

Town of Vienna, Virginia - Scope of Services

Reorganize and Update Subdivision and Zoning Ordinances

About the Project

The Town of Vienna is seeking a land use planning consulting firm or team to reorganize and update the Town's subdivision and zoning ordinances, Chapters 17 and 18 of the Town Code, respectfully. The consultant(s) must have knowledge of best practices in land use planning, urban design, and land use law, as well as experience drafting subdivision and zoning ordinances in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The Town's last significant zoning code changes occurred fifty years ago in 1969; a significant portion includes regulations that date back to the 1956 zoning ordinance. The implementation of the Church Street Vision C-1B Pedestrian Commercial Zone (1999) and Maple Avenue Commercial (MAC) Zone (2014) has provided developer incentives for revitalization in those areas of Town. However, much of the zoning code is still outdated and cumbersome. This results in uncertainty for citizens, elected officials, and the development community.

Over the last several years, the Town has experienced a high volume of single-family residential redevelopment. The Town Council has also approved several MAC rezonings of mixed-use developments. It should be noted that the MAC Zone is currently suspended due to concerns with the scale, massing, and preponderance of multi-family housing rather than commercial uses in these recently approved MAC projects.

Project Purpose and Goals

The Town of Vienna is an incorporated town located in the northeastern portion of Fairfax County. It encompasses 4.4 square miles and, according to the 2018 U.S. Census Bureau estimate, has a population of 16,556. Comparatively, Fairfax County is 391 square miles with a population of more than 1.1 million.

The Town desires to reorganize its subdivision and zoning ordinances so the regulations are logically organized and easy to understand through the use of plain language, charts, tables, and illustrations. In addition, the subdivision and zoning ordinances should be updated so they are in compliance with State statutes, recent Supreme Court decisions with regards to sign regulations, and consistent with the Town's Comprehensive Plan (adopted by Town Council on May 23, 2016).

The update should address areas where the Code is silent and zoning determinations have been made over the years by the Town's zoning administrator, or where regulations are currently lacking, e.g., parking requirements for all permitted uses. The update should provide for new

development in the commercial corridors that enhances the Town's neighborly charm and hometown character. Development regulations should also be aligned with contemporary subdivision and zoning best practices.

The Town's goals for the project are described below, with some examples provided for further clarification:

- 1) Reorganize the subdivision and zoning ordinances to ensure the regulations are logically organized and simply stated, with illustrations provided where appropriate. Specifically, the zoning ordinance should be organized into articles of similar items, e.g., general provisions, zone districts and dimensional standards, use regulations, development standards, administration and procedures, and definitions.
- 2) Update the subdivision ordinance to comply with State statutes, implement the objectives of the Town's Comprehensive Plan, and incorporate best practices.
- 3) Update the zoning ordinance to achieve the following:
 - Comply with State statutes and Supreme Court decisions;
 - Implement the objectives of the Town's Comprehensive Plan;
 - Review and potentially revise commercial zone districts, uses, and development standards based on best practices, e.g., provide lighting standards, parking standards and shared parking provisions for all permitted uses, and suggest potential new processes, such as a special exception, that can provide incentives for certain types of commercial and mixed-use development;
 - Review and potentially revise industrial zone districts, uses, and development standards based on best practices, e.g., provide lighting standards and parking standards for all permitted industrial uses, provide for modern industrial uses, such as data centers, and address compatibility with adjacent residential neighborhoods;
 - Review and potentially revise parks zone districts, uses, and development standards based on best practices, e.g., address area requirements to provide for pocket parks;
 - Review and potentially revise transitional zone district, uses, and development standards based on best practices, e.g., provide for new uses (assisted living);
 - Review and potentially revise multifamily zone district, uses, and development standards based on best practices, e.g., provide for new uses (cottage/village housing);
 - Review and potentially revise townhouse zone district, uses, and development standards based on best practices, e.g., clarify common open space; and

- Review and potentially revise single family detached residential zone districts, uses, and development standards based on best practices, e.g., address setback standards to provide for exterior home improvements (constructing a front porch), and codify zoning provisions for family day homes.

Process and Community Engagement

Staff from the Department of Planning and Zoning will manage the project with the Planning Commission serving as the primary advisory board, working closely with the Town Council. It is our desire to have 100% community awareness, with ample opportunities for community engagement.

We believe this can be achieved by providing information and seeking feedback at community and stakeholder meetings and open houses, and through social media, online surveys, a dedicated webpage, and information booths at community events, along with articles in the Town's monthly newsletter, the *Vienna Voice*. This approach is about community co-creation rather than community buy-in. The goal is to work with the community to reorganize and update the subdivision and zoning ordinances.

The project is expected to take approximately 18 months to two years to complete. It is divided into six tasks, as follows:

Task 1: Project Initiation and Orientation

This task includes background analysis of current policies and regulations, and outreach to elected officials, members of planning and zoning's boards and commissions, staff, and stakeholders, including residents, business owners, property owners, builders, and developers to receive input on the strengths and weaknesses of the current regulations. Input may be solicited through a variety of ways, i.e., interviews, surveys, meetings, open houses, etc.

Task 2: Code Assessment

In this task, the information and input obtained in Task 1 is synthesized into a code assessment that identifies the major goals for the project, along with recommendations on how to address and integrate these goals in the updated regulations. The code assessment concludes with a detailed outline of how the updated regulations would be structured if the recommendations in the assessment are implemented.

Task 3: Draft Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances

Task 3 includes the draft of the updated regulations. Because the subdivision and zoning ordinances are lengthy documents, drafting should be divided into several cohesive installments, or modules. The updates will be consistent with recommendations in the code assessment and follow the detailed outline. Meetings with elected officials and stakeholders

will be held on the draft to receive public input. In addition to regular public meetings, creative efforts to solicit input from the community should be sought. If any new zoning districts are proposed or any existing districts are renamed and/or consolidated, this task would also include preparing a revised zoning map.

Task 4: Test Draft Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances

Next, the updated subdivision and zoning ordinances will be tested to verify whether they are achieving the goals for the project. The testing stage includes a side-by-side comparison of six examples of recently-approved developments with comparable hypothetical development in accordance with the draft subdivision and zoning ordinances.

Task 5: Prepare Public Hearing Draft of Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances and Zoning Map

After the results from testing in Task 4 and input on the draft subdivision and zoning ordinances in Task 3, updates will be made and a public hearing draft of the subdivision and zoning ordinances will be prepared. These materials will be reviewed during the public hearing process. The public hearing draft of the subdivision and zoning ordinances and zoning map is the comprehensive draft that will be considered for adoption.

Task 6: Procedures Manual and Application Forms

After completing the public hearing draft in Task 5, a procedures manual to assist in the day-to-day implementation of the new subdivision and zoning ordinances will be prepared. The manual will serve as a “users’ guide” supplement to the new subdivision and zoning ordinances and will include details about application review procedures and schedules, and application submittal requirements. It will also include new application forms that are consistent with the requirements of the revised ordinances.

Background Materials

- Subdivision and Zoning Ordinances (Town Code, Chapters 17 and 18)
- 2015 Comprehensive Plan (Adopted by Town Council on May 23, 2016)