

Policy Briefing Summary

City Council



Regarding:	Public Hearing and Ordinance for City Code Chapter 34 (Development Code) Zoning Text Amendments Tiers 1 and 2
Staff Contact(s):	Matthew Alfele, City Planner
Presenter:	Matthew Alfele, City Planner
Date of Proposed Action:	February 17, 2026

Issue

On December 18, 2023, the City of Charlottesville, Virginia ("City"), adopted a new Development Code ("DC") intended to implement a more form-based Zoning Ordinance and increase density throughout the City in alignment with the City's 2021 Comprehensive Plan. As with any evolving regulatory framework, City Staff has identified both minor and significant issues within the DC that require amendments to ensure it continues to support the City's stated goals effectively.

Over the past year, City Staff, in collaboration with the Planning Commission ("PC"), worked to identify and correct many issues through a series of proposed Zoning Text Amendments ("ZTAs"). This effort represents the first in what will be an annual review process to maintain the DC's relevance and effectiveness as a tool for shaping the built environment in accordance with community objectives.

Background / Rule

In accordance with state regulations, City Staff requests that City Council hold a Public Hearing to consider adoption of the DC ZTAs reviewed by City Staff and the PC. These ZTAs have been organized into three (3) Tiers based on their scope and impact.

Tier 1 consists of sixty-three (63) proposed ZTAs that address scrivener errors, incorporate changes required by recent state legislation, and clarify or supplement existing provisions. Legislative changes include updates mandated by HB2660 and SB974. HB2660 shortens approval timeframes for subdivision plats and site plans. SB974 removes approval authority for administrative plat and plan reviews from planning commissions and governing bodies, assigning it to a designated agent, and expedites state agency review timelines. In addition to these legislative updates, Tier 1 includes minor clarifications requiring minimal PC feedback.

Tier 2 includes twenty-three (23) ZTAs that address oversights, clarify existing provisions, and make necessary modifications. These were presented to the PC during its November 12, 2025, Work Session and then again for a recommendation at the January 13, 2026, Public Hearing. At these meetings, detailed analyses explaining City Staff's rationale for each change were presented.

Tier 3 identifies policy issues requiring comprehensive analysis and robust community engagement. While these items are not part of the current proposal tonight, they have been captured within City Staff's "Working Document." To view the Working Document, please see the Staff Report and related materials from the January 13, 2026, Public Hearing.

For a detailed review of each ZTA and a comprehensive analysis, please refer to the Staff Report prepared for the January 13, 2026, PC Public Hearing. ([Link](#))

Analysis

The PC held a Public Hearing on January 13, 2026, during which one (1) member of the public spoke in favor of the proposed ZTAs. Following discussion, the PC voted unanimously to recommend approval. In addition, the PC raised several considerations for future policy review, including reevaluating build-to zones versus minimum setbacks, redefining active depth requirements, and exploring exemptions for existing structures, particularly within Architectural Design Control Districts. These concerns reflect a broader interest in reducing regulatory burdens on development projects to support financial feasibility and timely implementation. For further details on the meeting, please refer to the recorded Public Hearing meeting. ([Link](#))

Financial Impact

There is no anticipated financial impact associated with these ZTAs.

Recommendation

City Staff recommends that City Council adopt the attached Ordinance amending the City DC (Chapter 34) as presented.

Recommended Motion (if Applicable)

“I move to adopt the attached Ordinance amending the City DC (Chapter 34) as presented.”

Attachments

1. Ordinance
2. CC_Code_Amendments_Public_Hearing_2_17_26_email