



Date of Meeting: September 18, 2025

TOWN OF LEESBURG
PLANNING COMMISSION WORK SESSION

Subject: Zoning Ordinance Rewrite

Staff Contact: Michael Watkins, Zoning Administrator
Brian Boucher, Deputy Director
James David, Director

Purpose: Further discussion on “Dive List” items related to Article II Districts

Background: At their July 20, 2023 Public Meeting, the Planning Commission received an introductory presentation on the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite project. In October 2023, representatives from Kendig Keast Collaborative (Consultant) presented their code audit of the Town’s current Zoning Ordinance and broad recommendations for changes at a joint meeting of the Planning Commission and Town Council. In February and September 2024, the consultants delivered their first draft of the new Ordinance via the Town’s enCodePlus online zoning platform and provided an overview of concepts in each Article to the Planning Commission. The first draft of the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite was released on March 6, 2025 for a 60-day public review period. All Planning Commission and public presentations and the code audit are available on the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite project page at: leesburgva.gov/zoningordinancerewrite.

Issues: The Planning Commission has identified topics for a deeper dive and further discussion during their review of the first draft Zoning Ordinance Rewrite. These “Dive List” items have been documented and included as Attachment 2. At the meeting on September 18, 2025, discussion will focus on the following italicized Dive List items related to Article II Districts.

Section 5-3: Industrial Research Park (IR).

The IR District supports office and industrial development while maintaining significant vegetative buffering between non-industrial and industrial areas. Expansion of IR zoning is restricted, except for public service facilities. Examples of use categories permitted by-right or via special exception in IR include:

- Public, Institutional, and Civic Uses
- Industrial Uses
- Commercial Uses
- Utility and Communication Uses

The main difference between the IR District and the Innovation Center (IC) District is that IR accommodates office and industrial uses in a traditional industrial setting, while IC introduces opportunities for residential as a complementary use to employment, commercial, and civic uses. Uses that have a stronger industrial character and impact, such as data center or mini-warehouse, are allowed in IR but not in IC.

The Commission wanted to revisit data centers, which is a specific land use in the Industrial Uses category. IR is the only zoning district that allows data centers in the proposed ZO Rewrite. The Council made data centers a special exception use on May 14, 2024 (Ordinance No. 2024-O-012). ZO Rewrite Section 26-4 details application submittal requirements and process for all special exception uses, including data centers. There are no data center-specific application submittal requirements in the ZO Rewrite.

Data centers are subject to use-specific standards to ensure compatibility with the Town's character in terms of size, height, bulk, location of structures, and mitigation of potential nuisances on adjacent properties (see Attachment 3 Data Center Use Standards). These data center use standards were adopted by the Council on August 8, 2023 (Ordinance No. 2023-O-017). The Planning Commission worked on these data center use standards at their regular meetings held March 16, 2023, April 6, 2023, May 18, 2023 and June 15, 2023. There was input from industry, environmental groups, and the Town's Environmental Advisory Commission. **Staff supports keeping the data center use standards as-is since they were recently adopted and reflect significant input from stakeholders. Staff is open to discussion on additional application requirements, such as a preliminary water consumption analysis, as part of a special exception application for a data center use.**

Section 5-4 and 5-6: Mixed-Use District (MU) and Innovation Center District (IC)

The MU District supports compact, pedestrian-friendly mixed-use developments that serve as Town focal points. It accommodates both greenfield (new) and retrofit (redeveloped) projects, allowing residential, civic, and commercial uses alongside community spaces. There are "Use Mix Standards" to ensure a good balance between office, commercial, and residential uses. Developments in the MU District require a phasing plan to ensure a balanced mix of uses and adequate infrastructure improvements.

The IC District is a brand new district that fosters a mix of residential, office, research, and laboratory uses in a greener setting than traditional industrial zones. It includes moderate vegetative buffering near non-industrial districts.

The Commission wanted to clarify the difference between the MU and IC Districts. In general, MU puts slightly more emphasis on including residential as a component of development. This is carried forward in the use tables by allowing more residential uses by-right in MU than in IC. In addition, MU District "Use Mix Standards" require a minimum percentage of residential in every project. Note that a minimum percentage of nonresidential is also required to ensure that 100 percent residential projects are not supported in the MU.

The IC District places more emphasis on nonresidential uses, especially those that generate employment, than the MU. For example, contractor, flex, research and development, and production uses are all limited uses in the IC but not allowed in the MU. There are no "Use Mix Standards" in the current draft of the IC District.

A few more key differences between the MU and IC districts are listed in the following table:

Standard	MU	IC
Community Amenities and Open Space	25%	30%
Maximum Density (du/ac)	40	24
Minimum District Area	n/a	5 ac.
Height (maximum)	45 ft./60 ft.*	50 ft.
*The two dimensions shown are the maximum heights when adjoining residential districts or uses and not adjoining residential districts or uses, respectively.		

Staff supports keeping MU and IC as separate and distinct zoning districts. Staff will review the draft Zoning Map at the September 18 Planning Commission Work Session to identify what areas of Town are proposed for IR, MU and IC zoning designations.

Section 6-4: Open Space and Parks District (OSP)

The OSP District is a brand new district that preserves natural areas and parks, preventing exposure to natural hazards and protecting environmental and historical resources. Natural amenities such as the W&OD trail or other green spaces have been designated OSP. In general, parcels designated OSP are open space and parks owned or managed by a government entity. **Staff reviewed the draft Zoning Map and did not identify any additional lands to be included in the OSP District. Staff does not support putting privately owned or maintained green spaces, such as HOA open space, in OSP. These are typically already regulated by adopted proffers for the related development.**

Next Steps

Tentative PC Zoning Ordinance Rewrite Work Plan

#	Topic	Commission Meeting Date
1	ZO Rewrite Work Plan	January 16, 2025
2	Zoning Map	February 6, 2025
3	Release of Draft Text	March 6, 2025
4	Article 1 General Provisions	
5	Article 2 Zoning Districts and Dimensional Standards	April 3, 2025
6	Article 3 Use Regulations	April 17, 2025
7	Article 3 Use Regulations (continued)	May 1, 2025
8	Article 3 Use Regulations (continued)	May 15, 2025
9	None	June 5, 2025
10	Recap Articles 1-3, Article 4 Development Standards	July 10, 2025
11	Article 5 Review Bodies, Article 6 Review Procedures	July 17, 2025
12	Article 7 Nonconformities, Article 8 Enforcement, Article 9 Word Usage	August 7, 2025
13	No Meeting	August 21, 2025
14	Recap Articles 4-9, Deep Dive List	September 4, 2025
15	Deep Dive List (continued)	September 18, 2025
16	Deep Dive List (continued)	October 2, 2025
17	Deep Dive List (continued), Public Comment Report	October 16, 2025
18	Loose Ends	November 6, 2025
19	Public Hearing	January 15, 2026

Online Zoning Platform (enCodePlus)

The draft Zoning Ordinance Rewrite was available until May 5, 2025 via enCodePlus at the following website address: <https://online.encodeplus.com/regs/leesburg-va/>. Planning Commissioners and public are strongly encouraged to review and make comments on the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite via this online platform.

The September 18, 2025 Planning Commission Meeting is another of many opportunities throughout the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite project for members of the Planning Commission and the public to provide input.

Attachments

1. Public Comment Report
2. Future Discussion Items (Dive List)
3. ZO Rewrite Data Center Use Standards