

POWHATAN COUNTY

2024 Planning Activities Report to the Planning Commission March 4, 2025

Planning Commission

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Introduction

The 2024 Planning Activity Report provides a high-level overview of actions taken by the Powhatan County Department of Community Development, the Planning Commission, and the Board of Supervisors that relate to growth and development. This report is intended to satisfy requirements set forth in § 15.2-2221 of the Code of Virginia, which states that the Planning Commission must compile an annual report concerning the status of planning within Powhatan County.

Development and County Government

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission is an appointed body charged with promoting the orderly development of the community. Every locality in Virginia is required to have its own Planning Commission [Code of Virginia § 15.2-2210]. Per state law, the Planning Commission is responsible for a variety of tasks:

- Preparing the local comprehensive plan;
- Preparing and reviewing amendments to the zoning and subdivision ordinances;
- Reviewing proposed changes to the zoning map; and
- Reviewing the local Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

The Planning Commission is not a legislative body, but an advisory committee. It makes recommendations to the Board of Supervisors on legislative matters, such as the adoption and amendment of the comprehensive plan, zoning ordinance, and subdivision ordinance.

The Planning Commission consists of five (5) voting members.

Department of Community Development

Staff from the Department of Community Development provide technical support to the Planning Commission. The department's duties are described below.

Current Planning (Development Administration)

Staff members are responsible for the administration and enforcement of the zoning and subdivision ordinances. Tasks associated with the administration of these ordinances include the processing of subdivision proposals, site plans, rezoning applications, conditional use permit (CUP) applications, and variances. Staff members also respond to general inquiries and other requests. The department serves as the primary staff contact for the Planning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals and provides support to the Board of Supervisors.

Long-Range Planning (Project/Policy Development and Management)

Planning recommendations are routinely provided to the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors on a wide array of issues. Strategic and long-term planning begins with the preparation and implementation of the comprehensive plan; associated comprehensive plan or zoning text amendments; review of the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) by the Planning Commission; and other local projects. These planning documents provide the foundation for many of the land use and budgetary decisions implemented by Powhatan County.

Staff members also work with regional and state agencies to address transportation issues and other matters of regional and/or statewide significance, including the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and other regional committees associated with PlanRVA. Staff members also coordinate with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and PlanRVA to prepare applications seeking state and federal funding for local transportation improvements.

Code Compliance

Code compliance helps ensure that Powhatan County's zoning regulations are enforced consistently and equitably. A variety of code issues related to land use are reported to the department, including possible zoning violations and the storage of inoperable vehicles. Possible violations are investigated as complaints from the public are received.

Building Inspections

The Building Official and other staff members help ensure that structures are built and modified in a safe manner. The department enforces the Uniform Statewide Building Code for new structures, additions, and alterations.

Environmental

Staff members work with the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to ensure that developing sites are in conformance with Chapter 42: Article III of the County Code (Erosion and Sediment Control) and other local and state regulations.

Economic Development

Staff members assist local businesses with growth and development. The department, focusing on business retention and expansion, site selection, marketing, business networking, and tourism.

Rezoning

Rezoning is a request to change the zoning of a particular property. Requested rezonings (zoning map amendments) must be reviewed by the Planning Commission and approved by the Board of Supervisors. While these requests generally involve changing the property's zoning classification from one district to another, they may also involve modifications to conditions (proffers) imposed upon a property as part of a previous rezoning case.

In 2024, five (5) rezoning applications were submitted for review. All rezoning requests were initiated by private entities (not Powhatan County).

Case No.	Location	Request	Case Status
24-02-REZ	1318 Page Road	A-10 to I-1 119.9 acres	Approved
24-05-REZ	Anderson Hwy (41-12B)	A-10 to CC 6.9 acres	Approved
24-06-REZ	3070 Anderson Hwy	A-10 to CC 7 acres	Approved
24-08-REZ	3225 Lees Landing Road	A-10 to CR 9.49 acres	Approved
24-16-REZ	2206 Batterson Road	A-10 to VCPD 26.8 acres	Denied

The number of rezoning applications submitted in 2024 was lower than the number submitted in previous years.

Year	Number of Rezoning Applications Submitted
2024	5
2023	20
2022	7
2021	12

Conditional Use Permits

Per the zoning ordinance, certain uses may be permitted within select zoning districts with approval of a conditional use permit (CUP). Uses that require a CUP may be appropriate in certain locations, but not throughout the entire zoning district. The Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors review CUP applications to ensure that the proposed use:

- Does not change the character and established pattern of development in the surrounding area;
- Is compatible with uses permitted by-right within the zoning district; and
- Does not adversely affect the use or value of neighboring properties.

The Board of Supervisors may require that applicants adhere to certain conditions. If the approved conditions are not met, the CUP may be revoked.

In 2024, three (3) CUP applications were submitted for review.

Case No.	Location	Use	Case Status
24-03-CUP	1318 Page Road	Allow building height of 75 feet.	Approved
24-09-CUP	3441 Anderson Hwy	Towing and Recovery	Approved
24-10-CUP	3441 Anderson Hwy	Contractor's Storage Yard	Approved

The number of CUP applications submitted in 2024 was about the same as the number submitted in previous years.

Year	Number of CUP Applications Submitted
2024	3
2023	2
2022	3
2021	3

Zoning Text Amendments

The zoning ordinance establishes regulations regarding the use of land. Powhatan County’s zoning ordinance currently includes twenty (20) different districts and identifies uses permitted within each district. It also establishes design standards for new development.

Powhatan County’s zoning ordinance was first adopted in July 1965. Since that time, its text has been amended to reflect the changing needs of the community. Most zoning text amendments have been initiated by the Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors.

In 2024, two (2) zoning text amendments were approved.

Amendment Summary	Status
Adds Accessory Dwellings to RU zone	Approved
Amends Floodplain Overlay District	Approved

The number of ordinance amendments approved in 2024 was lower than the number approved in the two previous years.

Year	Number of Ordinance Amendments Initiated
2024	2
2023	4
2022	7
2021	2

Comprehensive Plan

The comprehensive plan establishes a vision of what Powhatan County should look like in 20 to 30 years. The plan addresses a variety of topics, including land use, housing, economic development, and natural resources. It identifies objectives and strategies that can be implemented to realize the community’s vision.

Per state law, every locality in Virginia must adopt a comprehensive plan [§ 15.2-2223]. The Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors consider the plan’s recommendations when evaluating different policies and proposals, including rezoning requests, conditional use permits, and the Capital Improvement Program.

Current (2021) Comprehensive Plan

On October 25, 2021, the Board of Supervisors voted to approve the 2021 Long-Range Comprehensive Plan Update (Ordinance O-2021-27).

Updating the 2021 Comprehensive Plan

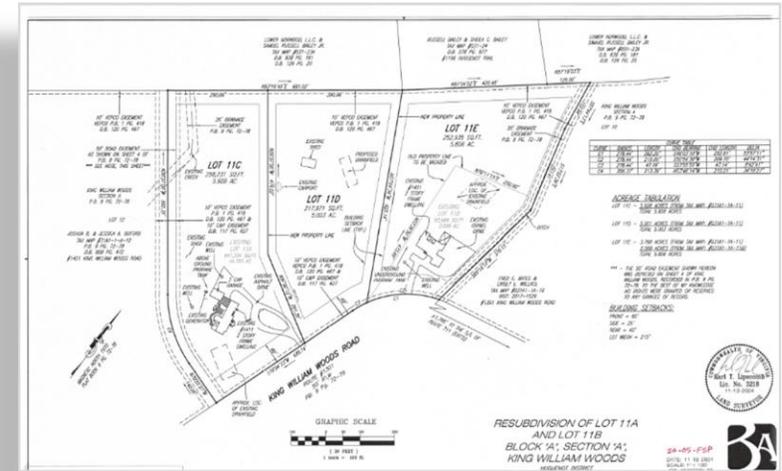
On November 18, 2024, the Board of Supervisors appointed a Comprehensive Plan Update Citizens Working Group (CWG), which is an ad hoc citizen group chartered by the Board in its efforts to update the County’s current comprehensive plan. The CWG is to be guided by the 2024-2029 Strategic Plan while concentrating two primary strategic areas identified in the Plan: Economic Growth & Business Development and Housing & Residential Growth. The CWG is expected to forward their recommendation to the Board of Supervisors in May of 2025.

Subdivisions

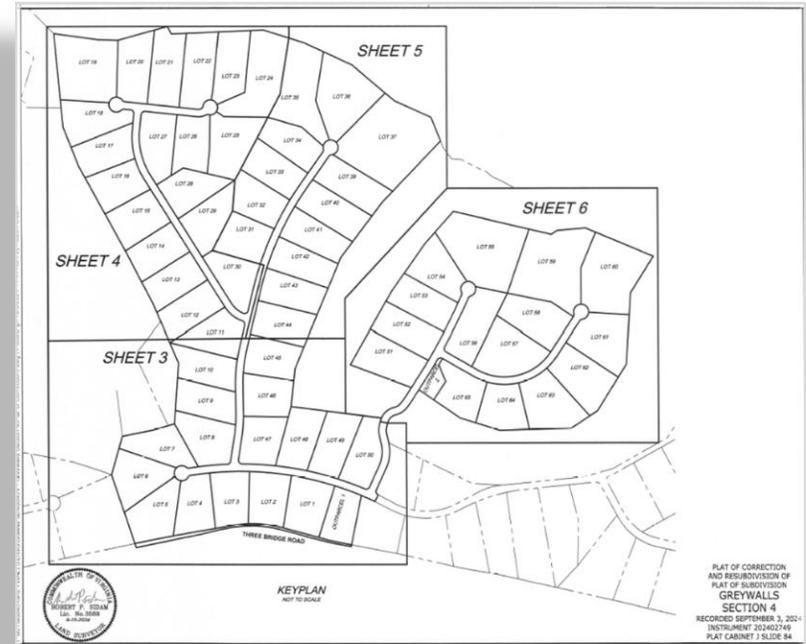
Prior to recordation, a final plat must be approved for all major subdivisions.

In 2024, three (3) residential subdivisions were approved with 93 lots.

Case No.	Location	Zoning	Acreage	Number of Lots
23-04-FSP	Old Sawmill Drive	A-10	186	16
24-01-FSP	Greywalls Drive	R-2	171	65
24-03-FSP	Walnut Tree Blvd	RR-5	69	12



Year	Number of Final Subdivision Plat Applications Approved
2024	3
2023	7
2022	5
2021	4



Building Permits

Generally, any project that involves building a new structure, altering an existing structure, or demolishing a structure will require a building permit. Powhatan County issues building permits for all construction within its boundaries.

Below is a summary of building permits issued by the Department of Community Development over the last three calendar years:

Building Permit Type	Permits Issued		
	2022	2023	2024
New Commercial Buildings	15	16	9
New Single-Family Dwellings	220	143	115
Existing Single-Family Buildings (Additions/Alterations)	311	317	281
Total	546	476	405

Building Permit Type	Total Building Value		
	2022	2023	2024
New Commercial Buildings	\$4,933,000	\$10,509,815	\$2,734,824
New Single-Family Dwellings	\$24,447,662	\$36,877,074	\$30,656,620
Existing Single-Family Buildings (additions/alterations)	\$3,64,373	\$10,227,098	\$7,656,882
Total	\$33,045,035	\$57,613,987	\$41,048,326



Residential Certificates of Occupancy

A Certificate of Occupancy (CO) states a building's legal use and/or type of permitted occupancy. They are generally issued after the completion of final building inspections. In 2024, 122 COs were issued for single-family dwellings in Powhatan County.



Certificates of Occupancy by Subdivision* CY22 - 24	
APPOMATTOX TRACE	8
ASTON	6
BRANCHWAY SPRINGS	16
ERIN HILL	17
GREYWALLS	16
HUNTINGTON - F	5
LAKE SHAWNEE	5
MAPLE GROVE	30
MILL QUARTER	9
NORWOOD CREEK	13
OAK LEAF	5
TILLMANS FARM	49
WALNUT CREEK	9
WATKINS MILL	6
WESTLAKE @ MILL MOUNT	10

* Only subdivisions with more than three COs in 2022-2024 included in chart.

Year	Number of Residential COs Issued
2024	122
2023	169
2022	185

Code Compliance

The zoning ordinance describes which uses are permitted in each of the zoning districts and how these uses may be conducted. These regulations help promote the health, safety, and general welfare of residents by designating the types of buildings, businesses, and activities acceptable within specific zoning districts. The Zoning Administrator helps ensure that regulations set forth in the zoning ordinance are enforced consistently and equitably. Residents, property owners, and other stakeholders regularly submit complaints regarding zoning violations, inoperable vehicles, trash/junk, and other nuisances. Complainant information is kept confidential, but all complaints received are investigated.

In 2024, the Department of Community Development investigated 26 complaints compared to 23 in 2023.

Other Planning-Related Activities

The following applications were reviewed throughout 2024.

Application Type	Number Reviewed 2024
Development Design Pattern Books	4
Temporary Business Permits	4
Temporary Event Permits	17
Sign Permits	52
Business Licenses	196
Private Roads	7
Non-Subdivision Plats (resurveys, lot line adjustments, family divisions, minor divisions, easement plats, etc.)	56



Boards/Committees

Local Boards/Committees

Staff members manage and coordinate several planning-related boards and committees. Members of these boards and committees are appointed or recommended by the Board of Supervisors.

In addition, staff members provide technical support to the Board of Supervisors, the Board of Zoning Appeals, and the Agricultural and Forestal District Committee.

Board/Committee	Overview	No. of Meetings (2024)
Planning Commission	<p>The Planning Commission is an appointed body charged with promoting the orderly development of the community. Every locality in Virginia is required to have its own Planning Commission [Code of Virginia § 15.2-2210]. The Planning Commission is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing the local comprehensive plan; • Preparing and reviewing amendments to the zoning and subdivision ordinances; • Reviewing proposed changes to the zoning map; and • Reviewing the local Capital Improvement Program (CIP). <p>The Planning Commission is not a legislative body, but an advisory committee. It makes recommendations to the Board of Supervisors on legislative matters, such as the adoption and amendment of the comprehensive plan, zoning ordinance, and subdivision ordinance. The Planning Commission consists of five (5) voting members.</p>	12
Board of Zoning Appeals	<p>The Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) consists of five (5) voting members appointed by the Circuit Court judge (with recommendations made by the Board of Supervisors). Per the Code of Virginia and County Code, the BZA is charged with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hearing and deciding appeals from any order, requirement, decision, or determination made by an administrative officer in administering or enforcing the zoning ordinance; • Authorizing variances from zoning ordinance requirements; and • Hearing and deciding applications for interpretation of the zoning map where there is any uncertainty as to the location of a district boundary. 	2
Agricultural and Forestal District Advisory Committee	<p>The Agricultural and Forestal District Advisory Committee (AFDAC) provides advice regarding the local Agricultural and Forestal District (AFD) program, which is intended to preserve important agricultural lands and forests. The AFDAC consists of up to ten (10) members, with the composition of the committee's membership dictated by the Code of Virginia.</p>	12

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