

SITE PLAN ORDINANCE AMENDMENT NO.26-0118

*City Code
Chapter 35.1*

April 2026

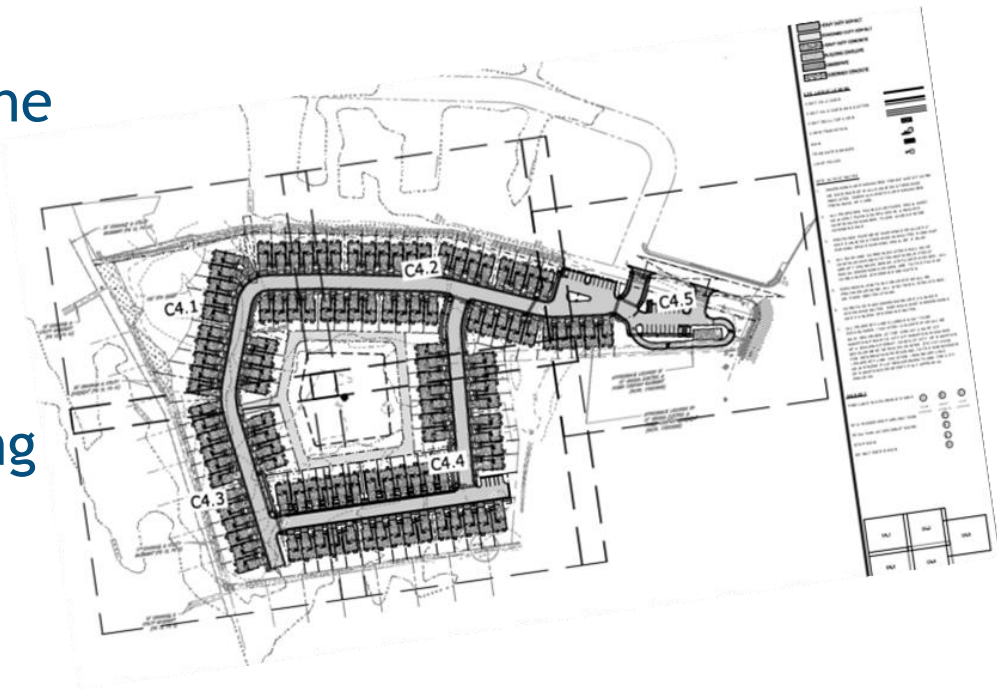


WHAT IS A SITE PLAN?



A site plan is a detailed drawing that shows how a piece of land will be developed. It illustrates both the existing conditions on the site and all proposed improvements. Site plans are required in most construction and development projects to ensure the design is safe, functional, and compliant with local regulations.

Site plan typically includes: property boundaries, building locations, driveways, sidewalks, parking areas, access points, utilities, set back , landscaping and more.



WHY SITE PLANS MATTER?



- Ensures the project meets zoning and engineering requirements
- Helps prevent flooding, traffic issues, and safety hazards
- Coordinates all disciplines (engineering, planning, utilities)
- Provides a shared blueprint for reviewers, contractors, and developers
- Supports transparent, consistent decision-making in the planning and permitting process

WHY NOW?



- Keep our code consistent with recent updates to State regulations (Code of Virginia § 15.2-2259 and §15.2-2260) .
- Support economic development by making the development process more efficient and user-friendly.
- Reduce review times by creating clearer submittal requirements and minimizing back-and-forth between applicants and staff.
- Provide easier access to information through better organization and clearer formatting of code requirements.
- Several important terms were not defined in the current code, so we are adding formal definitions to ensure consistency and reduce confusion moving forward.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS



Expanded Definitions and Major Revisions

- **Sec 35.1-2** Application and scope of chapter; definitions
- **Sec 35.1-2.2** Exemptions From Site Plan Approval
- **Sec. 35.1-7** Exceptions
- **Sec. 35.1-23** Submission of copies and application for approval, to be accompanied by review fee
- **Sec. 35.1-25** Review of site plan—Approval or disapproval generally

Housekeeping updates & Technical corrections

- **Sec 35.1-3** Administration and enforcement of chapter
- **Sec. 35.1-4** Compliance with chapter; stop work orders; penalty for violation
- **Sec. 35.1-8** Appeals
- **Sec. 35.1-10** Compliance with other ordinances.
- **Sec. 35.1-22** Contents of a site plan
- **Sec. 35.1-23.1** Coordination with other agencies and private utilities
- **Sec. 35.1-24** Distribution of copies
- **Sec. 35.1-28** Distribution of copies after approval
- **Sec. 35.1-31** Public records
- **Sec. 35.1-43** Utilities
- **Sec. 35.1-45** Sewage disposal system
- **Sec. 35.1-49** Green areas and landscaping requirements
- **Sec. 35.1-27** Effect of approval

SEC 35.1-2 APPLICATION AND SCOPE OF CHAPTER; DEFINITIONS



- This amendment clarifies and formalizes the definition of “Major & Minor Site Plans” by specifying the types of development activities that require full site plan review. It outlines clear thresholds and criteria, such as floodplain determinations, traffic impact studies, wastewater capacity improvements, and substantial grading changes, to ensure consistent application of review requirements.
- The update improves clarity, removes ambiguity, and ensures applicants understand when a major site plan submission is required.

SEC. 35.1-2.2.(B) &(C) EXEMPTIONS FROM SITE PLAN APPROVAL



- **Proposed Amendment - Clarification of Required Green Area:** This amendment adds the word “required” to clarify that only the minimum green area mandated by code must be provided. The intent is to eliminate confusion, prevent over-interpretation of standards, and ensure applicants are not asked to provide or pay for improvements beyond what is required by ordinance.
- **Proposed Amendment - Building Addition Threshold:** This amendment increases the allowable size of building additions that can proceed without triggering additional requirements. The intent is to provide greater flexibility to property owners, since smaller additions typically do not require new utility connections or land disturbance permits, thereby reducing regulatory burden and associated costs.

SEC. 35.1-7 EXCEPTIONS



This amendment clarifies the exception application process by clearly identifying responsibilities, outlining who is responsible for each step, and specifying the required submission elements. The goal is to improve transparency, accountability, and efficiency in the review process.

SEC. 35.1-23 & 23(1) SUBMISSION OF COPIES AND APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL



- Sec. 35.1-23: This amendment formalizes the transition from hard copy submissions to digital applications and communications, reflecting current practice over the past several years. Replacing paper copies with digital submittals will reduce costs for applicants, streamline document handling, improve efficiency, and accelerate the overall review process.
- Sec. 35.1-23(1): This amendment clarifies responsibilities related to communication and coordination with public utility companies. It outlines who is responsible for initiating contact, providing documentation, and confirming approvals, while establishing a clearer process flow to improve efficiency and reduce delays.

SEC. 35.1-25 REVIEW OF SITE PLAN - APPROVAL OR DISAPPROVAL GENERALLY



- This amendment aligns the review timeline with updated **State code** requirements by shortening the review period. For example, the review timeframe is reduced from 60 days to 40 days per submittal. This change ensures compliance with State regulations while accelerating the approval process and reducing overall project timelines for applicants.



**Staff respectfully requests the
Planning Commission's
recommendation for
amendment no.26-0118 and
welcomes any questions or
feedback**