

FLEXIBILITY ADDED TO SITE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

New amendment to the Public Facilities Manual allows administrative waivers of previously mandatory provisions

Recently, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors approved an amendment to the Public Facilities Manual (PFM) that provides greater flexibility during the site development review process, and allows innovative ideas to solve engineering problems without a lengthy legislative process.

Previously, if a provision in the PFM used the words “must” or “shall,” it was a mandatory minimum requirement and could not be waived. Now, if the request meets certain conditions and is not mandated by other law, the Director of Land Development Services can waive these previously mandatory provisions. In practice, this means that county staff can use their professional judgement when the realities of a development project make it difficult to follow the PFM. This increased flexibility can help shorten the development review process and allows sensible designs to improve the finished product, while still protecting the community and the environment. This change is part of the county's efforts to return the PFM to its original intent as a guidance document.



To take advantage of this new flexibility, the waiver request must meet the following conditions:

- A strict application of the PFM standard cannot be met for a particular site; or new or creative designs are proposed; and
- Variations meet the intent of the provisions, and the submitting engineer provides an adequate justification and supporting data.

PFM Flexibility

More improvements to the PFM are underway through the PFM Flexibility Project. Learn more at fairfaxcounty.gov/landdevelopment/public-facilities-manual-flexibility-project.

In addition, any waivers or alternative designs must comply with specific requirements of the Virginia Code, County Code, and other applicable regulations, such as specific standards of the Virginia Department of Transportation and other reviewing agencies, from which variances may not be granted at the local level.

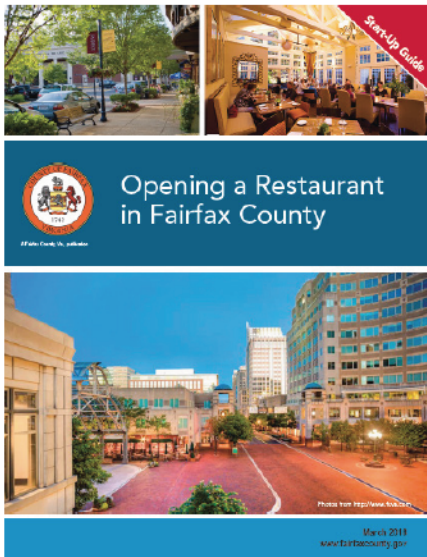
To take request a waiver, customers should use the current form. To find the Waiver/Modification/Exception Application Form, go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov and search “PFM waiver.”



Online Resources

CONNECT WITH THE BUILDING OFFICIAL'S BLOG

Fairfax County's Building Official's Blog offers the latest news about building code, the plan review process and building inspections. Written by Building Official Brian Foley and members of his staff, the blog was created to increase communication between the county and the development community in a less formal setting than other types of notifications. The only one of its kind, the blog talks about trends in design, offers solutions to common errors and provides updates on the goings-on of the Building Division. **Go to fairfaxcounty.gov and search "Building Official's Blog."**



RESTAURANT GUIDE SIMPLIFIES REVIEW PROCESS FOR CUSTOMERS

Recently, a step-by-step, customer-friendly guide to opening a restaurant in Fairfax County was published on the county's website. The guide uses clear language and visuals to explain a complex development review process involving multiple agencies. **To find it, go to fairfaxcounty.gov and search "Start a Restaurant."**

County Staff is Available to Assist You

Planner of the Day: 703-324-5387/5372, TTY 711

Engineer of the Day: 703-324-2268, TTY 711

Permit Application Center: 703-222-0801, TTY 711

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW METRICS

When a new office building, subdivision or any other development project begins, the customer's question is always, "How long will it take to get through the county's review process?" Land Development Services is working to answer that question by publishing its review time metrics online. **Search "Development Review Metrics" at fairfaxcounty.gov.**

PLAN EXCELLENCE AWARDS RECOGNIZE QUALITY



RC Fields; Florence Lane Subdivision



Urban LTD; Tall Oaks Shopping Center



Dewberry; Hitt/Hartland project

To recognize high-quality development plans submitted to Fairfax County for review, the Engineers & Surveyors Institute (ESI) and Fairfax County Land Development Services (LDS) give annual **ESI/LDS Plan Excellence Awards**. The ceremony took place on June 22, 2018 at ESI headquarters in Chantilly. To learn more about these awards, search “Plan Excellence Awards” at fairfaxcounty.gov.

SMALL BUSINESSES GET A ROAD MAP

New BizEx program helps small businesses successfully navigate Fairfax County’s regulatory processes

Small businesses now have a one-stop shop to get help understanding Fairfax County’s permit, review, inspection and license processes. The new Business Experience program—or BizEx for short—can assist prospective small businesses or current ones that want to grow, expand or evolve. BizEx can advise and guide businesses on:

- Things to consider when selecting a location
- What permits/processes are required
- What licenses are needed
- Connections to other county and state resources

The program offers guidance on regulatory process and procedures that include:

- Zoning
- Site plan and inspections
- Building plans, permits and inspections
- Parking requirements
- Sign permits
- Licenses and taxes



“I like to tell people to talk to us first before you sign a lease,” says Meaghan Kiefer, BizEx program manager. “We want to help you start or grow your business, and like a concierge, we can offer you valuable tips and guidance.”

The service isn’t designed to take the place of professional consultants like brokers, architects or engineers, offer legal advice or answer specific technical questions. However, BizEx can chart the path forward. To find out more, contact BizEx by email, BizEx@FairfaxCounty.gov, or call 703-324-2694, TTY 711.

zMOD: Updating Land Uses

Fairfax County's Zoning Ordinance is turning 40 this summer! The Zoning Ordinance Modernization Project (zMOD) is in full gear, with the goal of producing a forward-thinking, easy-to-use document that accommodates uses that we might not know about today, but will be here in the future.



This summer, staff from the Department of Planning and Zoning is digging into updating the uses in the Zoning Ordinance. Uses define how a piece of land can be used and under what conditions. In the Zoning Ordinance, each zoning district has a list of permitted uses that are allowed by-right (without any further zoning approval), by special permit or by special exception.

Working with the county's consultant, Clarion Associates, the existing land uses will be updated, defined and incorporated into a draft land use table that:

- Groups and consolidates similar uses into broader and more flexible categories;
- Indicates which uses are allowed in which zoning districts; and
- Contains links to any use-related limitations.

This restructuring and revising of the land use categories is a significant component of the Zoning Ordinance modernization. This fall, public outreach and engagement will be held to receive feedback on the draft of the updated uses. Stay tuned!

More Information

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-zoning/zmod
www.facebook.com/fairfaxcountyzoning

You can also subscribe for email updates at
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/email/lists
(Under the Land Use & Development topic area, select DPZ-zMod)

Two New GIS Tools Launched to Aid Site and Building Development

Land Development Services (LDS) has launched two new GIS applications in Fairfax County, in a continuing effort to use technology to streamline the development process.

- The **Soils Viewer** uses the 2011 soil survey prepared by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service to map the soil types in the county. Go to fairfaxcounty.gov/landdevelopment/soils.
- The **Type of Construction Viewer** allows users to find the Type of Construction and Use Group assigned to a building during its original construction. Its Type of Construction denote a building's combustibility and level of protection against fire; Use Groups identify occupancy based on how the building is used, i.e., mercantile, assembly, business, industrial and storage. This is key information county staff needs when reviewing plans and architects or engineers require when making alterations to existing construction. Search "Type of Construction Viewer" at fairfaxcounty.gov.