

Board of Supervisors Land Use Policy Committee

June 17, 2025

Government Center Conference Room 11

Board of Supervisors (Board) Members present:

Jeff McKay, Chairman
James Walkinshaw, Braddock District
James Bierman, Jr., Dranesville District
Rodney Lusk, Franconia District
Walter Alcorn, Hunter Mill District
Andres Jimenez, Mason District
Dan Storck, Mount Vernon District
Dalia Palchik, Providence District
Kathy Smith, Sully District (Board Vice Chair and Committee Chair)

Board Member absent:

Pat Herrity, Springfield District

The Land Use Policy Committee (Committee) meeting was called to order at 9:34 a.m.

The summary of the May 20, 2025, Committee meeting was accepted without change.

DCA South of Airport Noise Study:

Katie Hermann, Planning Division (PD), Department of Planning and Development (DPD), and Jim Allerdice, Vianair, Inc., presented the study of the DCA south of Airport noise and flight patterns. Also in attendance were Tracy Strunk, Director, DPD, and Corinne Bebek, PD, DPD. Ms. Hermann introduced Jim Allerdice, the consultant working on the airport noise project. Mr. Allerdice summarized changes to the air traffic control navigation process, the parties involved in this coordinated effort to primarily reduce overflights and noise exposure for residents south of the airport as delineated, and the design philosophy. A key design point included the shifting of flights to maximize paths over the center of the Potomac River and other compatible areas. The next steps include further team review with public input, sending final recommendations to the working group and ultimately to the Federal Aviation Administration for review and approval.

Discussion ensued with input from staff regarding current approvals by federal authorities and other local jurisdictions, future projected flight considerations, the Fly Quiet Program, the use of noise monitors, expediting the approval process and the expected impact on safety and efficiency with the project's implementation. With the support of the Committee, staff will continue as discussed.

Flood Risk Reduction Policy:

Ellie Coddington, Deputy Director, Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES), Bill Hicks, Director, Land Development Services, Joni Calmbacher, Director of Stormwater Planning, DPWES, presented the flood risk reduction policy update. Also in attendance was Chris Herrington, Director of DPWES. Ms. Coddington summarized the policy using three interconnected strategies; regulations, programs and projects. The proposed level of service provided by the County includes applying a safety factor to mitigate the effects of climate change. Mr. Hicks summarized existing stormwater regulations and policies, adverse flood impacts, the safety factor and proposed code and policy changes. Ms. Calmbacher discussed the legal and safety-influenced priorities for capital projects. Program updates included the Flood Mitigation Assistance Program (FMAP), purchase of repetitive loss properties, and flood related outreach. She discussed long term plans and the County's effort to obtain an improved Community Rating System rating under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The next steps include LDS reporting on flood regulation options, DPWES applying the flood risk reduction policy to CIP prioritization and continuing to develop and implement flood programs.

Discussion ensued with input from staff on the safety factor limit and future re-evaluations, coordination with other jurisdictions, FMAP projects, flood warnings provided to residents, NFIP and improved benefit, and the effect on infill lot development. It was agreed that managing flood risk is a responsibility shared by the County, residents and businesses. With the support of the Committee, staff will continue as discussed.

Battery Energy Storage Systems:

Jacqui Kamp, Senior Planner, Zoning Administration Division (ZAD), DPD, presented the Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) update. Also in attendance were Chief John Walser, Fire and Rescue Department, Tracy Strunk, Director, DPD, Leslie Johnson, Zoning Administrator, ZAD, DPD, Carmen Bishop, Deputy Zoning Administrator, ZAD, DPD and Bill Mayland, Assistant Zoning Administrator, ZAD, DPD. Ms. Kamp described the function of BESS, provided existing regulations, under Light Utility Facility (principal use), and the proposal to include Battery Energy Storage Systems, Large-Scale, as a new Light Utility Facility use. To address concerns about safety, noise and visual impacts, use-specific standards, additional submission requirements and other restrictions are proposed, including potential requirements for a noise study, emergency operations plan and a decommissioning plan.

Discussion ensued with input from staff on thermal runaway and contaminated runoff with the use of water suppression, potential for more flexibility as a principal use, setback for safety, use in urban areas, the decommissioning process, financial securities and fusion reactor feasibility. With the support of the Committee, staff will continue as discussed.

Zoning Ordinance Work Program:

Leslie Johnson, Zoning Administrator, ZAD, DPD, and William Mayland, Assistant Zoning Administrator, ZAD, DPD, presented the annual update of the Zoning Ordinance Work Program (ZOWP). Ms. Johnson provided a status update for fiscal year (FY) 2025 which included reports to the board, completed amendments, and those in progress and under staff review. She shared the proposed FY 2026/2027 Work Program list which includes ongoing topics (application fees, reports to the Board and minor editorial and state code revisions); first tier topics, including substations, battery energy storage, manufactured homes and a new item addressing limits on retailers selling tobacco/vape products near schools and child day centers; and second tier topics, which include adding use standards for certain accessory structures, review of accessory living unit standards, review of certain industrial and commercial use standards and to review and clarify the definition of building height for residential dwellings, among other topics.

Mr. Mayland summarized the Priority 2 work program and noted that eleven items were retained, 13 added and six moved to Priority 1. Mr. Mayland outlined the next steps, including a Board matter for approval of the ZOWP at the July 15, 2025, Board meeting. (Note: Board Matter for endorsement was approved on June 24, 2025).

Discussion ensued with input from staff regarding current and future uses that may warrant consideration. With the support of the Committee, staff will continue as discussed.

The Committee meeting adjourned at 11:55 am

The next Committee meeting is currently scheduled for July 8, 2025, at 11:00 a.m.