

CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE

Department of Neighborhood Development Services

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TO: Charlottesville Planning Commission
FROM: Matthew Alfele, Development Planning Manager
DATE: June 23, 2026
SUBJECT: Development Code Listening Session with local Builders and Developers

Staff continues to advance this year's Development Code Clean-up effort, an annual practice intended to correct technical errors, improve clarity, provide refinements, and ensure that the Development Code remains a reliable tool for both applicants and reviewers. This work is focused squarely on small, technical refinements that help streamline Development Review, reinforce the Code's adopted intent, and support a more predictable and accessible review process.

As you will recall, the 2025 Clean-up cycle resulted in substantial progress: the Planning Commission recommended, and City Council ultimately adopted 83 amendments to the Development Code in February 2026. These amendments took effect at the end of March 2026 in parallel with updates to development review procedures. Together, these changes strengthened consistency between the Code and review processes and enhanced the overall clarity of the regulatory framework. Throughout that cycle, however, community members—as well as some Commissioners and Councilors—often focused on large policy questions that were beyond the scope of the Clean-up effort. This created confusion about the intent of the project and, in some cases, led to expectations that broader directional changes would be considered.

To support clearer communication and a more focused process in 2026, staff has moved away from the tiered system used last year. Instead, all items under consideration this cycle are presented simply as Clean-up recommendations. Larger policy issues that arise through staff's daily interaction with applicants, builders, and community members will continue to be documented and tracked; however, they will not be advanced as part of this annual Clean-up effort. As always, major policy updates fall under the purview of the Long Range Planning division and the broader workplan established by the NDS Director. In addition, staff is working to better communicate this year's effort by providing a dedicated space on the Department's website along with other outreach efforts including a Development Code Initiative Connect Charlottesville page.

The Planning Commission expressed a strong desire to hear directly from local builders and developers as part of this year's effort, particularly regarding how the Code is functioning in practice and where small adjustments may be warranted. Staff shares this interest and recognizes that builders, developers, and design professionals bring invaluable on-the-ground experience that can

help identify areas where the Code may benefit from improved clarity, consistency, or usability. Staff also hopes to understand what aspects of the Code are working well so that those strengths can be preserved.

This evening's Work Session is structured to facilitate that discussion. Staff will begin with a brief recap of the 2025 effort and an overview of the 2026 Clean-up process and its defined scope. An open comment period will follow, during which builders and developers may share their experiences using the Code and highlight areas where small, technical corrections may improve the efficiency or predictability of Development Review. Speakers are encouraged, in particular, to describe their role in the development process and how they interact with the Development Code; to share specific examples of unclear or inconsistent provisions that could be improved through Clean-up edits; and to identify elements of the Code that are functioning well and should remain unchanged.

Following public comments, the Planning Commission will have time to discuss the feedback received and help staff identify themes appropriate for this year's Clean-up cycle. As with prior cycles, staff will incorporate relevant technical input into draft Clean-up language to be presented at future Work Sessions. Broader issues that fall outside the scope of Clean-up will be documented for continued tracking and possible consideration by Long Range Planning as part of future policy work. As with last year's effort, the goal is to have this cycle close with adoption by City Council in early 2027 and implementation of the changes by the end of March 2027.

Staff has prepared three questions Planning Commission may use to facilitate feedback during the listening session:

- Please begin by sharing your role in the development process and how you interact with the Development Code in your work.
- What parts of the Code create confusion or slowdowns, and what small, technical adjustments could improve clarity or predictability?
- What elements of the Code are currently working well and should remain unchanged during this Clean-up cycle?

Participation Options: Interested parties unable to attend in person may participate virtually via the provided link.

[Zoom Registration](#)

Written comments are also welcome and can be submitted to:

PlanningCommission@charlottesville.gov

Attachments and Links:

- [City's Development Review Webpage and Current Development Code](#)
- [Development Code Initiative Connect Charlottesville Page](#)
- Code Amendment Working Document Updated June 12, 2026
- Executive Summary of Code Amendment Issues as of June 12, 2026