

# Pittsylvania County Zoning Ordinance Update

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**Public Review and Open House**

*Thursday, December 14, 2023*

**PITTSYLVANIA**  
COUNTY, VIRGINIA



An aerial photograph of a river valley. The river flows through a lush green landscape, with a dam visible in the distance. The sky is hazy, and the overall scene is serene and natural.

# Agenda

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- Introduction to Zoning
- Project Progress & Schedule
- Draft Zoning Ordinance Structure and Major Changes
- Exit Survey

# What is a Zoning Ordinance?

A Zoning Ordinance defines **how land in Pittsylvania County can be used and developed**.

Zoning is permitted by Code of Virginia. Some elements of the Zoning Ordinance **must match state regulations exactly**; most others can be defined by the County.

## Zoning Ordinance

- Regulates use of land
- Set standards for structure size, height, area & location
- Ensures light, air, convenience & safety
- Facilitates public services & amenities

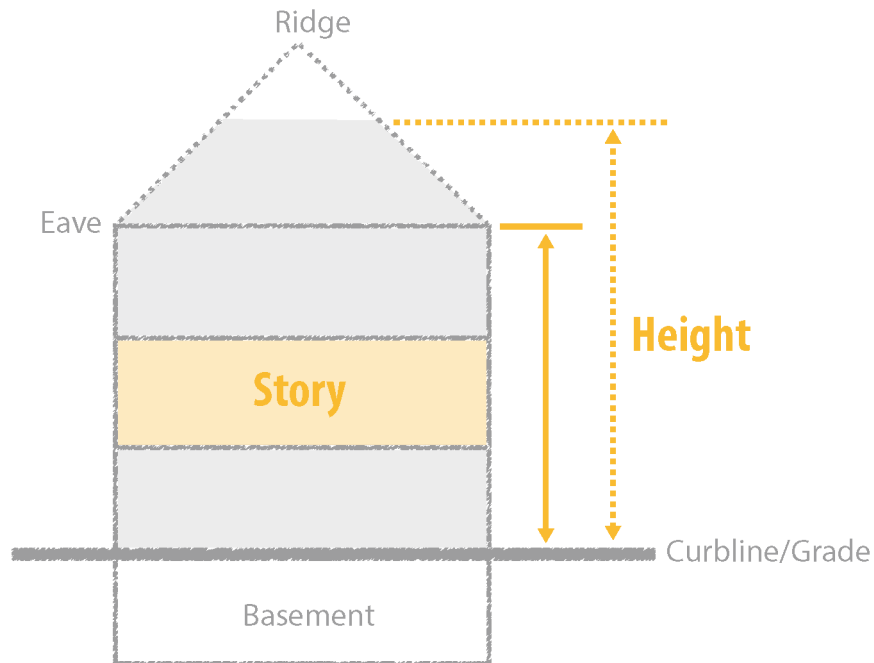
# Why Update the Zoning Ordinance?

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| Comply     | Comply with <i>Code of Virginia</i> requirements   |
| Clarify    | Clarify language and make the ordinance understandable                                     |
| Modernize  | Address modern issues, uses, and best practices  |
| Streamline | Streamline content to be more user-friendly, easy to find and interpret.                   |
| Revise     | Consider Comprehensive Plan recommendations and include provisions to achieve those goals. |

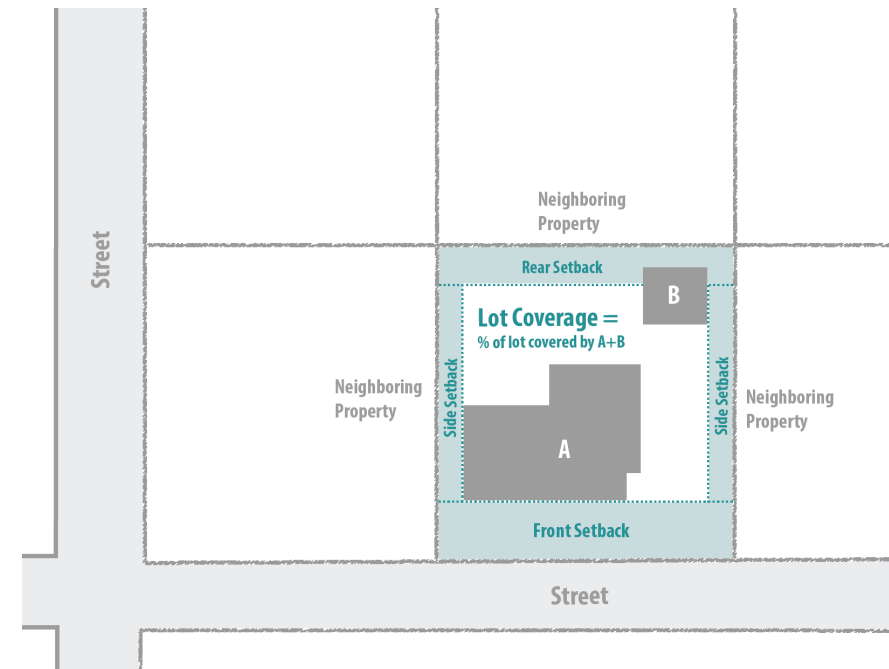
# What Does Zoning Look Like?

## *District Standards*

### Height Regulations



### Setback and Lot Coverage Regulations





# What Does Zoning Look Like?

## *District Uses*



# What Does Zoning Look Like?

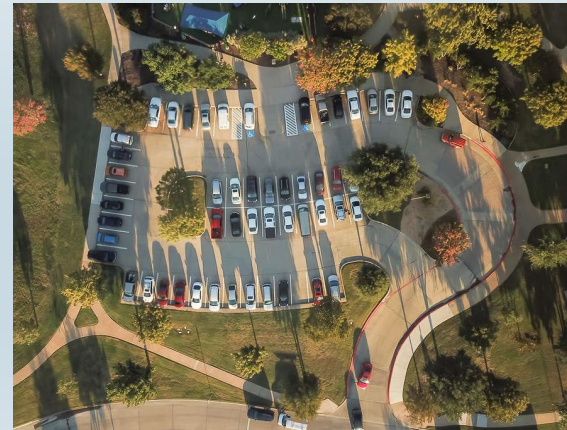
## *Community Design*



Signs



Lighting

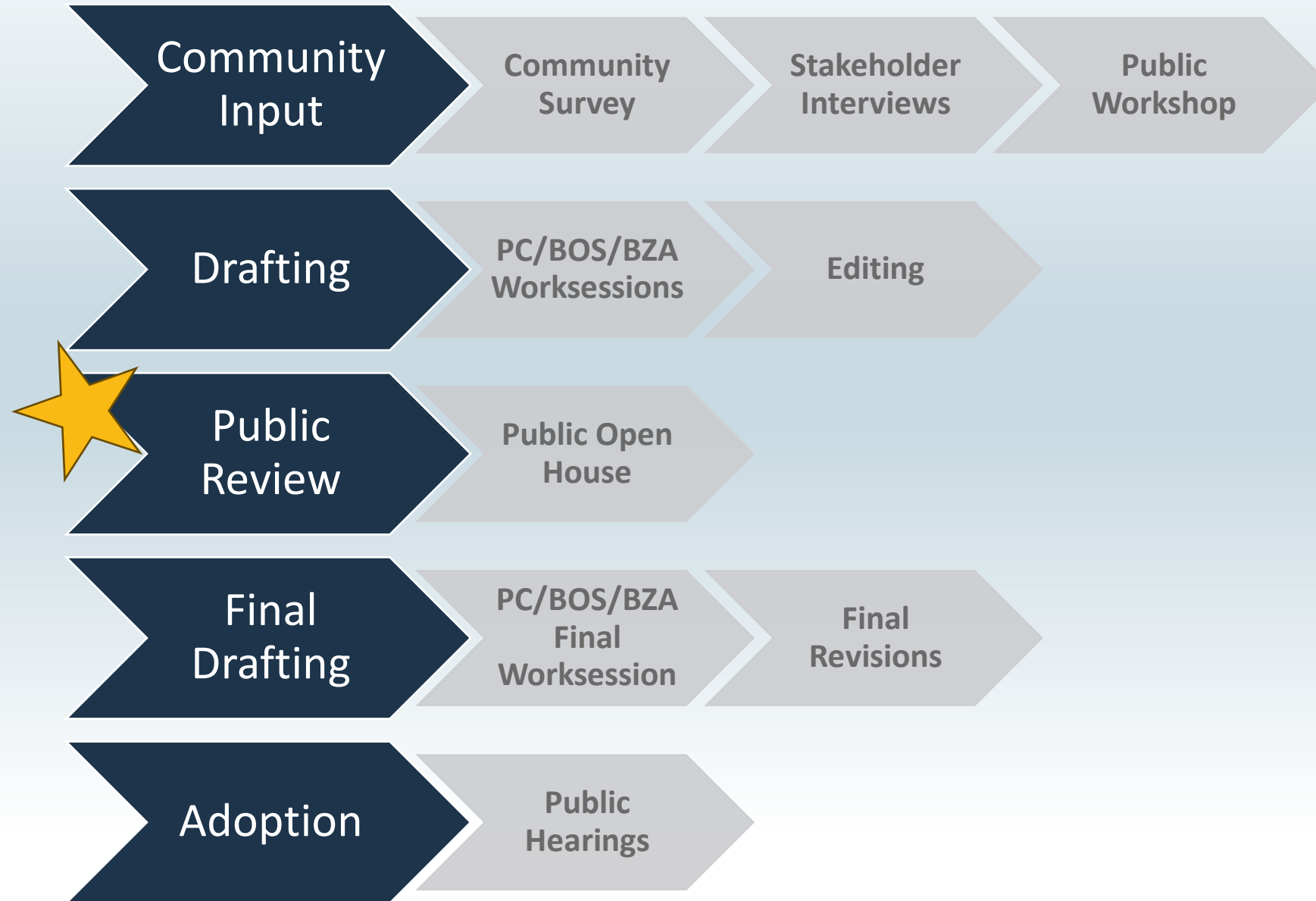


Parking



Landscaping,  
Buffering, and  
Screening

# Process to Date & Next Steps





# Proposed Ordinance Structure

**Article I** | In General

**Article II** | Administration

**Article III** | Permits and Applications

**Article IV** | District Standards

**Article V** | Overlay Zoning Districts

**Article VI** | Use Matrix

**Article VII** | Use Performance Standards

**Article VIII** | Community Design Standards

**Article IX** | Nonconforming Uses, Lots, and Structures

**Article X** | Definitions

# Changes Summary

## Draft Zoning Ordinance Changes

The following summary highlights major changes to the Draft Pittsylvania County Zoning Ordinance proposed to date, as advised by the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, and Board of Zoning Appeals since the start of the project in August 2022. Seven joint worksessions were held in 2022 and 2023 to direct, review, and edit the proposed Draft Zoning Ordinance.

This list is not exhaustive; it excludes editorial changes and constitutes the most substantive changes.

## General Reorganization

- The existing Ordinance was analyzed for cohesive flow; clarity; compliance with the Code of Virginia; and compliance with planning and zoning best practices. Input from Pittsylvania County staff, along with community input gathered during the community engagement phase of the project, was also reviewed and considered. This analysis and input resulted in the rearrangement (combining of articles and sections to provide like-material in one place), revision (changing of content/text for clarity, streamlining, and Code of Virginia compliance), and addition and/or removal of items (for Code of Virginia compliance and appropriateness for Pittsylvania's County's needs).
- The existing Ordinance has been reorganized for simplicity and to provide a more user-friendly structure. The Draft Ordinance is organized as follows:
  - Article I: In General
  - Article II: Administration
  - Article III: Permits and Applications
  - Article IV: District Standards
  - Article V: Overlay Zoning Districts
  - Article VI: Use Matrix
  - Article VII: Use Performance Standards
  - Article VIII: Community Design Standards
  - Article IX: Nonconforming Uses, Lots, and Structures
  - Article X: Definitions

## Article I: In General

Article I, In General, provides information on the authority, purpose, and applicability of the Zoning Ordinance, among other regulations. This Article is largely built based on the requirements of the Code of Virginia. Major changes include:

- Expanded the stated purpose of the Zoning Ordinance to include all items supplied in the Code of Virginia.
- Added text to require conformity with the Zoning Ordinance.
- Clarified and consolidated text addressing Ordinance interpretation to streamline content and to align more fully with the Code of Virginia.

# Article I In General

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## Based on State Code

- Code of Virginia, Title 15.2, Chapter 22
- Regulate land development
- Orderly subdivision
- State Code references

## General Management

- Conformity with ordinance
- Conflicting ordinances
- Severability
- Effective date

# Article II Administration

Appointments  
Powers & Duties  
Meeting  
Procedures



Zoning Administrator



Planning Commission



Board of Zoning Appeals

Enforcement



Violations



Fees & Fines

# Article III

## Permits and Applications

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- Zoning Text & Map Amendments
- Conditional Zoning and Proffers
- Special Use Permits
- Variances
- Site Development Plans
- Zoning Permits
- Certificates of Occupancy
- Written Determinations
- Appeals
- Public Hearings and Notifications



# Article IV

## District Standards

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- Establishment and Purpose
- General District Standards
- Agricultural Districts
- Residential Districts
- Commercial Districts
- Industrial Districts
- Planned Development Districts
- Conservation Districts

|  | A-1   |
|--|---|
| <b>Minimum Lot Area</b>  |   |
| All lots   | 1 acre <sup>37</sup>                        |
| <b>Density</b>   |   |
| All lots   | 1 residential unit per 1 acre <sup>38</sup> |
| <b>Minimum Required Setbacks</b>   |   |
| <i>Front (includes all structures)</i>   |   |
| Lots fronting a public road (setback measured from the edge of the ROW)  | 35 ft.                                      |
| Lots fronting a private road (setback measured from centerline)  | 60 ft.                                      |
| <i>Side<sup>39</sup></i>   |   |
| Principal structures   | 35 ft.                                      |
| Farm animal structures*  | 50 ft.                                      |
| Accessory structures   | 10 ft.                                      |
| <i>Rear</i>  |   |
| Principal structures   | 20 ft.                                      |
| Farm animal structures*  | 50 ft.                                      |
| Accessory structures   | 10 ft.                                      |
| <b>Maximum Structure Height</b>  |   |
| Principal structures   | 40 ft.                                      |
| Accessory structures   | 40 ft.                                      |
| <i>* Farm animal structures do not include intensive livestock structures, which are a separate use and have use standards outlined in Article VII, Use Performance Standards.</i> |   |

|   | R-E                            | R-1                                | RC-1                              |
|---|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Minimum Lot Area</b>                       |                                |                                    |                                   |
| All lots                                      | 5 acres                        | -                                  | -                                 |
| Public Water <i>AND</i> Sewer                 | -                              | 10,000 sq. ft.                     | 10,000 sq. ft.                    |
| Public Water <i>OR</i> Sewer                  | -                              | 15,000 sq. ft.                     | 15,000 sq. ft.                    |
| <i>NO</i> Public Utilities                    | -                              | 20,000 sq. ft.                     | 20,000 sq. ft.                    |
| <b>Minimum Lot Width<sup>42</sup></b>         |                                |                                    |                                   |
| Public Water <i>AND</i> Sewer                 | 100 ft.                        | 75 ft.                             | 75 ft.                            |
| Public Water <i>OR</i> Sewer                  | 100 ft.                        | 75 ft.                             | 75 ft.                            |
| <i>NO</i> Public Utilities                    | 150 ft.                        | 100 ft.                            | 100 ft.                           |
| <b>Density<sup>43</sup></b>                   |                                |                                    |                                   |
| All lots                                      | 1 residential unit per 5 acres | 1 residential unit per 0.25 acres* | 1 residential unit per 0.25 acres |
| <b>Minimum Required Setbacks<sup>44</sup></b> |                                |                                    |                                   |
| <i>Front</i>                                  |                                |                                    |                                   |
| Principal structures                          | 35 ft.                         | 35 ft.                             | 35 ft.                            |
| Accessory structures                          | Not permitted in front yard    |                                    |                                   |
| <i>Side</i>                                   |                                |                                    |                                   |
| Principal structures                          | 20 ft.                         | 15 ft.                             | 10 ft.                            |
| Accessory structures                          | 10 ft.                         | 10 ft.                             | 10 ft.                            |
| <i>Rear</i>                                   |                                |                                    |                                   |
| Principal structures                          | 30 ft.                         | 30 ft.                             | 25 ft.                            |
| Accessory structures                          | 15 ft.                         | 15 ft.                             | 15 ft.                            |
| <b>Maximum Structure Height</b>               |                                |                                    |                                   |
| All structures                                | 40 ft.                         | 40 ft.                             | 40 ft.                            |

# Article V Overlay Zoning Districts

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- In General
- Lake Surface Overlay District
- Floodplain Overlay District
- Airport Overlay District





# Article VII

## Use

### Performance

### Standards

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#### Agricultural Uses

- Intensive Agriculture
- Residential Agriculture
- Agritourism

#### Residential Uses

- Short-Term Rentals
- Dwellings & Accessory Dwellings
- Home Occupations

#### Public, Civic, and Recreation Uses

- Campgrounds
- Telecom Facilities
- Major and Minor Utilities

#### Commercial Uses

- Electronic Gaming Establishment
- Event Venue
- Special Event
- Mobile Restaurant

#### Industrial Uses

- Battery Energy Storage Facilities
- Data Centers
- Manufacturing

#### Miscellaneous Uses

- Accessory Structures
- Outdoor Storage
- Solar Energy Facilities

# Article VIII Community Design Standards

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- Visibility Clearance
- Lighting
- Landscaping and Screening
- Walls and Fences
- Parking and Loading
- Signs
- Open Space

## Lighting

- Completely new Ordinance standards based on best practice
- Applies to all commercial zoning districts, RMF, RPD, and any property used for non-residential purposes, either as permitted or through a SUP

## Landscaping/ Screening

- Completely new Ordinance standards based on best practice
- Transitional buffers and screening requirements are introduced

## Walls and Fences

- Examples of requirements include those related to height, materials, and location

# Parking and Loading

- Edited standards to make sure parking requirements are reasonable and that parking lot areas are safe and well-designed

# Signs

- Updated requirements to be content-neutral
- Added language related to enforcement, maintenance, and general standards for signage

# Open Space

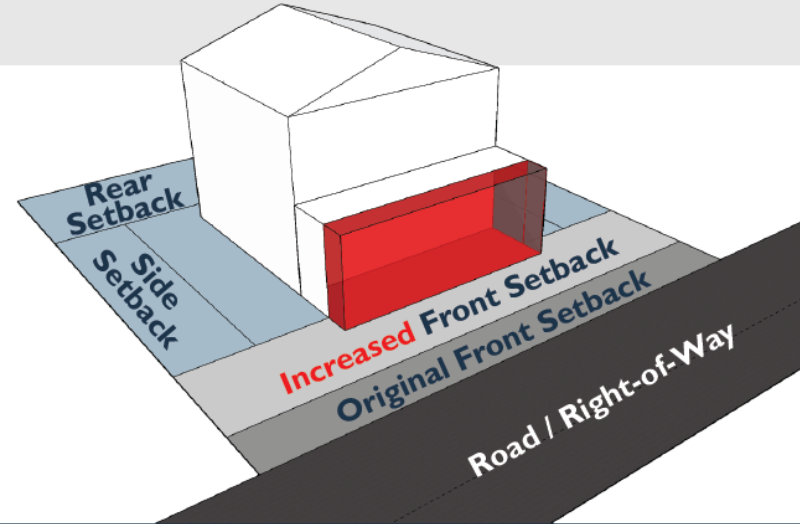
- Preserve natural resources
- Provide recreation and community gathering space
- Reduce “heat island” effect of developed areas  
Public is provided with meeting space
- Enhance stormwater management

# Article IX Nonconforming Uses, Lots, & Structures

## How Does a Structure Become Nonconforming?

In this example, a citizen owns property in a residential district. When the home was built, it complied with the existing setbacks. When the zoning ordinance was amended, some setback regulations became **more restrictive**. The **front setback was increased** an additional fifteen feet, resulting in a more restrictive setback.

**As a result, the house no longer meets the setback and becomes a nonconforming structure.**



**Original Front Setback:**  
30' Minimum  
**Side Setback:**  
15' Minimum  
**Rear Setback:**  
15' Minimum

**Increased Front Setback:**  
**45' Minimum**

| Uses   | Lots  | Structures   |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change to conforming use</li> <li>• Extend throughout a building</li> <li>• Change to more restrictive use</li> <li>• Lose status if discontinued 2 years or abandoned</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building on nonconforming lots</li> <li>• Lots can become more conforming or combined into conforming parcels.</li> <li>• Lots can be rezoned into a conforming district.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can alter if not increasing nonconformity</li> <li>• Rebuild when damaged or destroyed by natural disaster</li> <li>• Replace mobile homes</li> </ul> |



# Article X

## Definitions

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- **Consolidated and updated** definitions as needed.
- Updated with **Code of Virginia** definitions and references.
- **Organized** by topic
  - Common terminology
  - Abbreviations
  - General terms that apply to the whole ordinance
  - Overlay District terms
  - Use terms by use category

# Next Steps

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- Final Drafting Worksession:  
January 23, 2024
- Planning Commission Public  
Hearing: March 2024 (TBD)
- Board of Supervisors Public  
Hearing: April 2024 (TBD)

# Exit Survey

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*Thank You!*

