



County of Fairfax, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 1, 2017

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Robert A. Stalzer *RA Stalzer*
Deputy County Executive

SUBJECT: Recommended Implementation Plan for Community Council on Land Use Engagement Recommendations

Chairman Bulova created the Community Council on Land Use Engagement (Community Council) in January 2017 to produce a set of recommendations to improve Fairfax County's public outreach and community engagement in the land use development process. The Community Council, chaired by former Planning Commissioner Walter Alcorn, included members from each magisterial district.

The Council met six times between February and May 2017, and provided its final report (Attachment A) at the Board of Supervisors' meeting on June 20, 2017. The Community Council reached consensus on 23 recommendations which fell into three main categories: Communication, Engagement, and Education. The Board accepted the report and directed staff to develop a work plan for implementing or addressing the recommendations and to return to the Board with an implementation plan for their consideration.

The proposed implementation plan is set forth below and will be discussed with the Board at the Development Process Committee meeting scheduled for December 12, 2017.

Process for Implementation Plan Development

This Implementation Plan was developed through the collaboration of multiple County agencies involved in land use and development as well as those with experience in communicating with the public. A high level implementation template was created as a tool to gather information from multiple agencies on each of the report's 23 recommendations. Each agency identified their role, proposed actions, estimated fiscal impacts, ease of implementation, and next steps for each recommendation. Agencies also identified recommendations that could be addressed within established practices. A list of those established practices can be found on Attachment B.

The agency responses to the 23 Community Council on Land Use Engagement recommendations, grouped into five areas, are summarized below and identified with staff recommended actions. Note that Recommendation 19 pertains to the Board of Zoning Appeals, which reviewed the Community Council's recommendations for applicability.

Staff Recommended Actions

1. Create a Community Engagement Specialist position within the Department of Planning and Zoning

The Community Council found that public communication, education, and outreach could be better coordinated. A new Community Engagement Specialist position within the Department of Planning and Zoning would provide a dedicated resource for this coordination and address multiple Community Council recommendations. Duties would include creating a communication checklist for both staff and applicants/industry, expanding non-English language outreach, creating plain language land use tools and guides, ensuring alignment with One Fairfax policy, gathering feedback on the planning and zoning process from the public, and creating a toolkit for Board offices with best practices for information sharing. The Community Engagement Specialist would also create requirements and guidance for community outreach plans in zoning applications, assist staff on community engagement and messaging for major land use cases, Zoning Ordinance changes, and Comprehensive Plan amendments. This position would also ensure that online best practices are being met.

Recommendations addressed: 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 13, 14, 17, 18, 21, 22, and 23

Lead Agency for Action: Department of Planning and Zoning

2. Enhance Public Meeting Testimony Opportunities

The Community Council identified existing challenges with engaging in the public hearing process in a convenient and accessible way. The current methods of public testimony include written, email, and in-person participation. Staff recommends creation of a policy that would allow residents to submit testimony via a video platform (e.g. YouTube). The policy would prescribe guidelines regarding the allowed length, format, and a pre-screening procedure. Any such guidelines must be content-neutral to comport with First Amendment requirements. The video could be shown during the public testimony portion of the hearing and included in the meeting records.

Recommendations addressed: 11, 12, and 13

Lead Agency for Action: Department of Cable and Consumer Services

3. Create a Land Development Toolkit for Industry and a Land Use 101 Academy for Residents

The Community Council recommended establishing an ongoing Land Use 101 Academy that would be offered to residents online and in individual neighborhoods. This program is envisioned as an extension of the current Joint Training Academy program, which the County offers to land development staff. Staff recommends the creation of this program within the Department of Land Development Services.

Recommendations addressed: 5, 20, and 22

Lead Agency for Action: Land Development Services

4. Enhance Web-based IT and GIS/Mapping Functionality

The Community Council's recommendations named several potential improvements or enhancements to the County's IT functions. The new Planning Land Use System (PLUS)

is under development which will replace multiple aging IT systems with a consolidated modern enterprise solution that is integrated with other critical systems and is adaptable to changing business needs. This new system will make government information and services more easily accessible by the community. In addition, staff in the Department of Information Technology and the Office of Public Affairs will enhance mapping, website, and social media functions to respond specifically to Community Council recommendations.

Recommendations addressed: 5, 6, 7, 8, and 13

Lead Agencies for Action: Land Development Services, Department of Planning and Zoning, Office of Public Affairs, Department of Information Technology

5. Maintain HOA/Civic Association Contacts

The Community Council expressed interest in utilizing established groups as well as new methods of outreach. The Office of Public Affairs will manage listings and contact information for the County's Homeowner and Civic Associations to the extent it is able to obtain the information and keep it current. This information, in addition to opt-in, neighborhood-based social media outlets such as Nextdoor, will be leveraged to expand outreach and engagement in a targeted manner. Over 100,000 County residents already have accounts on Nextdoor.

Recommendations addressed: 15 and 16

Lead Agency for Action: Office of Public Affairs

Possible Fiscal Impacts

Many of the proposed actions can be accommodated by existing agency resources. However there are two proposed implementation actions that may require on additional resources. These additional resources will be evaluated and considered as a part of the FY 2019 budget development process.

1. Community Engagement Specialist for the Department of Planning and Zoning – A position is critical to the implementation of recommendations outlined above. This position is proposed as a S27, for which the midpoint salary is \$87,767, total with benefits equals \$130,518. This would be a recurring expense.
2. Land Use 101 Academy – This program would leverage the existing Joint Training Academy staff and resources, but would require a full-time program manager. This position is proposed as a S27, Training Specialist III, for which the midpoint salary is \$87,767, total with benefits equals \$130,518. This would be a recurring expense.

Land Development Services currently manages three staff-focused academies: the Building Code Academy; the Joint Training Academy; and the Site Code Academy. Each of these academies has one dedicated staff position to perform its work and ensure its success. Establishment of the Joint Training Academy has impacted the other academies because the amount of work for this Training Academy exceeds the workload of a single staff position. The Joint Training Academy consequently relies

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on informal support of the other academies and staff from other agencies. A full-time dedicated program manager will be critical to the success of a public-oriented Land Use 101 Academy.

In addition, it is recommended that services to support the development of curriculum be obtained from a private contractor. These services have two significant benefits. First, the time to program launch would be cut in half versus proceeding without such service. Currently, it is estimated that a curriculum for the public Land Use 101 Academy would require 14 months to develop; with additional services, that time can be reduced to seven months. Second, a professional training contractor will produce high quality and consistent presentation materials, such as hand-outs and PowerPoints. The cost of the contract services is estimated at \$100,000. This would be a one-time expense to develop the curriculum. As a point of reference, in developing the multi-agency and highly successful Joint Training Academy, the County invested \$171,000 on contract services for curriculum development.

These recommendations will be discussed with the Board at the December 12, 2017 Development Process Committee. Should you have any questions or comments in the interim, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Attachment A: Community Council on Land Use Engagement Final Report
Attachment B: Existing Practices Related to Community Council Recommendations

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Attachment A: Community Council on Land Use Engagement Final Report

The Community Council on Land Use Engagement's Final Report can be found online at:
<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/chairman/pdf/community.council.final.report-6.8.17.pdf> .

Attachment B: Existing Practices Related to Community Council Recommendations

The following list denotes existing practices that are responsive to recommendations found in the Community Council on Land Use Engagement report. The number in parenthesis corresponds to the Community Council recommendation number found in the report.

- New zMod amendments are being created with plain language translations. (1)
- The Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) creates webpages for all Comprehensive Plan amendments, posts information to Facebook, and sends LISTSERV announcements at early stages of the review. (3)
- DPZ Zoning Administration has initiated a procedure by which the Board authorizes consideration of zoning amendments prior to the development of the staff report and the authorization of public hearings. (3)
- Quick Response (QR) codes are already on signs and staff reports. The QR code links to LDSnet or other appropriate webpage. (6)
- All meetings are broadcast on Channel 16, streamed online, audible on the Board Room Telephone Line, recorded, and summarized. Testimony can be submitted electronically into public record. (11)
- DPZ holds community meetings in areas of the County subject to land use proposal. Planning Commissioners often attend these meetings and/or land use committee meetings. (12)
- Implementation of the new Planning Land Use System (PLUS) is underway. A new FairfaxCounty.gov will premiere soon. (13)
- Planning Commission meetings will begin at 7:30pm instead of 8:15pm beginning in January 2018. (17)
- The Board of Zoning Appeals has reviewed the Council's recommendations. (19)
- Community meetings, including charrettes, are routinely held for major development applications. (21)
- Established programs such as the PC Roundtable, Board-hosted programs, and the County Magazine present educational information on land use topics. (23)