

Code of Virginia
Title 15.2. Counties, Cities and Towns
Chapter 22. Planning, Subdivision of Land and Zoning

Article 3. The Comprehensive Plan.

§ 15.2-2223. Comprehensive plan to be prepared and adopted; scope and purpose.

A. The local planning commission shall prepare and recommend a comprehensive plan for the physical development of the territory within its jurisdiction and every governing body shall adopt a comprehensive plan for the territory under its jurisdiction.

In the preparation of a comprehensive plan, the commission shall make careful and comprehensive surveys and studies of the existing conditions and trends of growth, and of the probable future requirements of its territory and inhabitants. The comprehensive plan shall be made with the purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the territory which will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the inhabitants, including the elderly and persons with disabilities.

The comprehensive plan shall be general in nature, in that it shall designate the general or approximate location, character, and extent of each feature, including any road improvement and any transportation improvement, shown on the plan and shall indicate where existing lands or facilities are proposed to be extended, widened, removed, relocated, vacated, narrowed, abandoned, or changed in use as the case may be.

B. 1. As part of the comprehensive plan, each locality shall develop a transportation plan that designates a system of transportation infrastructure needs and recommendations that include the designation of new and expanded transportation facilities and that support the planned development of the territory covered by the plan and shall include, as appropriate, but not be limited to, roadways, bicycle accommodations, pedestrian accommodations, railways, bridges, waterways, airports, ports, freight corridors, and public transportation facilities. The plan shall recognize and differentiate among a hierarchy of roads such as expressways, arterials, and collectors. In developing the plan, the locality shall take into consideration how to align transportation infrastructure and facilities with affordable, accessible housing and community services that are located within the territory in order to facilitate community integration of the elderly and persons with disabilities. The Virginia Department of Transportation shall, upon request, provide localities with technical assistance in preparing such transportation plan.

2. The transportation plan shall include a map that shall show road and transportation improvements, including the cost estimate of such road and transportation improvements from the Virginia Department of Transportation, taking into account the current and future needs of residents in the locality while considering the current and future needs of the planning district within which the locality is situated.

3. The transportation plan, and any amendment thereto pursuant to § 15.2-2229, shall be consistent with the Commonwealth Transportation Board's Statewide Transportation Plan developed pursuant to § 33.2-353, the Six-Year Improvement Program adopted pursuant to subsection B of § 33.2-214, and the location of routes to be followed by roads comprising systems of state highways pursuant to subsection A of § 33.2-208. The locality shall consult with the Virginia Department of Transportation to assure such consistency is achieved. The transportation plan need reflect only those changes in the annual update of the Six-Year Improvement Program that are deemed to be significant new, expanded, or relocated roadways.

4. Prior to the adoption of the transportation plan or any amendment to the transportation plan, the locality shall submit such plan or amendment to the Department for review and comment. The Department shall conduct its review and provide written comments to the locality on the consistency of the transportation plan or any amendment to the provisions of subdivision 1. The Department shall provide such written comments to the locality within 90 days of receipt of the plan or amendment, or such other shorter period of time as may be otherwise agreed upon by the Department and the locality.

5. The locality shall submit a copy of the adopted transportation plan or any amendment to the transportation plan to the Department for informational purposes. If the Department determines that the transportation plan or amendment is not consistent with the provisions of subdivision 1, the Department shall notify the Commonwealth Transportation Board so that the Board may take appropriate action in accordance with subsection F of § 33.2-214.

6. If the adopted transportation plan designates corridors planned to be served by mass transit, as defined in § 33.2-100, a portion of its allocation from (i) the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority distribution specified in subdivision B 1 of § 33.2-2510, (ii) the commercial and industrial real property tax revenue specified in § 58.1-3221.3, and (iii) the secondary system road construction program, as described in Article 5 (§ 33.2-351 et seq.) of Chapter 3 of Title 33.2, may be used for the purpose of utility undergrounding in the planned corridor, if the locality matches 100 percent of the state allocation.

7. Each locality's amendments or updates to its transportation plan as required by subdivisions 2 through 5 shall be made on or before its ongoing scheduled date for updating its transportation plan.

C. The comprehensive plan, with the accompanying maps, plats, charts, and descriptive matter, shall show the locality's long-range recommendations for the general development of the territory covered by the plan. It may include, but need not be limited to:

1. The designation of areas for various types of public and private development and use, such as different kinds of residential, including age-restricted, housing; business; industrial; agricultural; mineral resources; conservation; active and passive recreation; public service; flood plain and drainage; and other areas;
2. The designation of a system of community service facilities such as parks, sports playing fields, forests, schools, playgrounds, public buildings and institutions, hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, community centers, waterworks, sewage disposal or waste disposal areas, and the like;
3. The designation of historical areas and areas for urban renewal or other treatment;
4. The designation of areas for the implementation of reasonable measures to provide for the continued availability, quality, and sustainability of groundwater and surface water;
5. A capital improvements program, a subdivision ordinance, a zoning ordinance and zoning district maps, mineral resource district maps and agricultural and forestal district maps, where applicable;
6. The location of existing or proposed recycling centers;
7. The location of military bases, military installations, and military airports and their adjacent safety areas; and
8. The designation of corridors or routes for electric transmission lines of 150 kilovolts or more.

D. The comprehensive plan shall include the designation of areas and implementation of measures for the construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of affordable housing, which is sufficient to meet the current and future needs of residents of all levels of income in the locality while considering the current and future needs of the planning district within which the locality is situated.

E. The comprehensive plan shall consider strategies to provide broadband infrastructure that is sufficient to meet the current and future needs of residents and businesses in the locality. To this end, local planning commissions may consult with and receive technical assistance from the Center for Innovative Technology, among other resources.

F. The comprehensive plan is encouraged to consider strategies to address resilience. As used in this subsection, "resilience" means the capability to anticipate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from significant multi-hazard threats with minimum damage to social well-being, health, the economy, and the environment.

1975, c. 641, § 15.1-446.1; 1976, c. 650; 1977, c. 228; 1988, c. 268; 1989, c. 532; 1990, c. 19; 1993, cc. 116, 758; 1996, cc. 585, 600; 1997, c. 587; 2003, c. 811; 2004, cc. 691, 799; 2005, cc. 466, 699; 2006, cc. 527, 563, 564; 2007, c. 761; 2012, cc. 729, 733; 2013, cc. 561, 585, 646, 656; 2014, cc. 397, 443; 2018, cc. 420, 691, 796, 828; 2023, cc. 353, 354, 424.

§ 15.2-2223.1. Comprehensive plan to include urban development areas.

A. For purposes of this section:

"Commercial" means property devoted to usual and customary business purposes for the sale of goods and services and includes, but is not limited to, retail operations, hotels, motels and offices. "Commercial" does not include residential dwelling units, including apartments and condominiums, or agricultural or forestal production, or manufacturing, processing, assembling, storing, warehousing, or distributing.

"Commission" means the Commission on Local Government.

"Developable acreage," solely for the purposes of calculating density within the urban development area, means land that is not included in (i) existing parks, rights-of-way of arterial and collector streets, railways, and public utilities and (ii) other existing public lands and facilities.

"Population growth" means the difference in population from the next-to-latest to the latest decennial census year, based on population reported by the United States Bureau of the Census. In computing its population growth, a locality may exclude the inmate population of any new or expanded correctional facility that opened within the time period between the two censuses.

"Urban development area" means an area designated by a locality that is (i) appropriate for higher density development due to its proximity to transportation facilities, the availability of a public or community water and sewer system, or a developed area and (ii) to the extent feasible, to be used for redevelopment or infill development.

B. Any locality may amend its comprehensive plan to incorporate one or more urban development areas.

1. Urban development areas are areas that may be appropriate for development at a density on the developable acreage of at least four single-family residences, six townhouses, or 12 apartments, condominium units, or cooperative units per acre, and an authorized floor area ratio of at least 0.4 per acre for commercial development, any proportional combination thereof, or any other combination or arrangement that is adopted by a locality in meeting the intent of this section.

2. The urban development areas designated by a locality may be sufficient to meet projected residential and commercial growth in the locality for an ensuing period of at least 10 but not more than 20 years, which may include phasing of development within the urban development areas. Where an urban development area in a county with the urban county executive form of government includes planned or existing rail transit, the planning horizon may be for an ensuing period of at least 10 but not more than 40 years. Future residential and commercial growth shall be based on official estimates of either the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service of the University of Virginia, the Virginia Employment Commission, the United States Bureau of the Census, or other official government projections required for federal transportation planning purposes.

3. The boundaries and size of each urban development area shall be reexamined and, if necessary, revised every five years in conjunction with the review of the comprehensive plan and in accordance with the most recent available population growth estimates and projections.

4. The boundaries of each urban development area shall be identified in the locality's comprehensive plan and shall be shown on future land use maps contained in such comprehensive plan.

5. Urban development areas, if designated, shall incorporate principles of traditional neighborhood design, which may include but need not be limited to (i) pedestrian-friendly road design, (ii) interconnection of new local streets with existing local streets and roads, (iii) connectivity of road and pedestrian networks, (iv) preservation of natural areas, (v) mixed-use neighborhoods, including mixed housing types, with affordable housing to meet the projected family income distributions of future residential growth, (vi) reduction of front and side yard building setbacks, and (vii) reduction of subdivision street widths and turning radii at subdivision street intersections.

6. The comprehensive plan shall describe any financial and other incentives for development in the urban development areas.

7. A portion of one or more urban development areas may be designated as a receiving area for any transfer of development rights program established by the locality.

C. No locality that has amended its comprehensive plan in accordance with this section shall limit or prohibit development pursuant to existing zoning or shall refuse to consider any application for rezoning based solely on the fact that the property is located outside the urban development area.

D. Localities shall consult with adjacent localities, as well as the relevant planning district commission and metropolitan planning organization, in establishing the appropriate size and location of urban development areas to promote orderly and efficient development of their region.

E. Any county that amends its comprehensive plan pursuant to subsection B may designate one or more urban development areas in any incorporated town within such county, if the council of the town has also amended its comprehensive plan to designate the same areas as urban development areas with at least the same density designated by the county. However, if a town has established an urban development area within its corporate boundaries, the county within which the town is located shall not include the town's projected population and commercial growth when initially determining or reexamining the size and boundary of any other urban development area within the county.

F. To the extent possible, federal, state and local transportation, housing, water and sewer facility, economic development, and other public infrastructure funding for new and expanded facilities shall be directed to designated urban development areas or to such similar areas that accommodate growth in a manner consistent with this section.

2007, c. 896; 2009, c. 327; 2010, cc. 465, 528; 2011, c. 561; 2012, cc. 192, 518, 805, 836.

§ 15.2-2223.2. Comprehensive plan to include coastal resource management guidance.

Beginning in 2013, any locality in Tidewater Virginia, as defined in § 62.1-44.15:68, shall incorporate the guidance developed by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science pursuant to subdivision 9 of § 28.2-1100 into the next scheduled review of its comprehensive plan. The Department of Conservation and Recreation, Virginia Marine Resources Commission, and the Virginia Institute of Marine Science shall provide technical assistance to any such locality upon request.

2011, c. 885.

§ 15.2-2223.3. Comprehensive plan shall incorporate strategies to combat projected sea-level rise and recurrent flooding

Beginning July 1, 2015, any locality included in the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission shall incorporate into the next scheduled and all subsequent reviews of its comprehensive plan strategies to combat projected relative sea-level rise and recurrent flooding. Such review shall be coordinated with the other localities in the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission. The Department of Conservation and Recreation, the Department of Emergency Management, the Marine Resources Commission, Old Dominion University, and the Virginia Institute of Marine Science shall provide technical assistance to any such locality upon request. Where federal regulations as effective July 1, 2015 require a local hazard mitigation plan for participation in the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Flood Insurance Program, such a plan may also be incorporated into the comprehensive plan. For a locality not participating in the FEMA Community Rating System, the comprehensive plan may include an action plan and time frame for such participation.

2015, c. 186.

§ 15.2-2223.4. Comprehensive plan shall provide for transit-oriented development.

Beginning July 1, 2020, each city with a population greater than 20,000 and each county with a population greater than 100,000 shall consider incorporating into the next scheduled and all subsequent reviews of its comprehensive plan strategies to promote transit-oriented development for the purpose of reducing greenhouse gas emissions through coordinated transportation, housing and land use planning. Such strategies may include (i) locating new housing development, including low-income, affordable housing, in closer proximity to public transit options; (ii) prioritizing transit options with reduced overall carbon emissions; (iii) increasing development density in certain areas; (iv) reducing, modifying, or waiving local parking requirements or ratios; or (v) other strategies designed to reduce overall carbon emissions in the locality.

2020, c. 14; 2021, Sp. Sess. I, c. 412.

§ 15.2-2223.5. Comprehensive plan shall address manufactured housing.

During an amendment of a locality's comprehensive plan after July 1, 2021, the locality shall incorporate into its comprehensive plan strategies to promote manufactured housing as a source of affordable housing. Such strategies may include (i) the preservation of existing manufactured housing communities, (ii) the creation of new manufactured home communities, and (iii) the creation of new manufactured home subdivisions.

2021, Sp. Sess. I, cc. 91, 92.

§ 15.2-2224. Surveys and studies to be made in preparation of plan; implementation of plan.

A. In the preparation of a comprehensive plan, the local planning commission shall survey and study such matters as the following:

1. Use of land, preservation of agricultural and forestal land, production of food and fiber, characteristics and conditions of existing development, trends of growth or changes, natural resources, historic areas, groundwater and surface water availability, quality, and sustainability, geologic factors, population factors, employment, environmental and economic factors, existing public facilities, drainage, flood control and flood damage prevention measures, dam break inundation zones and potential impacts to downstream properties to the extent that information concerning such information exists and is available to the local planning authority, the transmission of electricity, broadband infrastructure, road improvements, and any estimated cost thereof, transportation facilities, transportation improvements, and any cost thereof, the need for affordable housing in both the locality and planning district within which it is situated, and any other matters relating to the subject matter and general purposes of the comprehensive plan.

However, if a locality chooses not to survey and study historic areas, then the locality shall include historic areas in the comprehensive plan, if such areas are identified and surveyed by the Department of Historic Resources. Furthermore, if a locality chooses not to survey and study mineral resources, then the locality shall include mineral resources in the comprehensive plan, if such areas are identified and surveyed by the Department of Energy. The requirement to study the production of food and fiber shall apply only to those plans adopted on or after January 1, 1981.

2. Probable future economic and population growth of the territory and requirements therefor.

B. The comprehensive plan shall recommend methods of implementation and shall include a current map of the area covered by the comprehensive plan. Unless otherwise required by this chapter, the methods of implementation may include but need not be limited to:

1. An official map;
2. A capital improvements program;
3. A subdivision ordinance;
4. A zoning ordinance and zoning district maps;
5. A mineral resource map;
6. A recreation and sports resource map; and
7. A map of dam break inundation zones.

Code 1950, § 15-964.1; 1962, c. 407, § 15.1-447; 1975, c. 641; 1977, c. 228; 1980, c. 322; 1981, c. 418; 1988, c. 438; 1990, c. 97; 1991, c. 280; 1993, cc. 758, 770; 1996, cc. 585, 600; 1997, c. 587; 2006, c. 564; 2007, c. 761; 2008, c. 491; 2018, cc. 420, 691; 2021, Sp. Sess. c. 532.

§ 15.2-2225. Notice and hearing on plan; recommendation by local planning commission to governing body; posting of plan on website.

Prior to the recommendation of a comprehensive plan or any part thereof, the local planning commission shall (i) post the comprehensive plan or part thereof that is to be considered for recommendation on a website that is maintained by the commission or on any other website on which the commission generally posts information, and that is available to the public or that clearly describes how the public may access information regarding the plan or part thereof being considered for recommendation, (ii) give notice in accordance with § 15.2-2204, and (iii) hold a public hearing on the plan. After the public hearing, the commission may approve, amend and approve, or disapprove the plan. Upon approval, the commission shall by resolution recommend the plan, or part thereof, to the governing body and a copy shall be certified to the governing body. Any comprehensive plan or part thereof approved by the commission pursuant to this section shall be posted on a website that is maintained by the commission or on any other website on which the commission generally posts information, and that is available to the public or that clearly describes how the public may access information regarding the plan or part thereof approved by the commission and certified to the governing body. Inadvertent failure to post information on a website in accordance with this section shall not invalidate action taken by the local planning commission following notice and public hearing as required herein.

Code 1950, §§ 15-908, 15-921, 15-922, 15-964.2, 15-964.3; 1958, c. 389; 1962, c. 407, §§ 15.1-448, 15.1-449; 1968, c. 735; 1975, c. 641; 1976, c. 642; 1997, c. 587; 2009, c. 605.

§ 15.2-2226. Adoption or disapproval of plan by governing body.

After certification of the plan or part thereof, the governing body shall post the comprehensive plan or part thereof certified by the local planning commission on a website that is maintained by the governing body or on any other website on which the governing body generally posts information, and that is available to the public or that clearly describes how the public may access information regarding the plan or part thereof being considered for adoption. After a public hearing with notice as required by § 15.2-2204, the governing body shall proceed to a consideration of the plan or part thereof and shall approve and adopt, amend an adopt, or disapprove the plan. In acting on the plan or part thereof, or any amendments to the plan, the governing body shall act within 90 days of the local planning commission's recommending resolution; however, if a comprehensive plan amendment is initiated by the locality for more than 25 parcels, the governing body shall act within 150 days of the local planning commission's recommending resolution. Any comprehensive plan or part thereof adopted by the governing body pursuant to this section shall be posted on a website that is maintained by the local governing body or on any other website on which the governing body generally posts information, and that is available to the public or that clearly describes how the public may access information

regarding the plan or part thereof adopted by the local governing body. Inadvertent failure to post information on a website in accordance with this section shall not invalidate action taken by the governing body following notice and public hearing as required herein.

Code 1950, § 15-964.4; 1962, c. 407, § 15.1-450; 1975, c. 641; 1976, c. 642; 1997, c. 587; 2000, c. 893; 2009, c. 605; 2020, cc. 132, 76C

§ 15.2-2227. Return of plan to local planning commission; resubmission.

If the governing body disapproves the plan, then it shall be returned to the local planning commission for its reconsideration, with a written statement of the reasons for its disapproval.

The commission shall have sixty days in which to reconsider the plan and resubmit it, with any changes, to the governing body.

Code 1950, § 15-964.5; 1962, c. 407, § 15.1-451; 1997, c. 587.

§ 15.2-2228. Adoption of parts of plan.

As the work of preparing the comprehensive plan progresses, the local planning commission may, from time to time, recommend, and the governing body approve and adopt, parts thereof. Any such part shall cover one or more major sections or divisions of the locality or one or more functional matters.

Code 1950, §§ 15-906, 15-921, 15-964.6; 1958, c. 389; 1962, c. 407, § 15.1-452; 1997, c. 587.

§ 15.2-2229. Amendments.

After the adoption of a comprehensive plan, all amendments to it shall be recommended, and approved and adopted, respectively as required by § 15.2-2204. If the governing body desires an amendment, it may prepare such amendment and refer it to the local planning commission for public hearing or direct the local planning commission to prepare an amendment and submit it to public hearing within 60 days or such longer timeframe as may be specified after written request by the governing body. In acting on any amendments to the plan, the governing body shall act within 90 days of the local planning commission's recommending resolution; however, if a comprehensive plan amendment is initiated by the locality for more than 25 parcels, the governing body shall act within 150 days of the local planning commission's recommending resolution. If the local planning commission fails to make a recommendation on the amendment within the aforesaid timeframe, the governing body may conduct a public hearing, which shall be advertised as required by § 15.2-2204.

Code 1950, §§ 15-908, 15-921, 15-964.7; 1958, c. 389; 1962, c. 407, § 15.1-453; 1975, c. 641; 1997, c. 587; 2000, c. 893; 2010, c. 821; 2020, cc. 132, 760.

§ 15.2-2230. Plan to be reviewed at least once every five years.

At least once every five years the comprehensive plan shall be reviewed by the local planning commission to determine whether it is advisable to amend the plan.

Code 1950, § 15-964.8; 1962, c. 407, § 15.1-454; 1975, c. 641; 1997, c. 587.

§ 15.2-2230.1. Public facilities study.

In addition to reviewing the comprehensive plan, the planning commission may make a study of the public facilities, including existing facilities, which would be needed if the comprehensive plan is fully implemented. The study may include estimations of the annual prospective operating costs for such facilities and any revenues, including tax revenues, that may be generated by such facilities. For purposes of the study, public facilities may include but need not be limited to water and sewer lines and treatment plants, schools, public safety facilities, streets and highways. The planning commission may forward the study to the local governing body or any other local, regional, state or federal agency that the planning commission believes might benefit from its findings. The study shall also be forwarded to any utility companies or franchised cable operators that may be impacted by such public facilities. The utility companies, the franchised cable operators, and the locality shall cooperate and coordinate in the relocation of such utilities and cable lines as may be appropriate to avoid unnecessary delays in the construction of public facilities and capital projects by the affected localities, consistent with the service obligations of the utility companies and franchised cable operators. For purposes of this section, the term "utility company" shall not include a municipal utility that operates outside its locality's boundaries.

1998, c. 609; 2012, c. 553.

§ 15.2-2231. Inclusion of incorporated towns in county plan; inclusion of adjacent unincorporated territory in municipal plan.

Any county plan may include planning of incorporated towns to the extent to which, in the county local planning commission's judgment, it is related to planning of the unincorporated territory of the county as a whole. However, the plan shall not be considered as a comprehensive plan for any incorporated town unless recommended by the town commission, if any, and adopted by the governing body of the town.

Any municipal plan may include the planning of adjacent unincorporated territory to the extent to which, in the municipal local planning commission's judgment, it is related to the planning of the incorporated territory of the municipality. However, the plan shall not be considered as a comprehensive plan for such unincorporated territory unless recommended by the county commission and approved and adopted by the governing body of the county.

Code 1950, §§ 15-922, 15-964.9; 1962, c. 407, § 15.1-455; 1997, c. 587.

§ 15.2-2232. Legal status of plan.

A. Whenever a local planning commission recommends a comprehensive plan or part thereof for the locality and such plan has been approved and adopted by the governing body, it shall control the general or approximate location, character and extent of each feature shown on the plan. Thereafter, unless a feature is already shown on the adopted master plan or part thereof or is deemed so under subsection D, no street or connection to an existing street, park or other public area, public building or public structure, public utility facility or public service corporation facility other than a railroad facility or an underground natural gas or underground electric distribution facility of a public utility as defined in subdivision (b) of § 56-265.1 within its certificated service territory, whether publicly or privately owned, shall be constructed, established or authorized, unless and until the general location or approximate location, character, and extent thereof has been submitted to and approved by the commission as being substantially in accord with the adopted comprehensive plan or part thereof. In connection with any such determination, the commission may, and at the direction of the governing body shall, hold a public hearing, after notice as required by § 15.2-2204. Following the adoption of the Statewide Transportation Plan by the Commonwealth Transportation Board pursuant to § 33.2-353 and written notification to the affected local governments, each local government through which one or more of the designated corridors of statewide significance traverses, shall, at a minimum, note such corridor or corridors on the transportation plan map included in its comprehensive plan for information purposes at the next regular update of the transportation plan map. Prior to the next regular update of the transportation plan map, the local government shall acknowledge the existence of corridors of statewide significance within its boundaries.

B. The commission shall communicate its findings to the governing body, indicating its approval or disapproval with written reasons therefor. The governing body may overrule the action of the commission by a vote of a majority of its membership. Failure of the commission to act within 60 days of a submission, unless the time is extended by the governing body, shall be deemed approval. The owner or owners or their agents may appeal the decision of the commission to the governing body within 10 days after the decision of the commission. The appeal shall be by written petition to the governing body setting forth the reasons for the appeal. The appeal shall be heard and determined within 60 days from its filing. A majority vote of the governing body shall overrule the commission.

C. Widening, narrowing, extension, enlargement, vacation or change of use of streets or public areas shall likewise be submitted for approval, but paving, repair, reconstruction, improvement, drainage or similar work and normal service extensions of public utilities or public service corporations shall not require approval unless such work involves a change in location or extent of a street or public area.

D. Any public area, facility, park or use as set forth in subsection A which is identified within, but not the entire subject of, a submission under either § 15.2-2258 for subdivision or subdivision A 8 of § 15.2-2286 for development or both may be deemed a feature already shown on the adopted master plan, and, therefore, excepted from the requirement for submittal to and approval by the commission or the governing body, provided that the governing body has by ordinance or resolution defined standards governing the construction, establishment or authorization of such public area, facility, park or use or has approved it through acceptance of a proffer made pursuant to § 15.2-2303.

E. Approval and funding of a public telecommunications facility on or before July 1, 2012, by the Virginia Public Broadcasting Board pursuant to Article 12 (§ 2.2-2426 et seq.) of Chapter 24 of Title 2.2 or after July 1, 2012, by the Board of Education pursuant to § 22.1-20.1 shall be deemed to satisfy the requirements of this section and local zoning ordinances with respect to such facility with the exception of television and radio towers and structures not necessary to house electronic apparatus. The exemption provided for in this subsection shall not apply to facilities existing or approved by the Virginia Public Telecommunications Board prior to July 1, 1990. The Board of Education shall notify the governing body of the locality in advance of any meeting where approval of any such facility shall be acted upon.

F. On any application for a telecommunications facility, the commission's decision shall comply with the requirements of the Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996. Failure of the commission to act on any such application for a telecommunications facility under subsection A submitted on or after July 1, 1998, within 90 days of such submission shall be deemed approval of the application by the commission unless the governing body has authorized an extension of time for consideration or the applicant has agreed to an extension of time. The governing body may extend the time required for action by the local commission by no more than 60 additional days. If the commission has not acted on the application by the end of the extension, or by the end of such longer period as may be agreed to by the applicant, the application is deemed approved by the commission.

G. A proposed telecommunications tower or a facility constructed by an entity organized pursuant to Chapter 9.1 (§ 56-231.15 et seq.) of Title 56 shall be deemed to be substantially in accord with the comprehensive plan and commission approval shall not be required if the proposed telecommunications tower or facility is located in a zoning district that allows such telecommunications towers or facilities by right.

H. A solar facility subject to subsection A shall be deemed to be substantially in accord with the comprehensive plan if (i) such proposed solar facility is located in a zoning district that allows such solar facilities by right; (ii) such proposed solar facility is designed to serve the electricity or thermal needs of the property upon which such facility is located, or will be owned or operated by an eligible customer-generator or eligible agricultural customer-generator under § 56-594 or 56-594.01 or by a small agricultural generator under § 56-594.2; or (iii) the locality waives the requirement that solar facilities be reviewed for substantial accord with the comprehensive plan. All other solar facilities shall be reviewed for substantial accord with the comprehensive plan in accordance with this section. However, a locality may allow for a substantial accord review for such solar facilities to be advertised and approved concurrently in a public hearing process with a rezoning, special exception, or other approval process.

Code 1950, §§ 15-909, 15-923, 15-964.10; 1958, c. 389; 1960, c. 567; 1962, c. 407, § 15.1-456; 1964, c. 528; 1966, c. 596; 1968, c. 290; 1975, c. 641; 1976, c. 291; 1978, c. 584; 1982, c. 39; 1987, c. 312; 1989, c. 532; 1990, c. 633; 1997, cc. 587, 858; 1998, c. 683; 2007, c. 801; 2009, cc. 670, 690; 2012, cc. 803, 835; 2016, c. 613; 2018, cc. 175, 318; 2020, c. 665; 2022, c. 181. 12/8/202