



Date of Meeting: November 6, 2025

TOWN OF LEESBURG
PLANNING COMMISSION WORK SESSION

Subject: Zoning Ordinance Rewrite

Staff Contact: Michael Watkins, Zoning Administrator
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Purpose: Further discussion on “Dive List” items and Placeholder sections

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 1. At the meeting on November 6, 2025, discussion will focus on the last Dive List item related to Telecommunications standards.

The first draft of the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite released on March 6, 2025 had a few placeholders for sections that were not quite ready for public review. Those placeholder sections included attainable housing, signs, tree preservation, miscellaneous use standards, and Crescent District. The Commission discussed draft attainable housing regulations as well as sign regulations at their October 16, 2025 meeting and formed two subcommittees to continue working on those sections. Draft tree preservation standards, miscellaneous use standards, and Crescent District zoning will be reviewed at the November 6, 2025 regular meeting. Subcommittee recommendations on attainable housing and sign regulations are anticipated for the Commission’s December 4, 2025 meeting.

The project consultant has delivered a Public Comment Summary Report that identifies themes and key takeaways from public input over the life of the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite project to date (See Attachment 2). This report includes public feedback from focus groups, workshops, open houses, and enCodePlus, and will be a helpful tool as the Commission enters the final stages of their work on the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite over the next three to four months. Staff is anticipating releasing a second draft of the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite in mid-November that incorporates revisions based on relevant Commission and public input.

Dive List

Division 15 - Telecommunications

Division 15 of the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite regulates telecommunications facilities to balance community communication needs with protection of public health, safety, welfare, and aesthetics (See Attachment 3). The division encourages undergrounding and visual minimization of facilities, co-location on existing towers to reduce proliferation, and the use of design and screening techniques that reduce adverse visual impacts and potential hazards. The standards apply to all above-ground telecommunication structures except amateur radio services, which are exempt. Facilities must comply with size, setback, fencing, lighting, and removal requirements, and must align with applicable state and local development conditions and federal modification rules.

The ordinance establishes detailed design and dimensional standards for various telecommunications facility types including small cell, pole-mounted, rooftop, monopole, and transmission tower installations. Small cells must stay within strict volume limits; rooftop antennas are limited in height and roof coverage and must use stealth or camouflage techniques; and monopoles or towers cannot exceed 150 feet or be located within a half mile of historic districts. Both monopoles and transmission towers over 50 feet, or those not supporting small cells, require a special exception with justification demonstrating that co-location alternatives are infeasible. All facilities must meet national engineering standards for construction and wind resistance, and review procedures follow state wireless infrastructure zoning laws, with the Virginia Code prevailing in any procedural conflicts.

Placeholder Sections

Division 19 – Tree Canopy

Division 19 of the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite establishes detailed standards and procedures for tree canopy preservation, planting, and replacement in the Town to promote environmental quality, public health, and aesthetic value (See Attachment 4). Administration of these requirements involves review and approval of Landscape and Tree Preservation Plans by both the Zoning Administrator and Chief Engineer, and all development subject to this Division must submit a landscape plan. Plantings are required to meet the standards of the Town's Design and Construction Standards Manual (DCSM), with preference given to native and environmentally tolerant species. Installation timing is generally at initial occupancy, though limited deferrals of up to six months are allowed under specific circumstances such as seasonal constraints, material unavailability, or construction/phasing limitations, and deferred installations require a bond to guarantee completion.

The draft ordinance emphasizes preservation of existing tree canopy while providing for replacement or new planting where necessary. Tree canopy requirements are calculated based on projected coverage 20 years after development, with minimum percentages specified by zoning district. Certain areas, including lakes, ponds, stormwater facilities, and bona fide silvicultural activities, are exempt from these requirements. Reasonable deviations from canopy coverage may be approved by the Zoning Administrator in cases of hardship, wetland preservation, or development feasibility, and developers may contribute to a Tree Canopy Fund to satisfy requirements that cannot be met on-site. A tree preservation target is established to

ensure a minimum portion of the canopy requirement is met through preservation, with deviations subject to review and alternative site design considerations.

The draft ordinance provides a system of credits for tree preservation and planting, including base and additional credits for actions that provide environmental, ecological, air quality, wildlife habitat, or climate-related benefits. Specific credit multipliers reward preservation of forested areas, high-value individual trees, or plantings that support stormwater management, pollutant reduction, or wildlife. Trees planted for canopy credit must meet nursery standards and guidelines, while certain prohibited species or partial credit species are identified in the DCSM. Seedlings may also be counted in accordance with DCSM rules. These provisions encourage both the protection of mature trees and the strategic planting of new trees to achieve long-term canopy coverage.

Miscellaneous Use Standards

The following Article III Use Standards (part of Divisions 11 and 12) are proposed additions or revisions to the first draft of the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite that was released in March 2025.

1. Parking Structure.

- a. Access. The site shall have two points of access to a public road.
- b. Long-Term Bicycle Parking. A room, cage, or locker shall be provided for long-term storage of a minimum of ten bicycles.
- c. Bus Shelters. A minimum of one bus shelter shall be provided adjacent to the parking structure. Existing bus shelters within 1,250 feet count towards meeting this standard.
- d. Commercial Vehicles. The long term or overnight parking of commercial vehicles shall be prohibited. This provision shall not be interpreted to prohibit the parking of vehicles actively engaged in providing emergency service, commercial vehicles that may be otherwise permissible during special events, or the commercial vehicle of a commuter.
- e. Electronic Vehicle Parking. A minimum of five percent of the total parking spaces provided shall have access to electric vehicle charging infrastructure.
- f. Operating Condition. Such parking facilities shall be used solely for the parking of vehicles in operating condition. No motor vehicle repair work except emergency service shall be permitted in association with such a parking facility.

2. Community Service.

1. Maximum Floor Area. In a residential zoning district, the structure housing a community service shall be a maximum of 6,000 square feet in gross floor area.
2. HOA Facilities. Clubhouses, pools, courts, and other assembly areas for the use of residences are exempt from the special exception requirement.

3. Educational Facility - Public or Private Elementary, Middle, or High Schools.

1. All off-street parking and loading spaces, swimming pools, tennis courts, and similar facilities shall be effectively screened and shall not be located in any required yard in all residential districts.
2. Any on-site pedestrian circulation shall be designed so as to connect to any existing or proposed public use trails on adjacent properties which are designed to abut or connect to the public school site.

3. For outdoor lighting for recreational and athletic fields, see Sec. 20-3, Lighting Standards.
4. **Medical Facilities – Hospital.**
 1. Setback. The minimum setback for principal structures is the greater of:
 - a. 100 feet from property lines; or
 - b. The minimum yard requirements of the applicable zoning district; or
 - c. The adjacent zoning district setback requirements; and
 2. The minimum setback for accessory structures and parking is the greater of:
 - a. 25 feet from any rights-of-way; or
 - b. 50 feet from any property lines adjoining residential zoning districts; or
 - c. The minimum yard requirements of adjoining zoning districts.
5. **Outdoor Entertainment.**
 1. Outdoor entertainment areas must provide an enhanced buffer from residential uses.
 2. The hours of operation shall not exceed 7 a.m. to 11 p.m.

Section 5-7 Crescent District

The draft Crescent District (CD) implements the Crescent District Master Plan’s goals for commercial growth, redevelopment, and mixed-use urban design (See Attachment 5). It maintains existing uses along commercial corridors while accommodating retail, residential, office, and civic development in designated activity centers. The CD also allows residential neighborhoods, open space, parks, and government facilities. The district serves as an architectural control area to ensure building forms and streetscapes complement the Old and Historic District. CD standards apply broadly, while six subdistricts (CD-AC, CD-PAC, CD-CC, CD-RN, CD-OSP, CD-GC) provide tailored regulations based on context and intended use.

Crescent Subdistricts

1. **Activity Center (CD-AC):** High-density, walkable mixed-use nodes at strategic intersections. Focus on public spaces, active ground floors, and human-scale streets.
2. **Planned Activity Center (CD-PAC):** Interim designation supporting existing businesses and limited by-right changes until consolidation for CD-AC redevelopment.
3. **Commercial Corridor (CD-CC):** Moderate-scale commercial and office development, maintaining pedestrian-friendly streets, with potential for auto-oriented uses.
4. **Residential Neighborhood (CD-RN):** Diverse housing types, compact blocks, connected streets, parks, and neighborhood-serving commercial uses.
5. **Government Center (CD-GC):** Public uses including schools, government offices, and community facilities.
6. **Open Space and Parks (CD-OSP):** Areas reserved for recreational or environmental purposes.

See Attachment 6, Draft Crescent District Zoning Map, for subdistrict boundaries within the Crescent District planning area.

General Crescent District Standards

- **Land Use:** Uses are categorized as permitted (P), limited (L), minor or major special exception (M/S), or prohibited (--) per Table 10-2-3, *Crescent District Uses*. Existing lawful uses are exempt until they lapse; adaptive reuse is regulated.
- **Building Alterations:** Minor expansions (<10%) of existing buildings are exempt from full CD architectural standards; larger expansions comply with all standards. Maintenance and repairs are exempt.
- **Parking and Loading:** Off-street parking is required per Sec. 18-2, with credits for on-street, garages, and shared parking. Loading spaces may be on-street, shared, or intermittent for smaller buildings.
- **Landscaping and Screening:** Required per Secs. 19-2 and 19-7, with flexibility for mixed-use unified sites. Parking lot landscaping includes trees, shrubs, or masonry walls.
- **Outdoor Lighting:** Light poles limited to 15 feet.
- **Mechanical Equipment:** Rooftop and ground-mounted equipment must be screened from public view.
- **Architectural Standards:** Emphasize human scale, facade articulation, traditional hierarchy (base, middle, cap), window transparency, roof variety, and compatible materials (brick, stone, wood, fiber cement, limited metal/stucco). Corporate architecture must blend with historic character.
- **Parking Structures:** Must follow facade articulation standards, have multiple entrances, and conform to precedent imagery.
- **Streets:** Designed per Crescent District Master Plan, publicly or privately maintained, with potential modifications for pedestrian and vehicle circulation.
- **Review Procedures:** Administrative review for by-right projects; legislative review for rezonings; minor modifications to dimensional standards may be allowed to accommodate site conditions or superior design.

Crescent District - Activity Center

- Supports high-density mixed-use redevelopment at key intersections.
- Requires rezoning from CD-PAC with parcels totaling ≥ 15 acres.
- Lot/building standards include minimum community amenities (10% of site), density limits (30–100 du/ac), nonresidential FAR up to 2.0, and frontage zone depth of 0–10 ft.
- Mix of uses: 30–60% residential, 35–65% nonresidential, minimum 5% civic uses.
- Streets, parking, and alleys designed for walkability; setbacks from perimeter and frontage zones prescribed.
- Residential standards require articulated facades, no garage doors on primary facades, varied roof forms, and step-backs to reduce mass.
- Nonresidential/mixed-use buildings require minimum 12-foot ground floors, frequent entrances, fenestration, and features promoting social interaction.
- Rezoning criteria emphasize circulation, open space, parking, landscaping, architecture, and noise mitigation.

Crescent District – Planned Activity Center

- Interim zoning to support existing businesses and limited building expansions (up to 10% of gross floor area).

- Serves as a transitional stage to CD-AC, with similar dimensional and setback standards but lower density (max 1.5 FAR) and smaller building heights (up to 45 ft).
- Vehicle access and streetscape requirements consistent with CD standards.

Crescent District – Commercial Corridor

- Maintains existing commercial uses while allowing moderate redevelopment and building expansions along Market Street and Catoctin Circle.
- Maximum density of 1.5 FAR for nonresidential; up to 10 dwelling units on upper floors.
- Lot standards include community amenity (20%) and open space (15%) minimums.
- Building standards emphasize façade articulation, horizontal plane changes for long walls, recessed and ornamented entrances, minimum 12-foot ground floors, and glazing requirements.
- Streets, alleys, and vehicle access follow CD Master Plan and DCSM standards.

Crescent District – Residential Neighborhood

- Promotes housing diversity within connected, walkable streets and small blocks.
- Maximum density: 22 du/ac. Lot and frontage standards similar to other subdistricts, with setbacks for single-family and multifamily units.
- Residential architectural standards ensure façade articulation, projected/recessed elements, no garages on primary facades, roof variation, and foundation wall masonry/stone appearance.
- Vehicle access primarily via rear alleys; street and alley design per DCSM; connections to existing/planned streets required.
- Amenities and open space integrated into neighborhood design, supporting walkability and community interaction.

Crescent District – Government Center

- Supports public uses such as schools, government offices, and community facilities.
- Lot and building standards include minimum community amenity (20%) and open space (15%), with no maximum density.
- Frontage and setback standards ensure adequate separation from other districts while maintaining accessibility and aesthetic quality.

Crescent District – Open Space and Parks

- Preserves natural areas and provides land for active and passive recreation, including parks, trails, athletic fields, and greenways.
- Applied to lands suitable for open space and parks due to topography, soils, vegetation, wildlife habitat, scenic value, or flood hazards; generally remains undeveloped.
- Resource Protection: Aims to prevent development in hazard-prone areas, protect natural and historic resources, and maintain visual and physical relief from urban development.
- Standards and Uses: Uses are regulated per Sec. 10-2; buildings are limited to 35 ft. in height, with minimum 20 ft. setbacks on all sides; no minimum lot area required.

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	
4	Article 2 Zoning Districts and Dimensional Standards	April 3, 2025
5	Article 3 Use Regulations	April 17, 2025
6	Article 3 Use Regulations (continued)	May 1, 2025
7	Article 3 Use Regulations (continued)	May 15, 2025
8	None	June 5, 2025
9	Recap Articles 1-3, Article 4 Development Standards	July 10, 2025
10	Article 5 Review Bodies, Article 6 Review Procedures	July 17, 2025
11	Article 7 Nonconformities, Article 8 Enforcement, Article 9 Word Usage	August 7, 2025
12	No Meeting	August 21, 2025
13	Recap Articles 4-9, Deep Dive List	September 4, 2025
14	Deep Dive List (continued)	September 18, 2025
15	Deep Dive List (continued)	October 2, 2025
16	Deep Dive List (continued)	October 16, 2025
17	Placeholder Sections, Public Comment Report	November 6, 2025
18	Placeholder Sections	November 20, 2025
19	Placeholder Sections	December 4, 2025
20	Placeholder Sections	December 18, 2025
21	Public Hearing	February 5, 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/>. The November 6, 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. Future Discussion Items (Dive List and Placeholders)
2. Public Comment Summary Report
3. Draft Telecommunications Facility Standards
4. Draft Tree Canopy Standards
5. Draft Crescent District Zoning Text
6. Draft Crescent District Zoning Map