



May 13, 2026 Planning Commission Meeting

Title

Consider initiating (1) Zoning Ordinance amendments related to the Zoning Ordinance Update Project and (2) Subdivision Ordinance amendments to comply with the Code of Virginia – Thanh Dang, Community Development

Summary

Staff request Planning Commission initiate consideration for Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance amendments related to:

	Description
Zoning Ordinance Update Project	<p>The existing Zoning Ordinance (ZO) was last thoroughly evaluated and comprehensively re-written in 1997. In the ensuing time, many changes, both major and minor, have been made to the text of the ordinance, including the addition of districts and overlays. This has resulted in outdated requirements, internal inconsistencies, and an ordinance that can be difficult for community members to comprehend. Additionally, new ways of thinking about planning and zoning combined with new techniques and principles for implementing adopted plans offer ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of City planning and zoning.</p> <p>Work on the Zoning Ordinance Update Project began in July 2020 with the support of Planning Commission and City Council. However, Planning Commission has not previously taken formal action to initiate consideration of amendments associated with the project. This agenda item is intended to provide that formal initiation.</p> <p>A presentation on the Zoning Ordinance Update Project will be provided under the prior agenda item during this (May 13, 2026 Planning Commission) meeting.</p>
Subdivision Ordinance	<p>Last year, the Virginia General Assembly adopted amendments to Article 6, Land Subdivision and Development, which became effective on July 1, 2025. As a result, the Subdivision Ordinance (SO) must be updated to ensure compliance with these changes to state law. Know that although the City’s SO has not been updated, staff has been adhering to state law and following the updates to the Code of Virginia.</p>

	In addition to the required updates, staff will take this opportunity to make several minor revisions throughout the ordinance. These changes generally include formatting, reorganization of sections, updates to and removal of select definitions, and revisions to improve clarity.
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If Planning Commission agrees to direct staff to initiate consideration of the zoning and subdivision ordinance amendments, then the following motion is recommended:

I move that the Planning Commission initiate consideration of zoning and subdivision ordinance amendments to (1) the City of Harrisonburg Zoning Ordinance related to the Zoning Ordinance Update Project and (2) the City of Harrisonburg Subdivision Ordinance to comply with the Code of Virginia and to include minor revisions.

The Planning Commission finds that such amendments are required by the public necessity, convenience, general welfare, good zoning practice, and orderly subdivision of land and its development, and hereby directs staff to prepare appropriate draft ordinances for public hearings and recommendations in accordance with § 15.2-2286 and §15.2-2253 of the Code of Virginia.

Recommendation

Option 1. Motion to direct staff to prepare draft ordinances for public hearing and recommendation related to all requests.

Options

1. Motion to direct staff to prepare draft ordinances for public hearing and recommendation related to all requests.
2. Motion to direct staff to not proceed with preparing draft ordinance amendments.
3. Motion to direct staff to proceed with preparing draft ordinances for some items, but not all.

Note that if no motion is made, then staff cannot initiate consideration of the ZO amendments.

Attachments

- None.