewerage system, waterline as part of a public system or other improvement dedicated for public use, and maintained by the locality, the Commonwealth, or other public agency, and for the provision of other site-related improvements required by local ordinances for vehicular ingress and egress, including traffic signalization and control, for public access streets, for structures necessary to ensure stability of critical slopes, and for storm water management facilities, financed or to be financed in whole or in part by private funds only if the owner or developer (i) certifies to the governing body that the construction costs have been paid to the person constructing such facilities or, at the option of the local governing body, presents evidence satisfactory to the governing body that the time for recordation of any mechanics lien has expired or evidence that any debt for said construction that may be due and owing is contested and further provides indemnity with adequate surety in an amount deemed sufficient by the ~~governing body or its designated administrative agency agent~~; (ii) furnishes to the governing body a certified check or cash escrow in the amount of the estimated costs of construction or a personal, corporate or property bond, with surety satisfactory to the ~~governing body or its designated administrative agency agent~~, in an amount sufficient for and conditioned upon the construction of such facilities, or a contract for the construction of such facilities and the contractor's bond, with like surety, in like amount and so conditioned; or (iii) furnishes to the governing body a bank or savings institution's letter of credit on certain designated funds satisfactory to the ~~governing body or its designated administrative agency agent~~ as to the bank or savings institution, the amount and the form. The amount of such certified check, cash escrow, bond, or letter of credit shall not exceed the total of the estimated cost of construction based on unit prices for new public or private sector construction in the locality and a reasonable allowance for estimated administrative costs, inflation, and potential damage to existing roads or utilities, which shall not exceed 10 percent of the estimated construction costs. If the owner or developer defaults on construction of such facilities, and such facilities are constructed by the surety or with funding from the aforesaid check, cash escrow, bond or letter of credit, the locality shall be entitled to retain or collect the allowance for administrative costs to the extent the costs of such construction do not exceed the total of the originally estimated costs of construction and the allowance for administrative costs. "Such facilities," as used in this section, means those facilities specifically provided for in this section.

If a developer records a final plat which may be a section of a subdivision as shown on an approved preliminary subdivision plat and furnishes to the governing body a certified check, cash escrow, bond, or letter of credit in the amount of the estimated cost of construction of the facilities to be dedicated within said section for public use and maintained by the locality, the Commonwealth, or other public agency, the developer shall have the right to record the remaining sections shown on the preliminary subdivision plat for a period of five years from the recordation date of any section, or for such longer period as the local commission or other agent may, at the approval, determine to be reasonable, taking into consideration the size and phasing of the proposed development, subject to the terms and conditions of this subsection and subject to engineering and construction standards and zoning requirements in effect at the time that each remaining section is recorded. In the event a governing body of a county, wherein the highway system is maintained by the Department of Transportation, has accepted the dedication of a road for public use and such road due to factors other than its quality of construction is not acceptable into the secondary system of state highways, then such governing body may, if so provided by its subdivision ordinance, require the subdivider or developer to furnish the county with a maintenance and indemnifying bond, with surety satisfactory to the ~~governing body or its designated administrative agency agent~~, in an amount sufficient for and conditioned upon the maintenance of such road until such time as it is accepted into the secondary system of state highways. In lieu of such bond, the ~~governing body or its designated administrative agency agent~~ may accept a bank or savings institution's letter of credit on certain designated funds satisfactory to the ~~governing body or its designated administrative agency agent~~ as to the bank or savings institution, the amount and the form, or accept payment of a negotiated sum of money sufficient for and conditioned upon the maintenance of such road until such time as it is accepted into the secondary system of state highways and assume the subdivider's or developer's liability for maintenance of such road. "Maintenance of such road" as used in this section, means maintenance of the streets, curb, gutter, drainage facilities, utilities or other street improvements, including the correction of defects or damages and the removal of snow, water or debris, so as to keep such road reasonably open for public usage.

As used in this section, "~~designated administrative agency~~" means the planning commission of the locality or an agent designated by the governing body of the locality for such purpose as set forth in §§ 15.2-2258 through 15.2-2261;

6. For conveyance of common or shared easements to franchised cable television operators furnishing cable television and public service corporations furnishing cable television, gas, telephone and electric service to the proposed subdivision. Once a developer conveys an easement that will permit electric, cable or telephone service to be furnished to a subdivision, the developer shall, within 30 days after written request by a cable television operator or telephone service provider, grant an easement to that cable television operator or telephone service provider for the purpose of providing cable television and communications services to that subdivision, which easement shall be geographically coextensive with the electric service easement, or if only a telephone or cable service easement has been granted, then geographically coextensive with that telephone or cable service easement; however, the developer and franchised cable television operator or telephone service provider may mutually agree on an alternate location for an easement. If the final subdivision plat is recorded and does not include conveyance of a common or shared easement as provided herein, the ~~local planning commission or agent designated by the governing body to review and act on submitted subdivision plats~~ *designated agent* shall not be responsible to enforce the requirements of this subdivision;

7. For monuments of specific types to be installed establishing street and property lines;

8. That unless a plat is filed for recordation within six months after final approval thereof or such longer period as may be approved by the governing body, such approval shall be withdrawn and the plat marked void and returned to the approving official; however, in any case where construction of facilities to be dedicated for public use has commenced pursuant to an approved plan or permit with surety approved by the ~~governing body or its designated administrative agency agent~~, or where the developer has furnished surety to the ~~governing body or its designated administrative agency agent~~ by certified check, cash escrow, bond, or letter of credit in the amount of the estimated cost of construction of such facilities, the time for plat recordation shall be extended to one year after final approval or to the time limit specified in the surety agreement approved by the ~~governing body or its designated administrative agency~~, ~~whichever is greater agent~~;

9. For the administration and enforcement of such ordinance, not inconsistent with provisions contained in this chapter, and specifically for the imposition of reasonable fees and charges for the review of plats and plans, and for the inspection of facilities required by any such ordinance to be installed; such fees and charges shall in no instance exceed an amount commensurate with the services rendered taking into consideration the time, skill and administrator's expense involved. All such charges heretofore made are hereby validated;

10. For reasonable provisions permitting a single division of a lot or parcel for the purpose of sale or gift to a member of the immediate family of the property owner in accordance with the provisions of § 15.2-2244; ~~and~~

11. For the periodic partial and final complete release of any bond, escrow, letter of credit, or other performance guarantee required by the governing body under this section in accordance with the provisions of § 15.2-2245;

12. *For the review of plats, site plans, and plans of development solely involving parcels of commercial or residential real estate as set forth in §§ 15.2-2259 and 15.2-2260; and*

13. *For the identification of deficiencies, corrections, or modifications of proposed and resubmitted plats and plans as set forth in §§ 15.2-2259 and 15.2-2260.*

B. No locality shall require that any certified check, cash escrow, bond, letter of credit or other performance guarantee furnished pursuant to this chapter apply to, or include the cost of, any facility or improvement unless such facility or improvement is shown or described on the approved plat or plan of the project for which such guarantee is being furnished. Furthermore, the terms, conditions, and specifications contained in any agreement, contract, performance agreement, or similar document, however described or delineated, between a locality or its governing body and an owner or developer of property entered into pursuant to this chapter in conjunction with any performance guarantee, as described in this subsection, shall be limited to those items depicted or provided for in the approved plan, plat, permit application, or similar document for which such performance guarantee is applicable.

§ 15.2-2245. Provisions for periodic partial and final release of certain performance guarantees.

A. A subdivision ordinance shall provide for the periodic partial and final complete release of any bond, escrow, letter of credit, or other performance guarantee required by the governing body under this article within thirty days after receipt of written notice by the subdivider or developer of completion of part or all of any public facilities required to be constructed hereunder unless the ~~governing body or its designated administrative agency agent~~ notifies the subdivider or developer in writing of nonreceipt of approval by an applicable state agency, or of any specified defects or deficiencies in construction and suggested corrective measures prior to the expiration of the thirty-day period. Any inspection of such public facilities shall be based solely upon conformance with the terms and conditions of the performance agreement and the approved design plan and specifications for the facilities for which the performance guarantee is applicable, and shall not include the approval of any person other than an employee of the governing body, its administrative agency, the Virginia Department of Transportation or other political subdivision or a person who has contracted with the governing body, its administrative agency, the Virginia Department of

Transportation or other political subdivision.

B. If no such action is taken by the ~~governing body or administrative agency~~ *designated agent* within the time specified above, the request shall be deemed approved, and a partial release granted to the subdivider or developer. No final release shall be granted until after expiration of such thirty-day period and there is an additional request in writing sent by certified mail return receipt to the chief administrative officer of such governing body. The ~~governing body or its designated administrative agency~~ *agent* shall act within ten working days of receipt of the request; then if no action is taken the request shall be deemed approved and final release granted to the subdivider or developer.

C. After receipt of the written notices required above, if the governing body or administrative agency takes no action within the times specified above and the subdivider or developer files suit in the local circuit court to obtain partial or final release of a bond, escrow, letter of credit, or other performance guarantee, as the case may be, the circuit court, upon finding the governing body or its administrative agency was without good cause in failing to act, shall award such subdivider or developer his reasonable costs and attorneys' fees.

D. No ~~governing body or administrative agency~~ *designated agent* shall refuse to make a periodic partial or final release of a bond, escrow, letter of credit, or other performance guarantee for any reason not directly related to the specified defects or deficiencies in construction of the public facilities covered by said bond, escrow, letter of credit or other performance guarantee.

E. Upon written request by the subdivider or developer, the ~~governing body or its designated administrative agency~~ *agent* shall be required to make periodic partial releases of such bond, escrow, letter of credit, or other performance guarantee in a cumulative amount equal to no less than ninety percent of the original amount for which the bond, escrow, letter of credit, or other performance guarantee was taken, and may make partial releases to such lower amounts as may be authorized by the ~~governing body or its designated administrative agency~~ *agent* based upon the percentage of public facilities completed and approved by the governing body, local administrative agency, or state agency having jurisdiction. Periodic partial releases may not occur before the completion of at least thirty percent of the public facilities covered by any bond, escrow, letter of credit, or other performance guarantee. The ~~governing body or administrative agency~~ *designated agent* shall not be required to execute more than three periodic partial releases in any twelve-month period. Upon final completion and acceptance of the public facilities, the ~~governing body or administrative agency~~ *designated agent* shall release any remaining bond, escrow, letter of credit, or other performance guarantee to the subdivider or developer. For the purpose of final release, the term "acceptance" means: when the public facility is accepted by and taken over for operation and maintenance by the state agency, local government department or agency, or other public authority which is responsible for maintaining and operating such public facility upon acceptance.

F. For the purposes of this section, a certificate of partial or final completion of such public facilities from either a duly licensed professional engineer or land surveyor, as defined in and limited to § 54.1-400, or from a department or agency designated by the locality may be accepted without requiring further inspection of such public facilities.

§ 15.2-2254. Statutory provisions effective after ordinance adopted.

After the adoption of a subdivision ordinance in accordance with this chapter, the following provisions shall be effective in the territory to which the ordinance applies:

1. No person shall subdivide land without making and recording a plat of the subdivision and without fully complying with the provisions of this article and of the subdivision ordinance.

2. No plat of any subdivision shall be recorded unless and until it has been submitted to and approved by the ~~local planning commission or by the governing body or its duly authorized~~ *designated agent*, of the locality wherein the land to be subdivided is located; or by the ~~commissions, governing bodies or designated agents~~, as the case may be, of each locality having a subdivision ordinance, in which any part of the land lies.

3. No person shall sell or transfer any land of a subdivision, before a plat has been duly approved and recorded as provided herein, unless the subdivision was lawfully created prior to the adoption of a subdivision ordinance applicable thereto. However, nothing herein contained shall be construed as preventing the recordation of the instrument by which such land is transferred or the passage of title as between the parties to the instrument.

4. Any person violating the foregoing provisions of this section shall be subject to a fine of not more than \$500 for each lot or parcel of land so subdivided, transferred or sold and shall be required to comply with all provisions of this article and the subdivision ordinance. The description of the lot or parcel by metes and bounds in the instrument of transfer or other document used in the process of selling or transferring shall not exempt the transaction from the penalties or remedies herein provided.

5. No clerk of any court shall file or record a plat of a subdivision required by this article to be recorded until the plat has been approved as required herein. The penalties provided by § 17.1-223 shall apply to any failure to comply with the provisions of this subsection.

§ 15.2-2258. Plat of proposed subdivision and site plans to be submitted for approval.

Whenever the owner or proprietor of any tract of land located within any territory to which a subdivision ordinance applies desires to subdivide the tract, he shall submit a plat of the proposed subdivision to the

~~planning commission of the locality, or an agent designated by the governing body~~ *designated agent* thereof for such purpose. When any part of the land proposed for subdivision lies in a drainage district such fact shall be set forth on the plat of the proposed subdivision. When any part of the land proposed for subdivision lies in a mapped dam break inundation zone such fact shall be set forth on the plat of the proposed subdivision. When any grave, object or structure marking a place of burial is located on the land proposed for subdivision, such grave, object or structure shall be identified on any plans or site plans required by this article. When the land involved lies wholly or partly within an area subject to the joint control of more than one locality, the plat shall be submitted to the ~~planning commission or other~~ designated agent of the locality in which the tract of land is located. Site plans or plans of development required by subdivision A 8 of § 15.2-2286 shall also be subject to the provisions of §§ 15.2-2258 through 15.2-2261, mutatis mutandis.

§ 15.2-2259. Designated agent to act on proposed final plat.

A. 1. Except as otherwise provided in subdivisions 2 and 3, the ~~local planning commission or other~~ *designated agent* shall act on any proposed plat within 60 days after it has been officially submitted for approval by either approving or disapproving the plat in writing, and giving with the latter specific reasons therefor. The ~~Commission or~~ *designated agent* shall thoroughly review the plat and shall make a good faith effort to identify all deficiencies, if any, with the initial submission. However, if approval of a feature or features of the plat by a state agency or public authority authorized by state law is necessary, the ~~commission or~~ *designated agent* shall forward the plat to the appropriate state agency or ~~agencies~~ *authority* for review within ~~to five~~ business days of receipt of such plat. The state agency shall respond in accord with the requirements set forth in § 15.2-2222.1, which shall extend the time for action by the ~~local planning commission or other~~ *designated agent*, as set forth in subsection B. Specific reasons for disapproval shall be contained either in a separate document or on the plat itself. The reasons for disapproval shall identify deficiencies in the plat that cause the disapproval by reference to specific duly adopted ordinances, regulations, or policies and shall identify modifications or corrections as will permit approval of the plat. The ~~local planning commission or other~~ *designated agent* shall act on any proposed plat that it has previously disapproved within 45 days after the plat has been modified, corrected and resubmitted for approval.

2. The approval of plats, site plans, and plans of development solely involving parcels of commercial or residential real estate by a ~~local planning commission or other~~ *designated agent* shall be governed by subdivision 3 and subsections B, C, and D. For the purposes of this section, the term "commercial" means all real property used for commercial or industrial uses, and the term "residential" means all real property used for single-family or multifamily use.

3. The ~~local planning commission or other~~ *designated agent* shall act on any proposed plat, site plan or plan of development within 60 days after it has been officially submitted for approval by either approving or disapproving the plat in writing, and giving with the latter specific reasons therefor. The ~~local planning commission or other~~ *designated agent* shall not delay the official submission of any proposed plat, site plan, or plan of development by requiring presubmission conferences, meetings, or reviews. The ~~Commission or~~ *designated agent* shall thoroughly review the plat or plan and shall in good faith identify, to the greatest extent practicable, all deficiencies, if any, with the initial submission. However, if approval of a feature or features of the plat or plan by a state agency or public authority authorized by state law is necessary, the ~~commission or~~ *designated agent* shall forward the plat or plan to the appropriate state agency or agencies for review within ~~to business five business~~ days of receipt of such plat or plan. The state agency shall respond in accord with the requirements set forth in § 15.2-2222.1, which shall extend the time for action by the ~~local planning commission or other~~ *designated agent*, as set forth in subsection B. Specific reasons for disapproval shall be contained either in a separate document or on the plat or plan itself. The reasons for disapproval shall identify deficiencies in the plat or plan that caused the disapproval by reference to specific duly adopted ordinances, regulations, or policies and shall identify, to the greatest extent practicable, modifications or corrections that will permit approval of the plat or plan.

In the review of a resubmitted proposed plat, site plan or plan of development that has been previously disapproved, the ~~local planning commission or other~~ *designated agent* shall consider only deficiencies it had identified in its review of the initial submission of the plat or plan that have not been corrected in such resubmission and any deficiencies that arise as a result of the corrections made to address deficiencies identified in the initial submission. In the review of the resubmission of a plat or plan, the ~~local planning commission or other~~ *designated agent* shall identify all deficiencies with the proposed plat or plan that caused the disapproval by reference to specific duly adopted ordinances, regulations or policies and shall identify modifications or corrections that will permit approval of the plat or plan. Upon the second resubmission of such disapproved plat or plan, the ~~local planning commission or other~~ *designated agent's* review shall be limited solely to the previously identified deficiencies that caused its disapproval.

The ~~local planning commission or other~~ *designated agent* shall act on any proposed plat, site plan or plan of development that it has previously disapproved within 45 days after the plat or plan has been modified, corrected and resubmitted for approval. The failure of a ~~local planning commission or other~~ *designated agent* to approve or disapprove a resubmitted plat or plan within the time periods required by this section shall cause the plat or plan to be deemed approved.

Notwithstanding the approval or deemed approval of any proposed plat, site plan or plan of development, any deficiency in any proposed plat or plan, that if left uncorrected, would violate local, state or federal law, regulations, mandatory Department of Transportation engineering and safety requirements, and other mandatory engineering and safety requirements, shall not be considered, treated or deemed as having been approved by the ~~local planning commission or other~~ *designated* agent. Should any resubmission include a material revision of infrastructure or physical improvements from the earlier submission or if a material revision in the resubmission creates a new required review by the Virginia Department of Transportation or by a state agency or public authority authorized by state law, then the ~~local planning commission or other~~ *designated* agent's review shall not be limited to only the previously identified deficiencies identified in the prior submittals and may consider deficiencies initially appearing in the resubmission because of such material revision.

B. Any state agency or public authority authorized by state law making a review of a plat forwarded to it under this article, including, without limitation, the Virginia Department of Transportation and authorities authorized by Chapter 51 (§ 15.2-5100 et seq.), shall complete its review within 45 days of receipt of the plat upon first submission and within 45 days for any proposed plat that has previously been disapproved, provided, however, that the time periods set forth in § 15.2-2222.1 shall apply to plats triggering the applicability of said section. The Virginia Department of Transportation and authorities authorized by Chapter 51 (§ 15.2-5100 et seq.) shall allow use of public rights-of-way dedicated for public street purposes for placement of utilities by permit when practical and shall not unreasonably deny plat approval. If a state agency or public authority authorized by state law does not approve the plat, it shall comply with the requirements, and be subject to the restrictions, set forth in subsection A, with the exception of the time period therein specified. Upon receipt of the approvals from all state agencies and other agencies, the ~~local~~ *designated* agent shall act upon a plat within 35 days.

C. If the ~~commission or other~~ *designated* agent fails to approve or disapprove the plat within 60 days after it has been officially submitted for approval, or within 45 days after it has been officially resubmitted after a previous disapproval or within 35 days of receipt of any agency response pursuant to subsection B, the subdivider, after 10-days' written notice to the ~~commission, or~~ *designated* agent, may petition the circuit court for the locality in which the land involved, or the major part thereof, is located, to decide whether the plat should or should not be approved. The court shall give the petition priority on the civil docket, hear the matter expeditiously in accordance with the procedures prescribed in Article 2 (§ 8.01-644 et seq.) of Chapter 25 of Title 8.01 and make and enter an order with respect thereto as it deems proper, which may include directing approval of the plat.

D. If a ~~commission or other~~ *the designated* agent disapproves a plat and the ~~subdivider~~ *applicant* contends that the disapproval was not properly based on the ordinance applicable thereto, or was arbitrary or capricious, he may appeal to the circuit court having jurisdiction of such land and the court shall hear and determine the case as soon as may be, provided that his appeal is filed with the circuit court within 60 days of the written disapproval by the ~~commission or other~~ *designated* agent.

§ 15.2-2260. Localities may provide for submission of preliminary subdivision plats; how long valid.

A. Nothing in this article shall be deemed to prohibit the local governing body from providing in its ordinance for the mandatory submission of preliminary subdivision plats for tentative approval for plats involving more than 50 lots, provided that any such ordinance provides for the submission of a preliminary subdivision plat for tentative approval at the option of the landowner for plats involving 50 or fewer lots. The ~~local planning commission, or an~~ *designated* agent ~~designated by the commission or by the governing body to review preliminary subdivision plats~~ shall complete action on the preliminary subdivision plats within 60 days of submission. However, if approval of a feature or features of the preliminary subdivision plat by a state agency or public authority authorized by state law is necessary, the ~~commission or~~ *designated* agent shall forward the preliminary subdivision plat to the appropriate state agency or ~~agencies~~ *authority* for review within ~~40~~ *five* business days of receipt of such preliminary subdivision plat.

B. Any state agency or public authority authorized by state law making a review of a preliminary subdivision plat forwarded to it under this section, including, without limitation, the Virginia Department of Transportation and authorities authorized by Chapter 51 (§ 15.2-5100 et seq.), shall complete its review within 45 days of receipt of the preliminary subdivision plat upon first submission and within 45 days for any proposed plat that has previously been disapproved, provided, however, that the time period set forth in § 15.2-2222.1 shall apply to plats triggering the applicability of said section. The Virginia Department of Transportation and authorities authorized by Chapter 51 (§ 15.2-5100 et seq.) shall allow use of public rights-of-way for public street purposes for placement of utilities by permit when practical and shall not unreasonably deny plat approval. If a state agency or public authority authorized by state law does not approve the plat, it shall comply with the requirements, and be subject to the restrictions, set forth in subsection A of § 15.2-2259 with the exception of the time period therein specified. Upon receipt of the approvals from all state agencies, the ~~local~~ *designated* agent shall act upon a preliminary subdivision plat within 35 days.

C. If a ~~commission~~ has the responsibility of review of preliminary subdivision plats and conducts a public

~~hearing, it~~ *The designated agent* shall act on the plat within 45 days after receiving approval from all state agencies. If the ~~local designated agent or commission~~ does not approve the preliminary subdivision plat, the ~~local designated agent or commission~~ shall set forth in writing the reasons for such denial and shall state what corrections or modifications will permit approval by ~~such the designated agent or commission~~. With regard to plats involving commercial or residential property, as those terms are defined in subdivision A 2 of § 15.2-2259, the review process for such plats shall be the same as provided in subdivisions A 2 and A 3 of § 15.2-2259. However, no ~~commission or designated agent~~ shall be required to approve a preliminary subdivision plat in less than 60 days from the date of its original submission to the ~~commission or designated agent~~, and all actions on preliminary subdivision plats shall be completed by the *designated agent* ~~or commission~~ and, if necessary, state agencies, within a total of 90 days of submission to the ~~local designated agent or commission~~.

D. If the ~~commission or other designated agent~~ fails to approve or disapprove the preliminary subdivision plat within 90 days after it has been officially submitted for approval, the subdivider after 10 days' written notice to the ~~commission, or designated agent~~, may petition the circuit court for the locality in which the land involved, or the major part thereof, is located to enter an order with respect thereto as it deems proper, which may include directing approval of the plat.

E. If a ~~commission or other designated agent~~ disapproves a preliminary subdivision plat and the subdivider contends that the disapproval was not properly based on the ordinance applicable thereto, or was arbitrary or capricious, he may appeal to the circuit court having jurisdiction of such land and the court shall hear and determine the case as soon as may be, provided that his appeal is filed with the circuit court within 60 days of the written disapproval by the ~~commission or other designated agent~~.

F. Once a preliminary subdivision plat is approved, it shall be valid for a period of five years, provided the subdivider (i) submits a final subdivision plat for all or a portion of the property within one year of such approval or such longer period as may be prescribed by local ordinance, and (ii) thereafter diligently pursues approval of the final subdivision plat. "Diligent pursuit of approval" means that the subdivider has incurred extensive obligations or substantial expenses relating to the submitted final subdivision plat or modifications thereto. However, no sooner than three years following such preliminary subdivision plat approval, and upon 90 days' written notice by certified mail to the subdivider, the ~~commission or other designated agent~~ may revoke such approval upon a specific finding of facts that the subdivider has not diligently pursued approval of the final subdivision plat.

G. Once an approved final subdivision plat for all or a portion of the property is recorded pursuant to § 15.2-2261, the underlying preliminary plat shall remain valid for a period of five years from the date of the latest recorded plat of subdivision for the property. The five year period of validity shall extend from the date of the last recorded plat.

§ 15.2-2261. Recorded plats or final site plans to be valid for not less than five years.

A. An approved final subdivision plat which has been recorded or an approved final site plan, hereinafter referred to as "recorded plat or final site plan," shall be valid for a period of not less than five years from the date of approval thereof or for such longer period as the ~~local planning commission or other designated agent~~ may, at the time of approval, determine to be reasonable, taking into consideration the size and phasing of the proposed development. A site plan shall be deemed final once it has been reviewed and approved by the locality if the only requirements remaining to be satisfied in order to obtain a building permit are the posting of any bonds and escrows or the submission of any other administrative documents, agreements, deposits, or fees required by the locality in order to obtain the permit. However, any fees that are customarily due and owing at the time of the agency review of the site plan shall be paid in a timely manner.

B. 1. Upon application of the subdivider or developer filed prior to expiration of a recorded plat or final site plan, the ~~local planning commission or other designated agent~~ may grant one or more extensions of such approval for additional periods as the ~~commission or other designated agent~~ may, at the time the extension is granted, determine to be reasonable, taking into consideration the size and phasing of the proposed development, the laws, ordinances and regulations in effect at the time of the request for an extension.

2. If the ~~commission or other designated agent~~ denies an extension requested as provided herein and the subdivider or developer contends that such denial was not properly based on the ordinance applicable thereto, the foregoing considerations for granting an extension, or was arbitrary or capricious, he may appeal to the circuit court having jurisdiction of land subject to the recorded plat or final site plan, provided that such appeal is filed with the circuit court within sixty days of the written denial by the commission or other agency.

C. For so long as the final site plan remains valid in accordance with the provisions of this section, or in the case of a recorded plat for five years after approval, no change or amendment to any local ordinance, map, resolution, rule, regulation, policy or plan adopted subsequent to the date of approval of the recorded plat or final site plan shall adversely affect the right of the subdivider or developer or his successor in interest to commence and complete an approved development in accordance with the lawful terms of the recorded plat or site plan unless the change or amendment is required to comply with state law or there has been a mistake, fraud or a change in circumstances substantially affecting the public health, safety or welfare.

D. Application for minor modifications to recorded plats or final site plans made during the periods of validity of such plats or plans established in accordance with this section shall not constitute a waiver of the provisions hereof nor shall the approval of minor modifications extend the period of validity of such plats or plans.

E. The provisions of this section shall be applicable to all recorded plats and final site plans valid on or after January 1, 1992. Nothing contained in this section shall be construed to affect (i) any litigation concerning the validity of a site plan pending prior to January 1, 1992, or any such litigation nonsuited and thereafter refiled; (ii) the authority of a governing body to impose valid conditions upon approval of any special use permit, conditional use permit or special exception; (iii) the application to individual lots on recorded plats or parcels of land subject to final site plans, to the greatest extent possible, of the provisions of any local ordinance adopted pursuant to the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act (§ 62.1-44.15:67 et seq.); or (iv) the application to individual lots on recorded plats or parcels of land subject to final site plans of the provisions of any local ordinance adopted to comply with the requirements of the federal Clean Water Act, Section 402 (p.) of the Stormwater Program and regulations promulgated thereunder by the Environmental Protection Agency.

F. An approved final subdivision plat that has been recorded, from which any part of the property subdivided has been conveyed to third parties (other than to the developer or local jurisdiction), or a recorded plat dedicating real property to the local jurisdiction or public body that has been accepted by such grantee, shall remain valid for an indefinite period of time unless and until any portion of the property is subject to a vacation action as set forth in §§ 15.2-2270 through 15.2-2278.

§ 15.2-2269. Plans and specifications for utility fixtures and systems to be submitted for approval.

A. If the owners of any such subdivision desire to construct in, on, under, or adjacent to any streets or alleys located in such subdivision any gas, water, sewer or electric light or power works, pipes, wires, fixtures or systems, they shall present plans or specifications therefor to the ~~governing body of the locality in which the subdivision is located or its authorized~~ *designated* agent, for approval. If the subdivision is located beyond the corporate limits of a municipality but within the limits set forth in § 15.2-2248, such plans and specifications shall be presented for approval to the ~~governing body of such municipality, or its authorized~~ *designated* agent, if the county has not adopted a subdivision ordinance. The ~~governing body, or designated~~ agent, shall have 45 days in which to approve or disapprove the same. In event of the failure of any ~~governing body, or its designated~~ agent, to act within such period, such plans and specifications may be submitted, after ten days' notice to the locality, to the circuit court for such locality for its approval or disapproval, and its approval thereof shall, for all purposes of this article be treated and considered as approval by the ~~locality or its authorized~~ *designated* agent.

B. Any state agency or public authority authorized by state law making a review of any plat forwarded to it under this article, including, without limitation, the Virginia Department of Transportation and authorities authorized by Chapter 51 (§ 15.2-5100 et seq.), shall complete its review within 45 days of receipt of the plans, provided, however, that the time periods set forth in § 15.2-2222.1 shall apply to plats triggering the applicability of said section. The Virginia Department of Transportation and authorities authorized by Chapter 51 (§ 15.2-5100 et seq.) shall allow use of public rights-of-way dedicated for public street purposes for placement of utilities by permit when practical and shall not unreasonably deny plan approval. If a state agency or public authority by state law does not approve the plan, it shall comply with the requirements, and be subject to the restrictions, set forth in subsection A of § 15.2-2259, with respect to the exception of the time period therein specified. Upon receipt of the approvals from all state agencies, the ~~local~~ *designated* agent shall act upon a preliminary subdivision plat within 35 days.

§ 15.2-2270. Vacation of interests granted to a locality as a condition of site plan approval.

Any interest in streets, alleys, easements for public rights of passage, easements for drainage, and easements for a public utility granted to a locality as a condition of the approval of a site plan may be vacated according to either of the following methods:

1. By a duly executed and acknowledged written instrument of the owner of the land which has been or is to be developed in accordance with the site plan, declaring the interest or interests to be vacated, provided the ~~governing body or authorized~~ *designated* agent of the locality where the land lies consents to the vacation. The instrument shall be recorded in the same clerk's office wherein is recorded the written instrument describing the interest in real property to be vacated. The execution and recordation of the instrument shall operate to divest all public rights in, and to reinvest the owner with the title to the interests which formerly were held by the governing body; or

2. By ordinance of the governing body in the locality in which the property which is the subject of an approved site plan lies, provided that no interest shall be vacated in an area in which facilities, for which bonding is required pursuant to §§ 15.2-2241 through 15.2-2245, have been constructed.

The ordinance shall not be adopted until after notice has been given as required by § 15.2-2204. Any person may appear at the meeting for the purpose of objecting to the adoption of the ordinance. An appeal from the adoption of the ordinance may be filed within thirty days of the adoption of the ordinance with the circuit court having jurisdiction of the land over which the governing body's interest is located. Upon appeal,

the court may nullify the ordinance if it finds that the owner of the property, which has been developed or is to be developed in accordance with the approved site plan, will be irreparably damaged. If no appeal from the adoption of the ordinance is filed within the time above provided or if the ordinance is upheld on appeal, a certified copy of the ordinance of vacation may be recorded in the clerk's office of any court in which the instrument creating the governing body's interest is recorded.

The execution and recordation of an ordinance of vacation shall operate to destroy the effect of the instrument which created the governing body's interest so vacated and to divest all public rights in and to the property and vest title in the streets, alleys, easements for public rights of passage, easements for drainage, and easements for a public utility as may be described in, and in accordance with, the ordinance of vacation.

§ 15.2-2271. Vacation of plat before sale of lot therein; ordinance of vacation.

Where no lot has been sold, the recorded plat, or part thereof, may be vacated according to either of the following methods:

1. With the consent of the ~~governing body, or its authorized~~ *designated* agent, of the locality where the land lies, by the owners, proprietors and trustees, if any, who signed the statement required by § 15.2-2264 at any time before the sale of any lot therein, by a written instrument, declaring the plat to be vacated, duly executed, acknowledged or proved and recorded in the same clerk's office wherein the plat to be vacated is recorded and the execution and recordation of such writing shall operate to destroy the force and effect of the recording of the plat so vacated and to divest all public rights in, and to reinvest the owners, proprietors and trustees, if any, with the title to the streets, alleys, easements for public passage and other public areas laid out or described in the plat; or

2. By ordinance of the governing body of the locality in which the property shown on the plat or part thereof to be vacated lies, provided that no facilities for which bonding is required pursuant to §§ 15.2-2241 through 15.2-2245 have been constructed on the property and no facilities have been constructed on any related section of the property located in the subdivision within five years of the date on which the plat was first recorded.

The ordinance shall not be adopted until after notice has been given as required by § 15.2-2204. Any person may appear at the meeting for the purpose of objecting to the adoption of the ordinance. An appeal from the adoption of the ordinance may be filed within thirty days of the adoption of the ordinance with the circuit court having jurisdiction of the land shown on the plat or part thereof to be vacated. Upon appeal the court may nullify the ordinance if it finds that the owner of the property shown on the plat will be irreparably damaged. If no appeal from the adoption of the ordinance is filed within the time above provided or if the ordinance is upheld on appeal, a certified copy of the ordinance of vacation may be recorded in the clerk's office of any court in which the plat is recorded.

The execution and recordation of the ordinance of vacation shall operate to destroy the force and effect of the recording of the plat, or any portion thereof, so vacated, and to divest all public rights in and to the property and reinvest the owners, proprietors and trustees, if any, with the title to the streets, alleys, and easements for public passage and other public areas laid out or described in the plat.

§ 15.2-2307. Vested rights not impaired; nonconforming uses.

A. Nothing in this article shall be construed to authorize the impairment of any vested right. Without limiting the time when rights might otherwise vest, a landowner's rights shall be deemed vested in a land use and such vesting shall not be affected by a subsequent amendment to a zoning ordinance when the landowner (i) obtains or is the beneficiary of a significant affirmative governmental act which remains in effect allowing development of a specific project, (ii) relies in good faith on the significant affirmative governmental act, and (iii) incurs extensive obligations or substantial expenses in diligent pursuit of the specific project in reliance on the significant affirmative governmental act.

B. For purposes of this section and without limitation, the following are deemed to be significant affirmative governmental acts allowing development of a specific project: (i) the governing body has accepted proffers or proffered conditions which specify use related to a zoning amendment; (ii) the governing body has approved an application for a rezoning for a specific use or density; (iii) the governing body or board of zoning appeals has granted a special exception or use permit with conditions; (iv) the board of zoning appeals has approved a variance; (v) the ~~governing body or its~~ designated agent has approved a preliminary subdivision plat, site plan or plan of development for the landowner's property and the applicant diligently pursues approval of the final plat or plan within a reasonable period of time under the circumstances; (vi) the ~~governing body or its~~ designated agent has approved a final subdivision plat, site plan or plan of development for the landowner's property; or (vii) the zoning administrator or other administrative officer has issued a written order, requirement, decision or determination regarding the permissibility of a specific use or density of the landowner's property that is no longer subject to appeal and no longer subject to change, modification or reversal under subsection C of § 15.2-2311.

C. A zoning ordinance may provide that land, buildings, and structures and the uses thereof which do not conform to the zoning prescribed for the district in which they are situated may be continued only so long as the then existing or a more restricted use continues and such use is not discontinued for more than two years, and so long as the buildings or structures are maintained in their then structural condition; and that the uses of

such buildings or structures shall conform to such regulations whenever, with respect to the building or structure, the square footage of a building or structure is enlarged, or the building or structure is structurally altered as provided in the Uniform Statewide Building Code (§ 36-97 et seq.). If a use does not conform to the zoning prescribed for the district in which such use is situated, and if (i) a business license was issued by the locality for such use and (ii) the holder of such business license has operated continuously in the same location for at least 15 years and has paid all local taxes related to such use, the locality shall permit the holder of such business license to apply for a rezoning or a special use permit without charge by the locality or any agency affiliated with the locality for fees associated with such filing. Further, a zoning ordinance may provide that no nonconforming use may be expanded, or that no nonconforming building or structure may be moved on the same lot or to any other lot which is not properly zoned to permit such nonconforming use.

D. Notwithstanding any local ordinance to the contrary, if (i) the local government has issued a building permit, the building or structure was thereafter constructed in accordance with the building permit, and upon completion of construction, the local government issued a certificate of occupancy or a use permit therefor, (ii) a property owner, relying in good faith on the issuance of a building permit, incurs extensive obligations or substantial expenses in diligent pursuit of a building project that is in conformance with the building permit and the Uniform Statewide Building Code (§ 36-97 et seq.), or (iii) the owner of the building or structure has paid taxes to the locality for such building or structure for a period of more than the previous 15 years, a zoning ordinance shall not provide that such building or structure is illegal and subject to removal solely due to such nonconformity. Such building or structure shall be nonconforming. A zoning ordinance may provide that such building or structure be brought in compliance with the Uniform Statewide Building Code, provided that to do so shall not affect the nonconforming status of such building or structure. If the local government has issued a permit, other than a building permit, that authorized construction of an improvement to real property and the improvement was thereafter constructed in accordance with such permit, the ordinance may provide that the improvements are nonconforming, but not illegal. If the structure is one that requires no permit, and an authorized local government official informs the property owner that the structure will comply with the zoning ordinance, and the improvement was thereafter constructed, a zoning ordinance may provide that the structure is nonconforming but shall not provide that such structure is illegal and subject to removal solely due to such nonconformity. In any proceeding when the authorized government official is deceased or is otherwise unavailable to testify, uncorroborated testimony of the oral statement of such official shall not be sufficient evidence to prove that the authorized government official made such statement.

E. A zoning ordinance shall permit the owner of any residential or commercial building damaged or destroyed by a natural disaster or other act of God to repair, rebuild, or replace such building to eliminate or reduce the nonconforming features to the extent possible, without the need to obtain a variance as provided in § 15.2-2310. If such building is damaged greater than 50 percent and cannot be repaired, rebuilt or replaced except to restore it to its original nonconforming condition, the owner shall have the right to do so. The owner shall apply for a building permit and any work done to repair, rebuild or replace such building shall be in compliance with the provisions of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (§ 36-97 et seq.) and any work done to repair, rebuild or replace such building shall be in compliance with the provisions of the local flood plain regulations adopted as a condition of participation in the National Flood Insurance Program. Unless such building is repaired, rebuilt or replaced within two years of the date of the natural disaster or other act of God, such building shall only be repaired, rebuilt or replaced in accordance with the provisions of the zoning ordinance of the locality. However, if the nonconforming building is in an area under a federal disaster declaration and the building has been damaged or destroyed as a direct result of conditions that gave rise to the declaration, then the zoning ordinance shall provide for an additional two years for the building to be repaired, rebuilt or replaced as otherwise provided in this paragraph. For purposes of this section, "act of God" shall include any natural disaster or phenomena including a hurricane, tornado, storm, flood, high water, wind-driven water, tidal wave, earthquake or fire caused by lightning or wildfire. For purposes of this section, owners of property damaged by an accidental fire have the same rights to rebuild such property as if it were damaged by an act of God. Nothing herein shall be construed to enable the property owner to commit an arson under § 18.2-77 or 18.2-80, and obtain vested rights under this section.

F. Notwithstanding any local ordinance to the contrary, an owner of real property shall be permitted to replace an existing on-site sewage system for any existing building in the same general location on the property even if a new on-site sewage system would not otherwise be permitted in that location, unless access to a public sanitary sewer is available to the property. If access to a sanitary sewer system is available, then the connection to such system shall be required. Any new on-site system shall be installed in compliance with applicable regulations of the Department of Health in effect at the time of the installation.

G. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent a locality, after making a reasonable attempt to notify such property owner, from ordering the removal of a nonconforming sign that has been abandoned. For purposes of this section, a sign shall be considered abandoned if the business for which the sign was erected has not been in operation for a period of at least two years. Any locality may, by ordinance, provide that following the expiration of the two-year period any abandoned nonconforming sign shall be removed by the

owner of the property on which the sign is located, if notified by the locality to do so. If, following such two-year period, the locality has made a reasonable attempt to notify the property owner, the locality through its own agents or employees may enter the property upon which the sign is located and remove any such sign whenever the owner has refused to do so. The cost of such removal shall be chargeable to the owner of the property. Nothing herein shall prevent the locality from applying to a court of competent jurisdiction for an order requiring the removal of such abandoned nonconforming sign by the owner by means of injunction or other appropriate remedy.

H. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent the land owner or home owner from removing a valid nonconforming manufactured home from a mobile or manufactured home park and replacing that home with another comparable manufactured home that meets the current HUD manufactured housing code. In such mobile or manufactured home park, a single-section home may replace a single-section home and a multi-section home may replace a multi-section home. The owner of a valid nonconforming mobile or manufactured home not located in a mobile or manufactured home park may replace that home with a newer manufactured home, either single- or multi-section, that meets the current HUD manufactured housing code. Any such replacement home shall retain the valid nonconforming status of the prior home.



PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY

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May 6, 2025

TO: Board of County Supervisors

FROM: Michelle R. Robl
County Attorney *MRR*

Tara J. Mooney *TJM*
Assistant County Attorney *MRR*

AGENDA: June 3, 2025
PUBLIC HEARING

RE: COUNTY CODE UPDATE

Adopt annual amendments to the County Code, some of which are mandated by changes to state law: amendments to Chapter 8.1 (Commercial property Assessed Clean Energy (C-Pace) Financing Program), Chapter 13 (Motor Vehicles and Traffic), Chapter 16 (Miscellaneous Offenses), and Chapter 26 (Taxation); Initiate Amendment(s) to the Zoning Ordinance to address SB 992 (2025), SB 1267 (2025), and HB 2330 (2025), Initiate Amendments(s) to the Subdivision Ordinance to address SB 974 (2025), and Initiate Amendment(s) to the Prince William County Design and Construction Standards Manual and Prince William County Administrative Procedures Manual to address SB 974 (2025) and HB 2660 (2025).

Every year, the Board reviews the Prince William County Code of Ordinances ("County Code") following the General Assembly's general session, primarily to ensure that the County Code is amended to remain consistent with the Virginia Code given recent legislative changes. The General Assembly has concluded this year's general session and several Acts of the Assembly necessitate amendments to the County Code. This Office recommends the attached amendments to the County Code, as part of this annual review process. Amendments to the County Code, such as those proposed, require a duly advertised public hearing. The Board authorized the public hearing for June 3rd, 2025, and the public will be duly notified as required by law.

Many County Code sections, or provisions therein, are specifically enabled by corresponding Virginia Code sections. Often, these County Code sections must be in strict conformity with their corresponding Virginia Code sections to remain enforceable. Because several Virginia Code sections requiring strict conformity were amended by Acts of the General Assembly, those corresponding

County Code sections must also be amended. County Code Sections 8.1.2, 13-6, 13-131.1, 13-131.3, 13-135, 13-253, 13-254, 13-288, 13-288.1, 13-289, 13-291, 13-298, 13-404, 13-442, 16-8, 16-11, 16-25, 26-125, and 26-234 must be amended to remain in strict conformity with their corresponding Virginia Code sections. We also recommend adding new section 16-57.

In addition, we have included other proposed amendments to correct errors or inconsistencies discovered over the course of this year to ensure that the County Code is accurate, lawful, and consistent. Below is a brief description of the proposed changes, by Chapter.

I. Update to the County Code.

Chapter 8.1 (Commercial property Assessed Clean Energy (C-Pace) Financing Program) We recommend amending section 8.1-2 to reflect the updated definitions in the Virginia Code.

Chapter 13 (Motor Vehicles and Traffic) Amendments effective July 1, 2025, to Chapter 13 include several sections touching upon motor vehicle registration and highway safety. We propose parallel changes to the relevant sections of the County Code. These changes include the following: (a) adding mine rescue vehicles to the definition of emergency vehicles, (b) updated lighting requirements for mine rescue vehicles, (c) allowing vehicles used by social services when responding to a request for assistance from law enforcement to be equipped with amber warning lights, (d) allowing the court to dismiss certain summons or warrant for driving without a license where proof of compliance can be provided to the court on or before the court date, (e) adding violations for exhibition driving, (f) updating the language regarding seizure of a vehicle for racing to reflect the current Virginia Code, (g) adding clarifying language to allow a jury or a court trying a case without a jury to find the accused guilty of improper driving rather than reckless driving, (h) requiring that for any photo speed monitoring device placed in a school crossing zone, a such sworn certificate or facsimile thereof shall not be prima facie evidence of the facts contained therein unless such photographs, microphotographs, videotapes, or other recorded images, or documentation, depict or confirm a portable sign or tilt-over sign that is in position or blinking sign that is activated, indicating the school crossing zone, at the time of such vehicle speed violation, (i) stating that a violation of section 13-404 that results in serious bodily injury to, or the death of a vulnerable road user, who is lawfully crossing a highway is guilty of a class 1 misdemeanor, and (j) increasing the amount of property damage from \$1,500.00 to \$3,000.00 in which a law enforcement officer is required to send a report within 24 hours.

In addition, this office will coordinate with the County Executive and the Police Department about SB 1332 which allows for an increase in the limitation on charges for towing passenger vehicles. Pursuant to the County Code, we will recommend the Police Department refer the matter to the Towing Advisory Board for recommendations; this matter may then return to the Board for possible amendments to the County Code.

Chapter 16 (Miscellaneous Offenses) We recommend amending County Code §16-8 to reflect the current provisions of VA Code §18.2-57, in regards to assault and battery; amending County Code §16-11 to add a provision defining that for the purposes of this section “words” means the same as in Virginia Code §8.01-45; amending County Code §16-25 to add additional infractions and adding the definition of “diligent inquiry”. We also recommend adding to the County Code, §16-57 regarding use of a communications system to expose sexual or genital parts to a child over the age of 15 years as a class 1 misdemeanor. See proposed County Code §§16-82, 16-11, 16-25 and 16-57.

Chapter 25 (Subdivision) Recent action by the General Assembly also necessitates revisions to the County's Subdivision Ordinance. To amend the Subdivision Ordinance, the proposed amendment must first be referred to the Planning Commission for its recommendation, pursuant to Virginia Code Section 15.2-2253 and County Code Section 25-11. Consequently, we have also attached a draft resolution for the Board's consideration on June 3rd that would initiate the appropriate process for the Board to consider such amendments in the future.

Chapter 26 (Taxation) The amendments effective July 1, 2025, include clarifying reporting requirements of accommodations providers in County Code §26-125 and adding to County Code §26-234 that property on which a new structure is being built to replace or rebuild a church or other building used for religious worship shall be exempt from taxation.

Chapter 32 (Zoning) Recent action by the General Assembly also necessitates revisions to the County's Zoning Ordinance. These revisions can only be made through the usual process for zoning text amendments that are referred to the County's Planning Commission. Consequently, we have also attached a draft resolution for the Board's consideration on June 3rd that would initiate the appropriate process for the Board to consider such amendments in the future.

Prince William County Design and Construction Standards Manual (DCSM) and Prince William County Administrative Procedures Manual (APM) During the 2025 General Assembly session, the Governor signed SB 974 which provides a definition of "designated agent" and relates to the review of plats, site plans, and plans of development, and further relates to actions by the designated agent, and amends Virginia Code §§ 15.2-2201, 15.2-2241, 15.2-2245, 15.2-2254, 15.2-2258, 15.2-2259, 15.2-2260, 15.2-2261, 15.2-2269, 15.2-2270, 15.2-2271, and 15.2-2307, and HB 2660 which amends Virginia Code §§ 15.2-2259, and 15.2-2260 to address the timeframe, process, and requirements for the review of subdivision plats and site plans. These amendments necessitate changes to the Prince William County Design and Construction Standards Manual ("DCSM"), and the Prince William County Administrative Procedures Manual ("APM"). We have included in the draft resolution for the Board's consideration on June 3rd, initiation of amendments to the DCSM and APM based on SB 974 and HB 2660.

We have attached to this memo the County Code amendments and an Ordinance for the June 3rd, 2025, Board Meeting. Please let us know if we can provide additional information. We will be available to discuss the proposed changes and address any questions during the June 3rd, 2025, Board meeting.

ATTACHMENTS:

Ordinance to Adopt Annual Amendments to the County Code
Amendments to the County Code
Resolution to Initiate Zoning Text Amendments, Refer Proposed
Amendment(s) to the Subdivision Ordinance to the Planning Commission,
including the proposed amendments to the subdivision ordinance, and
Initiate Amendment(s) to the Prince William County Design and Construction
Standards Manual and the Prince William County Administrative Procedures
Manual
Chapter 100 of the 2025 Acts of Assembly
Chapter 171 of the 2025 Acts of Assembly
Chapter 512 of the 2025 Acts of Assembly
Chapter 587 of the 2025 Acts of Assembly
Chapter 594 of the 2025 Acts of Assembly

cc:

County Executive
Deputy County Executives
Chief of Police
Finance Director
Director of Planning
Director of Development Services
Director of Public Works
Director of Social Services
Director of Transportation
Commonwealth's Attorney