



FREDERICK COUNTY PHASE I ZONING UPDATE

What is the Zoning Ordinance?

The Zoning Ordinance is the set of laws that regulate how land in Frederick County can be used and developed. The ultimate purpose of zoning regulations is to protect the health, safety, and well-being of the Frederick County community.

Why is the County reorganizing the Zoning Ordinance?

The County's Zoning Ordinance has not been comprehensively reviewed or updated since the 1990s, but has rather received numerous small amendments. This has led to the Ordinance becoming outdated, repetitive, and increasingly difficult to navigate over time. Additionally, the Zoning Ordinance is missing many of the recent requirements of the Code of Virginia. Reorganizing the Ordinance improves readability; makes information easier to find; reduces confusion; and promotes consistency for property owners, staff, and decision-makers. ***This reorganizational update is considered Phase I and does not consist of policy changes.***

What is the Code of Virginia and how does it relate to the Zoning Ordinance?

The Code of Virginia is state law and gives local governments in Virginia the authority to adopt and enforce zoning ordinances. Zoning ordinances are also required to incorporate certain regulations included in state code. One of the primary goals of the Phase I update is to achieve compliance with the Code of Virginia. This not only protects the County in administration and enforcement of the Ordinance, but improves transparency for property owners as related to state-mandated zoning requirements.

What is staying the same in the Zoning Ordinance?

Nearly everything! Any and all changes made as part of the Phase I update have been made solely for compliance with the mandatory items of state code, reorganizational purposes, or to remove redundant or conflicting provisions. ***This is a technical update focused on clarity and usability - not changes in zoning policy.*** Examples of policy elements include where certain uses are allowed, landscaping or parking standards, site plan requirements, or waiver processes. These policy items have remained the same.

What changes can I expect in the reorganized Zoning Ordinance?

You can expect a simplified and more user-friendly Ordinance document with increased tables, flowcharts, and graphics to help explain requirements. You can also expect increased transparency regarding the roles and responsibilities of the Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, and key County staff; greater clarity for application requirements; and required provisions under state law.

Will my property be rezoned?

No. The County is not currently initiating any rezoning efforts. ***The current zoning of your property will not be impacted, and the specific standards for your zoning district will not change at this time.***

Will this impact pending applications?

Pending applications will continue to be processed under the existing Ordinance and as consistent with state law. Additionally, because there are no policy changes to the Zoning Ordinance, there are no new requirements that will take effect for applications to be submitted in the future.

Will there be future updates to the Zoning Ordinance?

Yes. A Phase II update to the Zoning Ordinance is anticipated following the County's Comprehensive Plan update, which is ongoing and slated for completion in 2027. The Phase II update will focus on policy changes to implement the land use and development goals established in the updated Comprehensive Plan. Connecting the Zoning Ordinance with the Comprehensive Plan will be important to align the community's long-term vision with the County's day-to-day regulatory decisions.

I still have questions. Who should I reach out to for assistance?

Contact the Planning and Development Department at 540-665-5651 or visit the offices at 107 North Kent Street, Suite 202, Winchester, VA 22601 anytime between 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. on weekdays.

