FLUVANNA COUNTY, VIRGINIA

GENERAL PLANNING INFORMATION

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

January 2020
BASIC PLANNING TOOLS

In Virginia, each locality is responsible for overseeing land use planning within its boundaries. The primary planning tools are the zoning ordinance; the subdivision ordinance; and the comprehensive plan. State law grants localities the power to implement these tools.

What is the Zoning Ordinance?

The zoning ordinance establishes regulations governing the use of land. Fluvanna County’s zoning ordinance includes eleven different districts and describes the allowable uses permitted in each district. It also establishes design standards for new development, such as setbacks and density requirements. Fluvanna County’s zoning ordinance was first adopted in January 1974. Since that time, the text has been amended to reflect the changing needs of the community.

What is the Subdivision Ordinance?

As its name implies, the subdivision ordinance regulates the division of land. Regulations within the subdivision ordinance control the dimensions of lots, the extent and nature of required utilities, plat details, and necessary transportation improvements. Virginia Code requires all localities to adopt a subdivision ordinance. The approval of subdivision plans is an administrative process; local planning staff reviews subdivision plans to determine whether or not they meet the provisions of the subdivision ordinance. In Fluvanna County, most new subdivisions are associated with residential development.

What is the Comprehensive Plan?

The Comprehensive Plan is a guide to the future growth and development of Fluvanna County. The current Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2015 with subsequent amendments. Since its adoption, the document has influenced land use decisions and County policy. Officials continue to implement strategies that help the County realize the goals described within the plan.

The Comprehensive Plan’s Future Land Use Map shows where the County wants to direct new development. There are six Community Planning Areas, which are intended to support higher density, mixed-use development around existing population centers. The Rural Residential areas accommodate low-density, clustered residential development, while the Rural Preservation areas are intended to remain largely undeveloped.

With the approval of the Board of Supervisors, the Comprehensive Plan may be amended. According to Virginia Code, the plan must be reevaluated and updated at least once every five years.
To ensure that growth and development occur in an orderly way that does not compromise the health, safety, and welfare of current residents and newcomers, Fluvanna County has its own Department of Planning and Community Development. The department’s duties and activities are described below:

**Current Planning (Development Administration)**

This primary activity involves the daily administration and enforcement of the zoning and subdivision ordinances. Tasks associated with the administration of these ordinances include the processing of subdivision proposals, boundary adjustments, easement plats, site plans, special use permits, rezonings, variances, general inquiries, and other requests.

The department serves as the primary staff contact for the Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, Agricultural and Forestal District Advisory Committee, and other ad hoc committees and task forces. Department staff also supports the Board of Supervisors as needed or requested.

**Long Range Planning (Project/Policy Development and Management)**

Planning recommendations are routinely provided to the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors on a wide array of issues. Strategic and long-term planning begins with the preparation and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, associated comprehensive plan or zoning text amendments, the annual review of the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) by the Planning Commission, and other local projects. These planning documents provide the foundation for many of the land use and budgetary decisions that are implemented by the County.

The department also manages the Agricultural and Forestal District and the Conservation Easement programs. Staff advises county agencies about regional and local transportation issues and assists in the development of recreational facilities as needed. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) information critical to planning and land use decisions is developed, collected, and maintained by planning staff. Routine contact with other regional planning departments and the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (and all of its member localities) is critical to maintaining up-to-date information and invaluable regional connections.

**Code Enforcement and Inspections**

Code compliance ensures that Fluvanna County’s regulations are enforced consistently and equitably. A wide variety of code issues routinely come to the County including subdivision and zoning ordinance violations, inoperative vehicle and junkyard complaints, and other nuisance and miscellaneous complaints.
District Summary: A-1 (Agricultural, General)

Uses Permitted

The A-1 (Agricultural, General) District permits limited residential development, and limited commercial and industrial uses directly related to agriculture, forestry, or other traditionally-rural uses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agriculture</th>
<th>Home Occupations</th>
<th>Some uses permitted by-right include:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equestrian Facilities</td>
<td>Single-Family Detached Dwellings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Sales</td>
<td>Two-Family Dwellings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunt Clubs</td>
<td>Accessory Dwellings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Select commercial uses are allowed only by Special Use Permit (SUP).

Maximum Gross Residential Density 1 dwelling unit per 2 acres

In order to construct more than one dwelling per parcel, a sketch plan must be submitted that would demonstrate that all dwellings could be lawfully subdivided so as to be on their own lots.

Minimum Lot Size 2 acres

Minimum Road Frontage
- Route 6, 15, 53, 250 and 616: 500’
- All Other Public Roads: 300’
- Private Roads: 200’

Minimum Lot Width Minimum lot width at minimum required setback must equal the minimum required frontage.

Minimum Setback (Front)
- Route 6, 15, 53, 250 and 616: 200’
- All Other Public Roads: 125’
- Private Roads: 100’

Minimum Setback (Side) 50’

Minimum Setback (Rear) 75’

Maximum Building Height 35’ (see Zoning Ordinance for exceptions)

Note: Lots within rural cluster developments have different dimensional requirements; those lots must meet the setback and yard requirements of the R-4 district.
**District Summary: R-1 (Residential, Limited)**

**Uses Permitted**

The R-1 (Residential, Limited) District permits low-density residential development.

Some uses permitted by-right include:
- Accessory Dwellings
- Single-Family Detached Dwellings
- Two-Family Dwellings
- Agriculture (within open space of cluster developments)
- Group Homes
- Home Occupations

Few civic and commercial uses are allowed only by Special Use Permit (SUP).

**Residential Density & Dimensional Requirements**

- **Maximum Gross Residential Density**: 1 dwelling unit per acre
- **Minimum Lot Size**: 1 acre
- **Minimum Road Frontage**: 100’
- **Minimum Lot Width**: None
- **Minimum Setback (Front)**: 75’
- **Minimum Setback (Side)**: 25’
- **Minimum Setback (Rear)**: 50’
- **Maximum Building Height**: 35’ (see Zoning Ordinance for exceptions)

Note: Lots within cluster developments have different dimensional requirements.
**DISTRICT SUMMARY: R-2 (RESIDENTIAL, GENERAL)**

**Uses Permitted**

The R-2 (Residential, General) District permits low- to medium-density residential development.

Some uses permitted by-right include:
- Accessory Dwellings
- Group Homes
- Home Occupations
- Agriculture
- Single-Family Dwellings (Attached and Detached)
- Townhouses
- Multi-Family Dwellings
- Two-Family Dwellings

(Within open space of cluster developments)

Few civic and commercial uses are allowed only by Special Use Permit (SUP).

**Residential Density & Dimensional Requirements**

- **Maximum Gross Residential Density**: 2 dwelling units per acre
- **Minimum Lot Size**: 21,870 square feet (½ acre)
- **Minimum Road Frontage**:
  - Existing Public Roads: 100’
  - New, Internal Public Roads: 50’
- **Minimum Lot Width**: None
- **Minimum Setback (Front)**: 50’
- **Minimum Setback (Side)**: 10’
- **Minimum Setback (Rear)**: 25’
- **Maximum Building Height**: 35’ (see Zoning Ordinance for exceptions)

Note: Lots within cluster developments have different dimensional requirements.
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General Planning Information

District Summary: R-3 (Residential, Planned Community)

Uses Permitted

The R-3 (Residential, Planned Community) District permits low- to medium-density residential development in a village-style setting, with limited commercial uses serving the surrounding neighborhood.

Some uses permitted by-right include:

Financial Institutions  Single-Family Dwellings (Attached and Detached)
Medical Clinics         Townhouses
Offices                Multi-Family Dwellings
Pharmacies             Two-Family Dwellings
Restaurants            Group Homes
Retail Stores          Accessory Dwellings

Note: The Master Plan for each development shows the general location of the various types of land uses permitted.

Select civic and commercial uses are allowed only by Special Use Permit (SUP).

Residential Density & Dimensional Requirements

Maximum Gross Residential Density  2.9 dwelling units per acre (between 3 and 10 residential units per acre may be permitted by Special Use Permit)
Minimum Lot Size
Minimum Road Frontage
Minimum Lot Width
Minimum Setback (Front)
Minimum Setback (Side)
Minimum Setback (Rear)
Maximum Building Height

Varies among R-3 Developments

Specifically defined with the Master Plan of each development.
**DISTRICT SUMMARY: R-4 (RESIDENTIAL, LIMITED)**

**Uses Permitted**

The R-4 (Residential, Limited) District permits low- to medium-density residential development. The district applies to all of the lots within Lake Monticello.

Some uses permitted by-right include:

- Accessory Dwellings
- Group Homes
- Home Occupations
- Minor Utilities
  - Single-Family Dwellings (Attached and Detached)
  - Townhouses
  - Multi-Family Dwellings
  - Two-Family Dwellings

Few civic and commercial uses are allowed only by Special Use Permit (SUP).

**Residential Density & Dimensional Requirements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Without Central Water and Sewer</th>
<th>With Central Water and Sewer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Gross Residential Density</td>
<td>1 dwelling per 2 acres</td>
<td>2.9 dwellings per acre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Lot Size</td>
<td>2 acres</td>
<td>15,000 square feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Road Frontage</td>
<td>200’</td>
<td>60’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Lot Width</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Setback (Front)</td>
<td>25’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Setback (Side)</td>
<td>10’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Setback (Rear)</td>
<td>25’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Building Height</td>
<td>35’ (see Zoning Ordinance for exceptions)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
District Summary: B-1 (Business, General)

Uses Permitted

The B-1 (Business, General) District permits general commercial activities.

Some uses permitted by-right include:

- Assisted Living Facilities
- Gas Stations
- Pharmacies
- Automobile Sales/Service
- Grocery Stores
- Restaurants
- Bakeries
- Hotels
- Retail Stores
- Car Washes
- Medical Clinics
- Self-Storage Facilities
- Corporate Offices
- Offices
- Veterinary Offices
- Financial Institutions
- Personal Service Establishments

Dimensional Requirements

- Minimum Lot Size: None
  - Must be able to accommodate on-site water/septic if needed
- Minimum Road Frontage: None
- Minimum Lot Width: None
- Minimum Setback (Front): 50’ (see Zoning Ordinance for exceptions)
  - Parking lots must be setback 25’
- Minimum Setback (Side): 50’ if adjoining residential/agricultural districts
- Minimum Setback (Rear): 50’ if adjoining residential/agricultural districts
- Maximum Building Height: 45’ (see Zoning Ordinance for exceptions)
- Sidewalks: Sidewalks required on both sides of the street.
District Summary: B-C (Business, Convenience)

Uses Permitted

The B-C (Business, Convenience) District permits retail and service business that cater to the needs of the surrounding residential areas.

Some uses permitted by-right include:

- Bakeries
- Bed & Breakfasts
- Daycare Centers
- Financial Institutions
- Gas Stations
- Grocery Stores
- Medical Clinics
- Offices
- Personal Service Establishments
- Pharmacies
- Restaurants
- Retail Stores

Commercial uses that generate higher amounts of traffic are permitted by Special Use Permit (SUP).

Dimensional Requirements

- Minimum Lot Size: None
  Must be able to accommodate on-site water/septic if needed
- Minimum Road Frontage: None
- Minimum Lot Width: None
- Minimum Setback (Front): 50’ (see Zoning Ordinance for exceptions)
  Parking lots must be setback 25’
- Minimum Setback (Side): 50’ if adjoining residential/agricultural districts
- Minimum Setback (Rear): 50’ if adjoining residential/agricultural districts
- Maximum Building Height: 35’ (see Zoning Ordinance for exceptions)
- Sidewalks: Sidewalks required on both sides of the street.
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DISTRICT SUMMARY: I-1 (INDUSTRIAL, LIMITED)

Uses Permitted

The I-1 (Industrial, Limited) permits certain businesses and light industries that have only a limited impact on surrounding neighborhoods.

Some uses permitted by-right include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Uses</th>
<th>Uses</th>
<th>Uses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Automobile Sales/Service</td>
<td>Retail Stores</td>
<td>Wholesale Warehouses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car Washes</td>
<td>Contractor’s Storage Yards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Institutions</td>
<td>Lumberyards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Clinics</td>
<td>Machine Shops</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offices</td>
<td>Light Manufacturing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offices</td>
<td>Research Laboratories</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More intensive industrial and commercial uses are permitted with a Special Use Permit (SUP).

Dimensional Requirements

- **Minimum Lot Size**: None
- **Must be able to accommodate on-site water/septic if needed**
- **Minimum Road Frontage**: None
- **Minimum Lot Width**: None
- **Minimum Setback (Front)**: 100’ (see Zoning Ordinance for exceptions)
  - Parking lots must be setback 50’ (see Zoning Ordinance for exceptions)
- **Minimum Setback (Side)**: 50’ if adjoining residential/agricultural districts
- **Minimum Setback (Rear)**: 50’ if adjoining residential/agricultural districts
- **Maximum Building Height**: 45’ (see Zoning Ordinance for exceptions)
- **Maximum Lot Coverage**: 80%
- **Sidewalks**: Sidewalks required on both sides of the street.
District Summary: I-2 (Industrial, General)

Uses Permitted

The I-2 (Industrial, General) permits heavy industries that may be incompatible with residential and commercial uses.

Some uses permitted by-right include:

- Contractor’s Storage Yard
- Lumberyards
- Machine Shops
- Light/Medium Manufacturing
- Research Laboratories
- Sawmills

More intensive industrial uses are permitted with a Special Use Permit (SUP).

Dimensional Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Lot Size</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Must be able to accommodate on-site water/septic if needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Road Frontage</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Lot Width</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Setback (Front)</td>
<td>200’ (see Zoning Ordinance for exceptions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Setback (Side)</td>
<td>50’ from adjoining agricultural, residential, and business districts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Setback (Rear)</td>
<td>50’ from adjoining agricultural, residential, and business districts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Building Height</td>
<td>70’ (structures exceeding this height require a Special Use Permit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Lot Coverage</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidewalks</td>
<td>Sidewalks required on both sides of the street.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Accessory Structures

The Zoning Ordinance defines accessory structures as any “structure subordinate to the main use or structure on the same lot and serving a purpose naturally incidental to the main use or structure.” Example of accessory structures include sheds and garages.

**Setbacks for Accessory Structures in the A-1, R-1, and R-2 Districts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimum Setback (Front)</th>
<th>Same as underlying districts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Setback (Side)</td>
<td>15’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Setback (Rear)</td>
<td>25’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Height</td>
<td>Must be shorter than the main building (some exceptions) May be no taller than one story if within 15’ of a lot line</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Setbacks for Accessory Structures in the R-3 Districts**

Specifically defined with the Master Plan of each development.

**Setbacks for Accessory Structures in the R-4 Districts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimum Setback (Front)</th>
<th>25’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Setback (Side)</td>
<td>10’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Setback (Rear)</td>
<td>25’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Height</td>
<td>Must be shorter than the main building (some exceptions) May be no taller than one story if within 15’ of a lot line</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Setbacks for Accessory Structures in B-1 and B-C Districts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimum Setback (Front)</th>
<th>50’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Setback (Side)</td>
<td>25’ if adjoining residential/agricultural districts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Setback (Rear)</td>
<td>25’ if adjoining residential/agricultural districts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Height</td>
<td>45’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Setbacks for Accessory Structures in I-1 Districts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimum Setback (Front)</th>
<th>100’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50’ if along an access road or interior road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Setback (Side)</td>
<td>50’ if adjoining residential/agricultural districts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Setback (Rear)</td>
<td>50’ if adjoining residential/agricultural districts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Height</td>
<td>45’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Measuring Lot Dimensions

- Rear Setback
- Front Setback
- Frontage
- Lot Width
- Buildable Area
- Buildable Area (Corner Lot)
- Side Setback
- Lot Width
- Frontage
- Road
- Road

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Subdivision Ordinance

As its name implies, the subdivision ordinance regulates the division of land. Regulations within the subdivision ordinance control the dimensions of lots, the extent and nature of required utilities, plat details, and necessary transportation improvements. Virginia Code requires all localities to adopt a subdivision ordinance. The approval of subdivision plans is an administrative process; local planning staff reviews subdivision plans to determine whether or not they meet the provisions of the subdivision ordinance. In Fluvanna County, most new subdivisions are associated with residential development.

Types of Subdivision

In Fluvanna County, there are three different types of subdivisions, each with their own requirements. Below is a general overview of each type.

- Family Subdivision
  Family subdivisions allow a lot to be created and sold or given to a family member, which could be the owner’s child, spouse, sibling grandchild, grandparent, or parent. Only one lot may be created for each eligible family member. The family member receiving the property may not sell the lot for at least three (3) years. The lots created must meet the requirements set forth in the Zoning Ordinance, and they must have frontage on a 20’ permanent access easement that leads to a public road.

- Minor Subdivision
  Minor subdivisions contain fewer than six lots, excluding family subdivisions. The lots within a minor subdivision must meet the requirements set forth in the Zoning Ordinance. Depending on the lot size and individual site conditions, these lots may be served by private or public roadways.

- Major Subdivision
  Major subdivisions contain six or more lots. The lots within a major subdivision must meet the requirements set forth in the Zoning Ordinance. All street within major subdivisions must meet the Virginia Department of Transportation’s (VDOT) subdivision street standards. Major subdivisions within the A-1 (Agricultural, General District) must be designed as “rural clusters.”

Contact the Planning Department to learn more about the requirements established by the subdivision ordinance.
# Subdivision Review Process

Each type of subdivision must undergo a slightly different review process. The review process ensures that any newly-created lots meet the County’s subdivision and zoning requirements. Contact the Planning Department to learn more about the subdivision approval process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-Application Meeting</strong></td>
<td>The pre-application meeting allows the applicant to talk with Planning Staff to learn more about the subdivision and zoning requirements prior to preparing a plat for review. This step is not required, but is encouraged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sketch Plan</strong></td>
<td>The sketch plan is a conceptual, informal map of the proposed subdivision and the surrounding area. It provides the reviewer with general information regarding the subdivision, and allows them to determine whether or not the proposal generally meets County requirements. Required for <em>family subdivisions</em>, <em>minor subdivisions</em>, and <em>major subdivisions</em>. For major subdivisions, the sketch plan must be approved by the Planning Commission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preliminary Plat</strong></td>
<td>The preliminary plat shows the existing boundaries and certain existing features of a parcel to be subdivided, together with the property lines of proposed lots and certain proposed improvements. Required for <em>minor subdivisions</em> and <em>major subdivisions</em>. The preliminary plat is reviewed by Planning Staff. If the plan is not approved, the applicant will be required to resubmit the preliminary plat to address the comments provided by the reviewer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Final Plat</strong></td>
<td>The final plat shows the new property lines and proposed improvements that were approved by the Planning Department as part of the preliminary plat. Required for <em>family subdivisions</em>, <em>minor subdivisions</em> and <em>major subdivisions</em>. The final plat is reviewed by Planning Staff. If the plan is not approved, the applicant will be required to resubmit the final plat to address the comments provided by the reviewer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recordation</strong></td>
<td>After the final plat is approved by the Planning Department, it may be recorded by the Clerk of the Circuit Court. Once recorded, the newly-subdivided parcels are legal lots-of-record.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Fluvanna County, Virginia**  
**General Planning Information**

**Contact Information**

The Department of Planning and Community Development is available to answer questions related to zoning, subdividing property, and long-range planning issues within Fluvanna County.

**Office Hours**  
8:00 AM - 5:00 PM (Monday - Friday)  
Closed on State Holidays

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Palmyra, VA 22963

**Mailing Address**  
P.O. Box 540  
Palmyra, VA 22983

**Phone Number**  
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**Fax Number**  
(434) 591-1911

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