



Date of Meeting: November 20, 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 Crescent District and Public Comment Report

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**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](https://leesburgva.gov/zoningordinancerewrite).

**Issues:** 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. Subcommittee recommendations on attainable housing and sign regulations are anticipated for the Commission's December 4, 2025 meeting. Draft tree preservation standards, miscellaneous use standards, and Crescent District zoning were discussed at the November 6, 2025 regular meeting. Continued discussion on the Crescent District zoning will occur at the November 20, 2025 regular meeting.

A Public Comment Summary Report authored by the consultant was circulated at the November 6, 2025 meeting. The report identifies themes and key takeaways from public input over the life of the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite project to date (See Attachment 1). 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 months. The Commission will discuss the consultant's Public Comment Report at the November 20, 2025 regular meeting.

Staff is anticipating releasing a second draft of the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite on November 14, 2025 for a 45-day public review period that includes all placeholder sections and incorporates revisions based on relevant Commission and public input.

### 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 2). 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 3, 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.

*Subdistrict: Crescent District - Activity Center*

- Supports high-density mixed-use redevelopment at key intersections.
- Requires rezoning from CD-PAC with parcels totaling  $\geq 15$  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.

*Subdistrict: 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.

*Subdistrict: 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.

*Subdistrict: 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.

*Subdistrict: 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.

*Subdistrict: 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.

Public Comment Report

The consultant's Public Comment Report summarizes feedback from residents, business owners, developers, civic groups, and professionals. The report identifies major themes such as preserving Leesburg's character and environment, clarifying and modernizing regulations, balancing flexibility with predictability, and improving the development review process.

Across stakeholder groups, several cross-cutting issues emerged. Residents emphasized preserving neighborhood character, green space, and historic assets while limiting density, height, and short-term rentals. Developers and business owners sought a faster, more predictable review process, fewer restrictive standards, and flexibility for mixed-use and flex space development. Technical professionals highlighted the need for modernized parking, sustainability, and tree preservation standards. Civic and preservation groups stressed better environmental protections, clearer historic district rules, and improved pedestrian safety.

The report concludes that the Town faces three core tensions: (1) efficiency versus public oversight, (2) density as both a tool and a perceived threat, and (3) market flexibility versus regulatory certainty. The draft ordinance responds to these by reorganizing its structure, introducing new districts and clearer standards, expanding administrative approvals, and adding flexibility through tools like shared parking, minor special exceptions, and sustainability incentives. It also incorporates stronger tree preservation, clarified use regulations, and stricter

short-term rental provisions. Together, these revisions aim to modernize the ordinance while balancing community values with development feasibility.

**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	Crescent District, Public Comment Report	November 20, 2025
19	Subcommittee Recommendations: Attainable Housing, Signs	December 4, 2025
20	Questions/comments on ZO Rewrite Draft II	December 18, 2025
21	Questions/comments on ZO Rewrite Draft II	January 15, 2026
22	Public Hearing	February 5, 2026

Online Zoning Platform (enCodePlus)

The draft Zoning Ordinance Rewrite is available via enCodePlus at the following website address: <https://online.encodeplus.com/reg/leesburg-va/>. The November 20, 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 Summary Report
2. Draft Crescent District Zoning Text
3. Draft Crescent District Zoning Map