



TOWN OF OCCOQUAN

Circa 1734 | Chartered 1804 | Incorporated 1874

314 Mill Street
PO BOX 195
Occoquan, VA 22125
(703) 491-1918
occoquanva.gov
info@occoquanva.gov

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

April 23, 2024 | 6:30 PM

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Citizens' Time** - Members of the public may, for three minutes, present for the purpose of directing attention to or requesting action on matters not included on the prepared agenda. These matters shall be referred to the appropriate town official(s) for investigation and report. Citizens may address issues as they come up on the agenda if advance notice is given during 'Citizens' Time
3. **Approval of Minutes**
 - a. March 26, 2024 Meeting Minutes
4. **Reports**
 - a. Town Council Report
 - b. Deputy Town Manager Report
 - c. Architectural Review Board Report
5. **Discussion Items**
 - a. Zoning Administrator Presentation on Potential Zoning Text and Comprehensive Plan Amendments Relating to Accessory Dwelling Units and Density
 - b. Strategic Planning Update
 - c. Riverwalk Planning Update
 - d. Planning Commission Priorities Update
 - i. Riverside Station (Formerly North Woodbridge Town Center)
 - ii. Alpine X
 - iii. Belmont Bay Expansion Project
6. **Adjournment**

Eliot Perkins
Chair, Planning Commission



TOWN OF OCCOQUAN PLANNING COMMISSION

Agenda Communication

3. Approval of Minutes	Meeting Date: April 23, 2024
3A: March 26, 2024 Meeting Minutes	

Attachments: a. March 26, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Submitted by: Matt Whitmoyer
Deputy Town Manager

Explanation and Summary:

This is a request to approve the meeting minutes from March 26, 2024 for the Planning Commission Meeting.

Proposed/Suggested Motion:

"I move to approve the meeting minutes from March 26, 2024 as presented."

OR

Other action the Planning Commission deems appropriate.



**TOWN OF OCCOQUAN
PLANNING COMMISSION**
Town Hall - 314 Mill Street, Occoquan, VA 22125

MEETING DATE: 2024-03-26

MEETING TIME: 6:30 PM

Present: Chairperson Eliot Perkins, Commissioners, Darryl Hawkins, Ann Kisling, Ralph Newell, Ryan Somma, Don Wood

Absent: Robert Love

Town Staff: Matt Whitmoyer, Deputy Town Manager; Jeff Harvey (remote), Assistant Zoning Administrator

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:01pm

2. Citizen Comments

None

3. Approval of Minutes

a. February 27, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Kisling motioned to approve the minutes with amended recommendations from Mr. Whitmoyer. Commissioner Newell seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

4. Zoning Discussion

a. Zoning Administrator Report on Potential Zoning Text and Comprehensive Plan Amendments Relating to Density

Mr. Harvey gave an overview of the potential changes to density and recommendations. Chairperson Perkins said the 20% slope restriction cannot be reconsidered due to the Town's legal history. Mr. Harvey said to consider changing the Comprehensive Plan, and to consider higher density that does not detract from the historic district. Chairperson Perkins asked about minimum lot sizes and where the Town is now. Mr. Harvey said the current minimum lot size is 10k feet. Commissioner Somma asked if allowing flag lots would make it more permissible for a resident who has two single-family detached homes to split their lot. Mr. Harvey said this is likely the case.

Mr. Harvey went over the potential zoning for 119 Poplar Lane recommendations. Chairperson Perkins asked if zoning needs to change for a parking lot. Mr. Harvey said no change is needed for Town parking, but private parking is not allowed. Commissioner Wood said part of the Planning Commission's recommendations is to make use of private parking for visitors, and asked if the lot would need to be zoned B-1 to take advantage of this. Chairperson Perkins asked if the parking lot being charged or free would have impact, Mr. Harvey said a parking lot would not be considered single use.

Mr. Harvey gave an overview of accessory dwellings. He said the Town needs to address whether accessory buildings are allowed in B-1 zone in the code. Such buildings can be problematic for parking and size to the main building. He gave an overview of mitigation steps. Commissioner Somma asked that furnished rooms over garages be included. Commissioner Wood asked how to get around the temptation of accessory dwellings becoming long term apartments. Mr. Harvey said to make the accessory dwelling incidental to the main dwelling. There are enforcement problems of whether the owner is renting the dwelling to a renter, family member, or long-term guest.

Commissioner Kisling moved to approve the attached draft report as presented and to refer it to the Town Council for their review and feedback. Commissioner Newell seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

5. Action Items

a. Request to Approve and Refer Strategic Planning Recommendations to Town Council

Chairperson Perkins gave an overview of the format for each section. He said that once the Planning Commission has completed the report, he will meet with the Mayor to go over the document.

On the section about Trail Towns, Chairperson Perkins asked about the gut check survey. Commissioner Somma said the gut check is to assess Town vision. Chairperson Perkins said the connection between Tanyard Hill Park and the Occoquan Greenway will be dependent on Prince William County taking over Tanyard Hill Park. If they don't, then it becomes very difficult. Chairperson Perkins asked about the high cost of the Trail Town gateway signage. Commissioner Somma said this would be a large sign patterned after the signage at Harper's Ferry. Commissioner Newell asked about Tanyard Hill property parking. Mr. Whitmoyer said the property owner is indifferent to people using the parking available there.

On the Parking and Transportation section, Chairperson Perkins said the OmniRide bus stop is worthwhile, but is also an unknown. He asked about the possibility of finding grants for the Town seeking Bicycle Friendly status. Concerning Town bike rack improvements, the near-term goals are signage and bike racks, and the long-term goal is to have bike repair stations. Mr. Whitmoyer said that for item number four, all these things are currently in progress. For Washington Street the County is adding crosswalks and lighting.

On Green Infrastructure improvements, Commissioner Wood said the goals are broad and ambitious, and the action items are the specific recommendations. Action items show visitors the Town is serious about environmental stewardship and brands Occoquan as environmentally conscious. Chairperson Perkins said that water quality testing is in the budget, and the Riverkeepers will install muscles as a trial cost-free and then the Town will evaluate expanding the program. Mr. Whitmoyer said signs are up for the water quality testing. Chairperson Perkins said item number three is all about education, and we don't want the Town Council to think the Planning Commission is telling people to do these things. Commissioner Wood noted the Prince William Community Energy and Sustainability Plan and making Occoquan align with that. It was decided that composting would require more research. There will be an initiative to take out invasive trees and plant native trees. Chairperson Perkins was not aware of places the Town can reforest but is aware of Forest Branch Park and Commerce Street where we can re-forest.

On Placemaking and Beautification, chairperson Perkins said there is a need to fund a public art program and expand the volunteer program to include placemaking. Commissioner Newell asked how the Commission is defining public art. Mr. Whitmoyer said a survey will define this. Commissioner Newell suggested having murals elsewhere in Town.

On Business Support, Chairperson Perkins said preserving the commercial use of Town buildings is primary. Commissioner Wood asked for clarification on item number two. Chairperson Perkins said it involves working

with property owners in town and external businesses we want to bring into Town. Commissioner Kisling asked if it could be a social media initiative. Chairperson Perkins said yes.

Chairperson Perkins said there will be a need for more funding to tell Occoquan's story. The NOVA Arts District requires the most staff effort. He asked for final input on the report by the end of the week.

Commissioner Wood motioned to take the draft strategic plan as discussed on March 26th, 2024 be referred to the Town Council, taking into account minor edits with approval of the Chair. Commissioner Kisling seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:29pm

Minutes Prepared by Commissioner Somma, Planning Commission Secretary



TOWN OF OCCOQUAN PLANNING COMMISSION

Agenda Communication

5. Discussion Items	Meeting Date: April 23, 2024
5A: Zoning Administrator Presentation on Potential Zoning Text and Comprehensive Plan Amendments Relating to Accessory Dwelling Units and Density	

Attachments:

- a. Zoning Administrator Presentations
- b. Zoning Administrator Reports from March 26, 2024

Submitted by: Matt Whitmoyer
Deputy Town Manager

Explanation and Summary:

This is a discussion item to review the presentations provided by the Zoning Administrator on zoning text and comprehensive plan amendments relating to accessory dwelling units and density increases.

The Zoning Administrator will present on the two items and answer any questions.

At the March 26 meeting, the Planning Commission referred the Zoning Administrator's report on three separate density items to the Town Council for review. At the April 2 meeting, the Town Council reviewed the report and referred two of the items (density increases on select parcels along Washington Street and accessory dwelling units) back to the Planning Commission to draft comprehensive plan and zoning text amendments that will appropriately address the density needs of the town.

Background

A number of jurisdictions in the area have been reviewing their density restrictions over the past year. As Occoquan continues to mature, it seems likely that the Town too will need to do so in response to expressed needs for additional housing and revenues.

Since areas adjacent to other high-density areas are often the most suitable for such changes, the Council at a minimum would like the Planning Commission to evaluate those areas along Washington Street zoned R-1 or R-2 that are proximate to areas zoned R-3. Additionally, there have been repeated suggestions in the past that the parcel immediately east of the Route 123 bridge currently zoned R-1, should be considered for business zoning, and thus the Council requests that the Planning Commission evaluate this as well. Finally, the Council would like the Planning Commission to review the restrictions on accessory dwellings and determine whether or not adjustments are warranted.

At the February 27th meeting, the Planning Commission requested that the Zoning Administrator evaluate and report on the following three (3) zoning-related items:

1. Evaluate the extent to which it is appropriate to alter density in specific areas,
2. Consider whether the parcel immediately east of the Route 123 bridge currently zoned R-1, should be considered for business zoning, and
3. Review the restrictions on accessory dwellings and determine whether or not adjustments are warranted.



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TOWN COUNCIL
Earnest W. Porta, Jr., Mayor
Jenn Loges, Vice Mayor
Cindy Fithian
Eliot Perkins
Nancy Freeborne Brinton
Theo Daubresse

**TOWN MANAGER /
CHIEF OF POLICE**
Adam C. Linn, J.D.

March 22, 2024

Mr. Eliot Perkins, Chair
Planning Commission
Town of Occoquan
P.O. Box 195
Occoquan, VA 22125

Re: Evaluation of Potential Changes to Density – Washington Street and other areas of the Town

Dear Chair Perkins:

The Town Council at its February 27, 2024, meeting requested the Zoning Administrator to evaluate the extent to which the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance could be adjusted to increase development densities of properties along Washington Street that are in proximity to other properties zoned R-3. This was the primary area of focus, but other areas of the Town could be considered.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:

The Comprehensive Plan is the guiding document that the Town uses to make land use decisions. Comprehensive Plans are known to be “Living Documents”, as they reflect the desires of the community, but they change over time, and must be reevaluated every five years as required by the Code of Virginia. Occoquan’s Comprehensive Plan has several themes that would apply to the review of density. These themes are:

- Sustain Occoquan’s community character and distinctive quality of life.
- Enhance Occoquan’s circulation and mobility with an emphasis on pedestrian safety.
- Sustain and enhance Occoquan’s business/historic district while diversifying the town’s economic base.

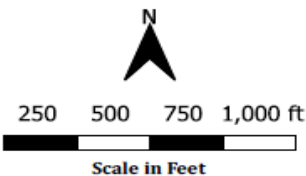
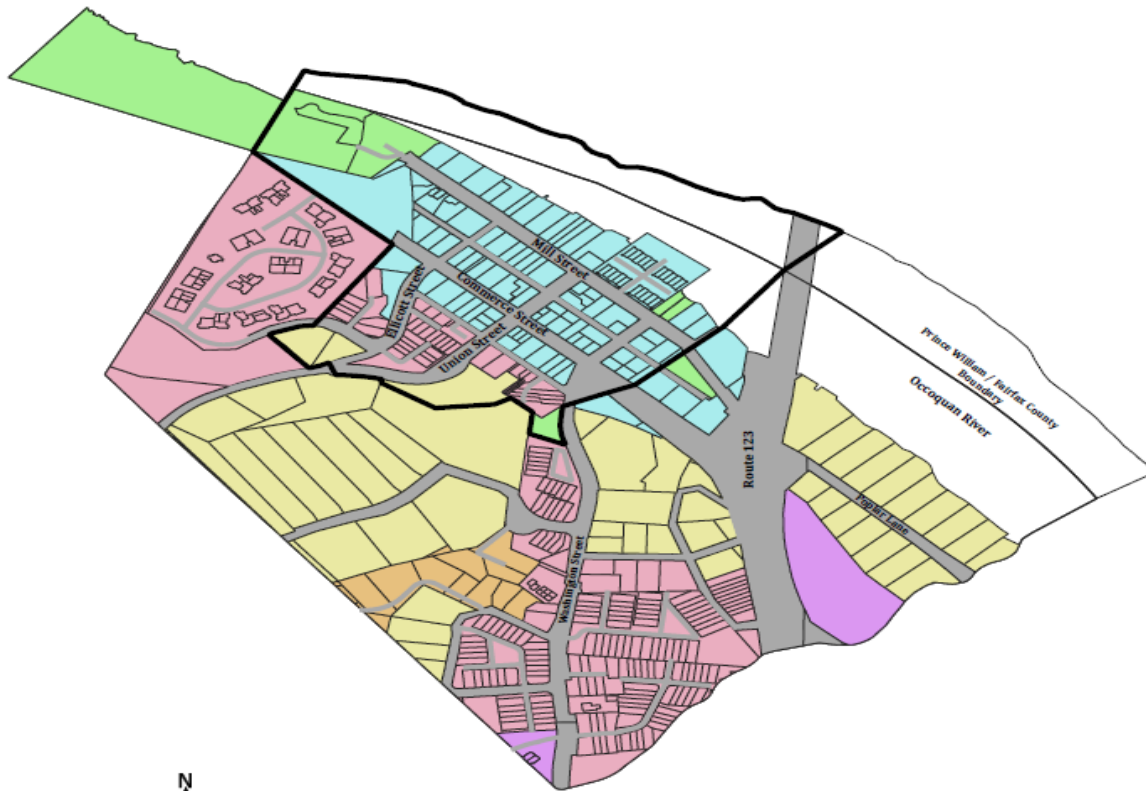
- Witness environmental stewardship by living in harmony with our diverse natural environment.
- Partner with neighboring localities to coordinate planning and governance matters of mutual interest.
- Commit to developing a comprehensive plan schedule and accountability metric.

The Plan acknowledges past population growth, its desirable location to include proximity to the Occoquan River and easy transportation access to Interstate-95, making it a “community of choice”. It also acknowledges a changing demographic that is more family-focused and diverse. Future growth should take those factors into account. The Plan notes the past growth and development and mentions community debate about adding additional townhome communities to the Town.

The Future Land Use map acknowledges the existing development pattern along Washington Street. It varies from the Zoning Map in that the Zoning Map indicates two parcels being zoned R-2, medium density residential where the Land Use Map indicates the future use should be low-density residential.









There are several areas located along East Locust Street, Poplar Lane, Union Street, and West Locust Street that are currently planned and zoned for low-density residential use. If desired those areas could be considered for in-fill/redevelopment. However, page 20 of the Plan speaks to the need for housing development to be closely monitored to maintain the current balance of affordable, mid-level, and luxury level residential choices. *“As for the areas outside the Historic District, the Town should seek to limit the expanded use of current residential areas so as to ease the strains on the community’s transportation networks.”* These statements imply that future increases in density should be limited and provide adequate areas for parking and pedestrian connectivity to minimize traffic impacts.

Town of Occoquan, VA Future Land Use Map



For more information on Zoning, please refer to the Town Code, Chapter 157.

Zoning update June 12, 2014

Zoning District Designation	
 Low Density Residential	 Mixed Use Overlay
 Medium Density Residential	 Park and Open Space
 Med-High Density Residential	 Street
 High Density Residential	 Historic District

ZONING:

The Zoning Map of the Town (below) shows the area of Washington Street primarily being encompassed by R-3, general residential, high-density zoning. The zoning density generally decreases as you travel north on Washington Street towards the Historic District with R-1, limited residential – low density and R-2, general residential, medium density. The applicable residential zoning districts allow for the following forms of development:

R-3 – Single family detached dwellings, duplex dwellings, townhouse dwellings, and multi-family dwellings. The minimum lot size of single family detached dwellings is 6,000 square

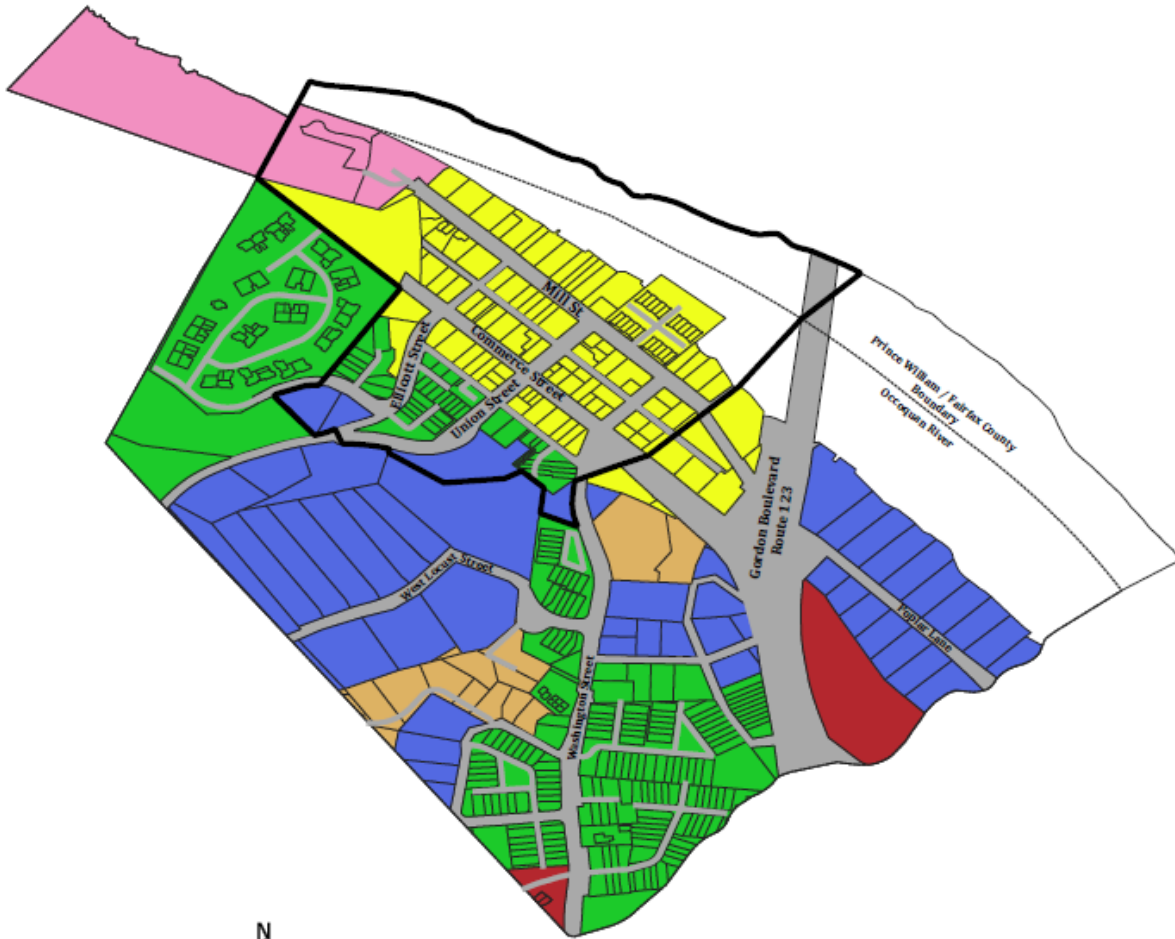
feet. The minimum lot size of duplex dwellings is 12,000 square feet. The minimum lot width and requirement for 40% open space dictate the lot yield for townhouse developments. Multi-family dwellings can be built at a maximum density of 16 units per acre on a minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet with a minimum 30% open space.

R-2 – Detached single family dwellings and duplex dwellings. The minimum lot size of single family detached dwellings is 10,000 square feet. The minimum lot size for duplex units is 12,000 square feet.

R-1 – Single family detached dwellings with minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet. The minimum lot width is 70 feet.

Other areas of the town, outside the historic district, are zoned R-1 and R-4. The R-4 district is exclusive to multi-family housing. R-4 zoned properties are located at the periphery of town. All these residential zoning districts limit building heights to a maximum of 35 feet. As such, all dwellings are two or three stories at most depending on the type of construction.

Town of Occoquan, VA Zoning District Map



250 500 750 1,000 ft



Scale in Feet

For more information on Zoning, please refer to the Town Code, Chapter 157.

Zoning update March 7, 2023

Zoning Districts

R-1	B-1
R-2	PPU
R-3	Street
R-4	Historic District

ANALYSIS:

Considering the guidance of the Comprehensive Plan, current zoning scheme, and topography of the town, there appears to be limited potential for significant in-fill/redevelopment. The Comprehensive Plan reflects the current conditions in town and does not have any direct recommendations for increased development densities. The current zoning scheme is suburban in scale with substantial lot sizes, significant setbacks, and limited building height. Areas located outside the historic district are characterized as a plateau and hillside overlooking the Occoquan River. Zoning regulations limiting development on steep slopes and the practicalities of developing on those slopes also limit new residential development potential without tear-down and rezoning.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

In keeping with the spirit of the Comprehensive Plan and the current zoning scheme, there are a few tools that can be considered to allow a limited increase in residential development in the town. Those items are:

1. Consider reducing the minimum lot size for single family detached homes in the R-1 and R-2 zones to 6,000 square feet. This would allow a uniform lots size in town where single family homes are permitted. It could also retain the feeling of being located in a town if connecting sidewalks are constructed.
2. Consider allowing flag or stem lots. This allows for limited road frontage but gives a separate driveway access to the new home.
3. Adopt zoning changes to allow for cluster development. The intent of cluster development is to reduce lot sizes to preserve open space. It is permitted per Sec. 15.2-2286.1. <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title15.2/chapter22/section15.2-2286.1/> Given the small sizes of parcels in the Town, a change in permitted dwelling unit types or density may be necessary.
4. Permit the use of accessory dwellings. An accessory dwelling is essentially an apartment in a dwelling or detached structure that is smaller in size and scale than the primary dwelling.
5. Consider relaxing the slope restriction for land areas exceeding 20% slope.

If the Planning Commission is inclined to consider an amendment to Comprehensive Plan to increase development densities the following considerations are recommended to be part of the decision-making process to adjust the Future Land Use Map:

1. Consider higher density development along roadways that are not gateways to the historic district. Over-building in gateways to the historic district may detract from its sense of place.
2. Consider areas where pedestrian connectivity can be achieved to minimize traffic congestion and promote the sense of small-town community.
3. Consider areas where the traffic volume on existing streets can accommodate the increase in vehicles associated with new development.

4. Consider promoting small lot detached, attached, and semi-attached dwelling unit types as additional housing options to achieve density goals and desired scale of development.
5. Consider higher density areas to be located near existing or planned parks and playgrounds. This will promote social interaction and a sense of community.
6. Consider increasing maximum building heights where appropriate. Increased building height should not detract from the viewshed of the historic district.

Thank you for the time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey A. Harvey". The signature is stylized with large loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jeffrey A. Harvey, AICP
Assistant Zoning Administrator

JAH/bar

cc: Adam C. Linn, Town Manager

Potential Density Changes Overview



Town of Occoquan, VA
Presentation by Legacy Engineering



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Goals



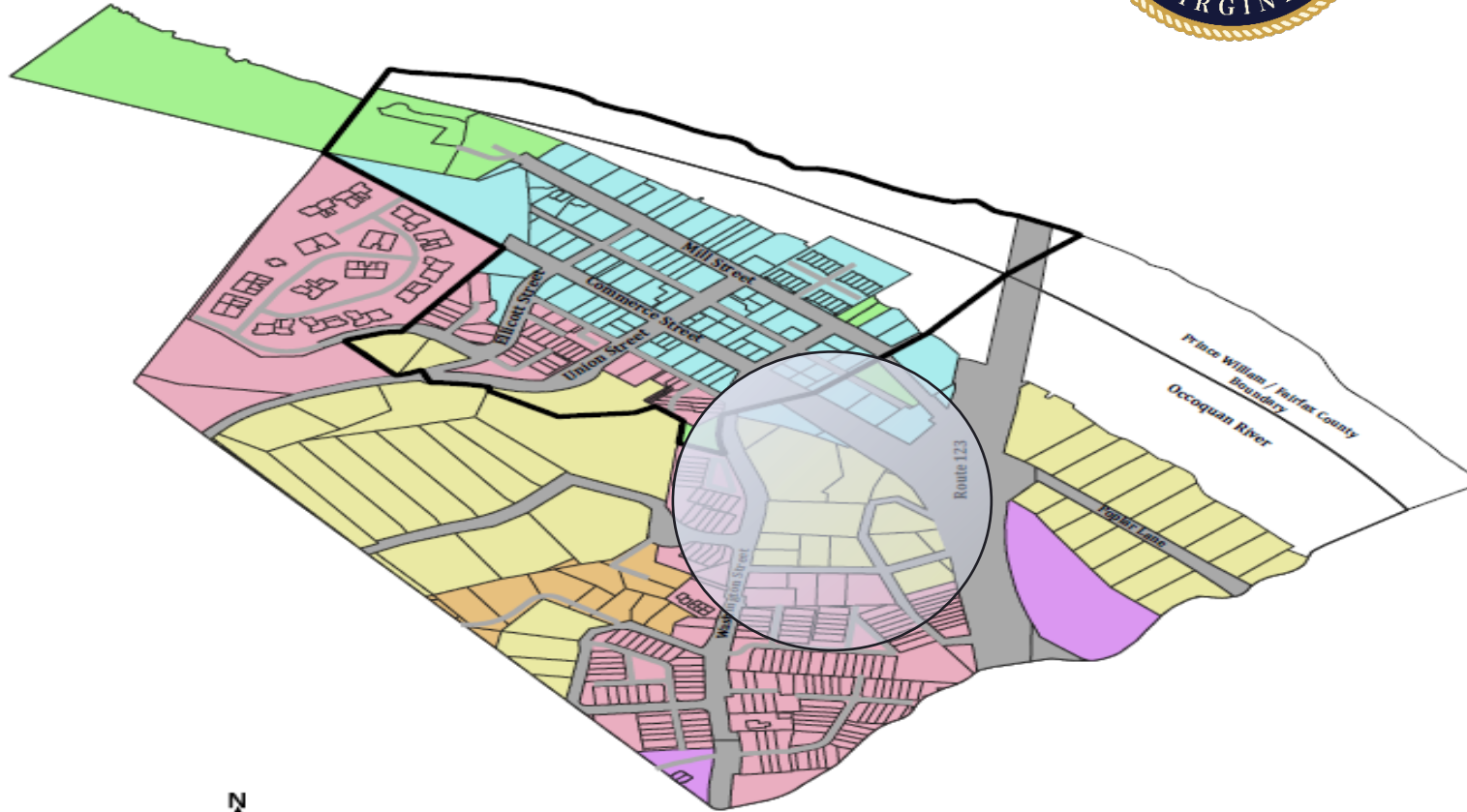
GOALS

1. Consider Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance adjustments to increase densities.
2. Evaluate properties along Washington Street in proximity of properties zoned R-3.
3. Provide recommendations to Town Council.



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Town of Occoquan, VA Future Land Use Map



250 500 750 1,000 ft



Scale in Feet

For more information on Zoning, please refer to the Town Code, Chapter 157.

Zoning update June 12, 2014

Zoning District Designation

Low Density Residential	Mixed Use Overlay
Medium Density Residential	Park and Open Space
Med-High Density Residential	Street
High Density Residential	Historic District



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Comprehensive Plan Themes

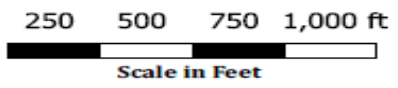
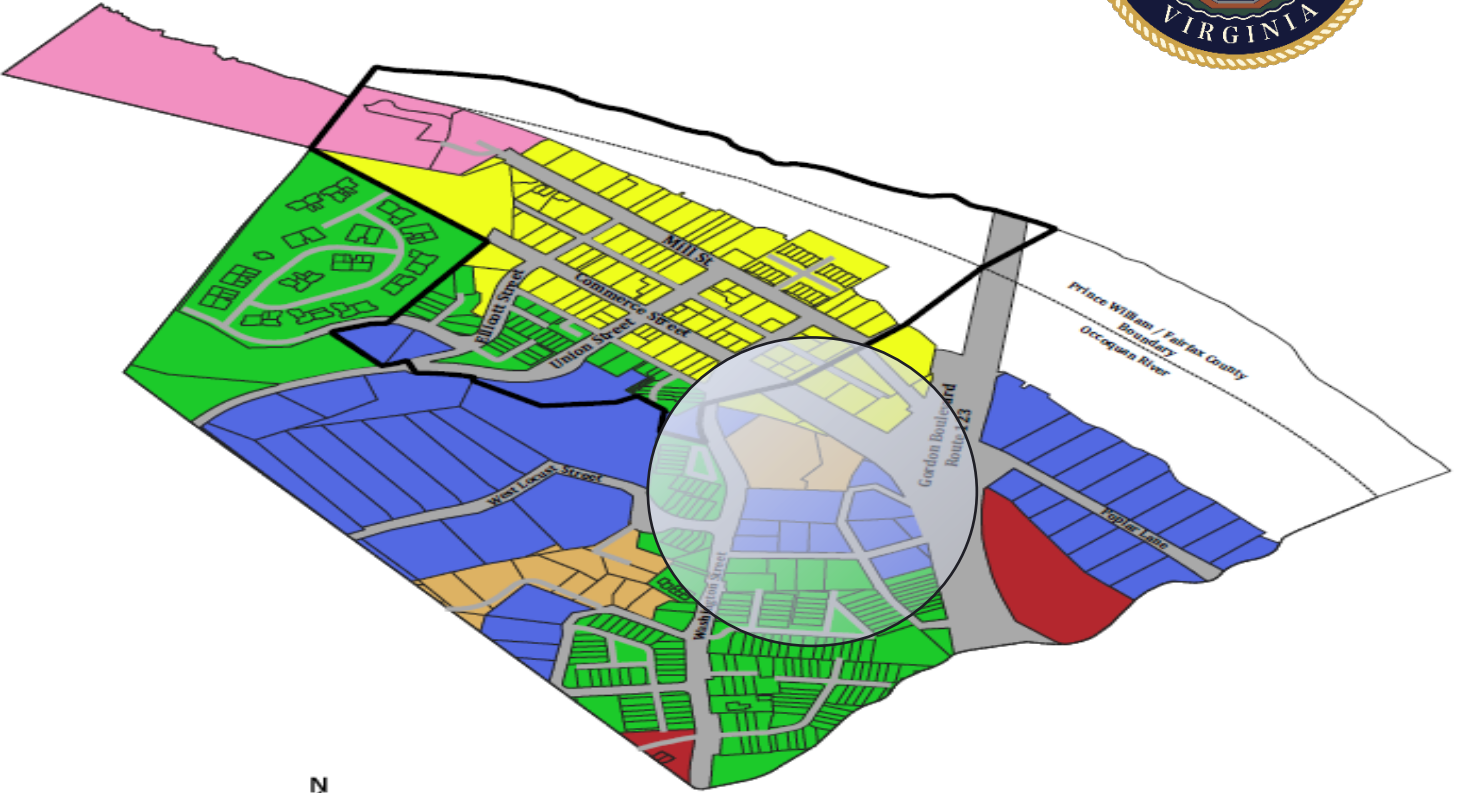


1. Sustain Occoquan's Community character
2. Enhance circulation and mobility
3. Sustain Occoquan's business/historic district while diversifying the economic base.
4. Need for housing development to be closely monitored to maintain the current balance of affordable, mid-level, and luxury level residential choices.
5. As for the areas outside the Historic District, the Town should seek to limit the expanded use of current residential areas so as to ease the strains on the community's transportation networks.
6. Partner with neighboring localities for preservation, mutual interest and environmental stewardship.
7. Commit to developing a comprehensive plan schedule and accountability metric.











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Town of Occoquan, VA Zoning District Map



For more information on Zoning, please refer to the Town Code, Chapter 157.
Zoning update March 7, 2023

Zoning Districts	
	R-1
	R-2
	R-3
	R-4
	B-1
	PPU
	Street
	Historic District



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Considerations



- The proposed area circled falls between East Locust, West Locust and River Road following along Washington Street.
- Current Comprehensive Plan identifies the area as to be lower residential density than the current zoning map.
- Area is bounded by R-3 zoning, Gordon Boulevard and the Historic District.
- Possible Comprehensive Plan amendment to change to Med-High Density.



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Next Steps



- Make recommendations to Town Council:
- Amend Comprehensive Plan now
 - Things to consider when amending the Comprehensive Plan:
 - The current capacity for the water and sewer services.
 - The current transportation needs / demands on the area.
 - Needs for housing.
 - Pedestrian connectivity.
 - Access to community amenities such as parks.
 - Community character.
 - Do the recommendations fall within the current zoning scheme, if not amend the zoning ordinance?
- Amend Comprehensive Plan in 2026 for required 5-year Update?



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TOWN COUNCIL
Earnest W. Porta, Jr., Mayor
Jenn Loges, Vice Mayor
Cindy Fithian
Eliot Perkins
Nancy Freeborne Brinton
Theo Daubresse

**TOWN MANAGER /
CHIEF OF POLICE**
Adam C. Linn, J.D.

April 19, 2024

Mr. Eliot Perkins, Chair
Planning Commission
Town of Occoquan
P.O. Box 195
Occoquan, VA 22125

Re: Accessory Dwellings

Dear Chair Perkins:

The Town Council at its February 27, 2024, meeting requested the Zoning Administrator to review the restrictions on accessory dwellings and determine whether adjustments to the zoning ordinance are warranted.

ZONING ORDINANCE:

The zoning ordinance includes some definitions that are important to understanding what an accessory dwelling is and how it may be permitted.

Accessory building use or structure. *"A separate building, use or structure on the same lot with and customarily incidental to the principal use of the parcel or principal structure."*

Apartment house. See Dwelling, multi-family.

Boardinghouse. *"A building arranged or used for lodging for compensation, with or without meals, and not occupied as a single-family unit"*.

Building, main. *"A building in which the principal use of the lot is conducted"*.

Duplex. *"A building situated on a single lot and containing two dwelling units structurally attached, each having separate entrances."*

Dwelling, attached. *"One of a series of three or more dwelling units separated from one another by common party separated from one another by common party walls without openings, i.e., townhouses."*

Dwelling, detached single-family. *"A detached dwelling designed for occupancy by one family and not attached, duplex, or semidetached."*

Dwelling, multifamily. *“A building or portion of a building, designed for occupancy by three or more dwelling units with shared principal entryways,, including rental apartments and apartment condominiums.”*

Dwelling, semidetached. *“A dwelling having a party wall in common with another dwelling but which otherwise is designed to be and is substantially separate from any other structure or structures except accessory buildings.”*

Dwelling unit. *“A room, interconnected rooms, constituting a separate independent housekeeping establishment intended for permanent, full-time human occupancy and physically separated from any other rooms or dwelling units which may be in the same structure, and containing independent cooking and sleeping facilities.”*

Recreational vehicle. *“Any vehicle, trailer, or semitrailer designed for human occupation and not meeting the definition of manufactured home and is not meant for permanent occupancy.”*

There is no separate definition for accessory dwelling or accessory dwelling unit. Zoning districts R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, and PPU all allow accessory buildings. The B-1 zoning district has conflicting requirements. It does not allow accessory buildings as a permitted use but does allow residential uses provided that they do not occupy the floor of the building that is adjacent to the primary street or sidewalk. However, in the height limitations, it references that *“no accessory building may be more than one story tall.”*

Reading the definitions of accessory building use or structure combined with the definition of dwelling unit, it can be surmised that accessory dwelling units are permitted in the R-1, R-2, R-3, and R-4 zoning districts. The units would have to be incidental to the principal use of the parcel or principal structure. For an accessory dwelling unit to be incidental to a principal dwelling unit, it must serve the occupants of the principal dwelling. Traditionally this means that the accessory dwelling unit must be designated for a family member(s), employee(s) of a family run home business or guest(s) of the family residing in the principal dwelling. An accessory dwelling unit is smaller in scale and subordinate to the primary dwelling. They are often found in the basement of a dwelling where they can be physically separated or as part of or the entirety of a detached structure.

Recently, there has been some discussion in the Town about the permissibility of the use of Tiny Houses on private property. The use of tiny houses or tiny homes has been growing in popularity in recent years. This practice is often referred to as alternative housing and sometimes associated with Affordable Dwelling Units (ADU). Such use has been defined and permitted by some locality zoning ordinances and restricted by others.

Any single-family dwelling unit is a principal structure that requires a building permit and building inspections to ensure compliance with building code regulations. When constructing any house it must meet the Building Code. A tiny house being constructed as a single-family dwelling must meet appendix Q of the International Residential Code (IRC) which would be reviewed by Prince William County Building Official’s Office. As a principal structure, there could be only one tiny house on a lot. A tiny house could be an accessory dwelling provided it is smaller in size and subordinate to the principal dwelling.

Many tiny houses are marketed and sold on wheels for mobility, which requires registration and licensing by the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles. Many localities regulate these

structures as “campers” or “recreational vehicles” or “Tiny-Homes-On-Wheels (THOW’s). Tiny homes could be captured in this definition if it was on wheels, but it would further be restricted by the permanent occupancy provision of the definition. In other words, a tiny house on wheels cannot be used for permanent residence, cannot be permanently connected to utilities and similar to a recreational vehicle must periodically be removed from a property.

The zoning ordinance for the Town does not define tiny homes. However, it does define *Dwelling, Detached Single-Family* which does not outline size or square footage for such a unit. Accessory building is also defined. This can be viewed in one of two ways. Either construction of a tiny home is permitted if constructed as a single-family dwelling, or it is permitted as an accessory dwelling. Any tiny home constructed on a chassis is not a building and would be categorized as a recreational vehicle.

RECOMMENDATION:


The Zoning Administrator recommends that the zoning requirements in the B-1 zoning district be clarified to permit accessory buildings and to permit accessory dwellings. Accessory dwellings should be called out as use permitted in the residential zoning district. It would be advisable to create a definition of accessory dwelling and place limits on its size and scale to minimize community impacts.

Dwelling, accessory. An ancillary dwelling unit which may be located in a principal structure or a detached accessory building for such uses as a family member apartment, guest house (for occasional visits by family or friends), maid's quarters, short term rental, and shall conform to the following:

- (1) An accessory dwelling shall not exceed the total gross floor area of the principal dwelling unit.
- (2) When an accessory building is located in the principal dwelling, the entry to the unit and its design shall be such that the appearance of the building shall remain a one-family residence.
- (3) An accessory dwelling shall have the same address as the principal dwelling.
- (4) Detached accessory dwellings shall meet the setback and building height requirements of accessory buildings.
- (5) Each accessory dwelling shall have at least one (1) designated off-street parking space.

Thank you for the time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey A. Harvey". The signature is stylized with large loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jeffrey A. Harvey, AICP
Assistant Zoning Administrator

JAH/bar

cc: Adam C. Linn, Town Manager

Accessory Dwelling Overview





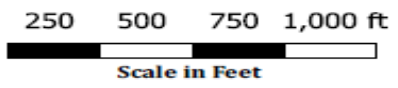
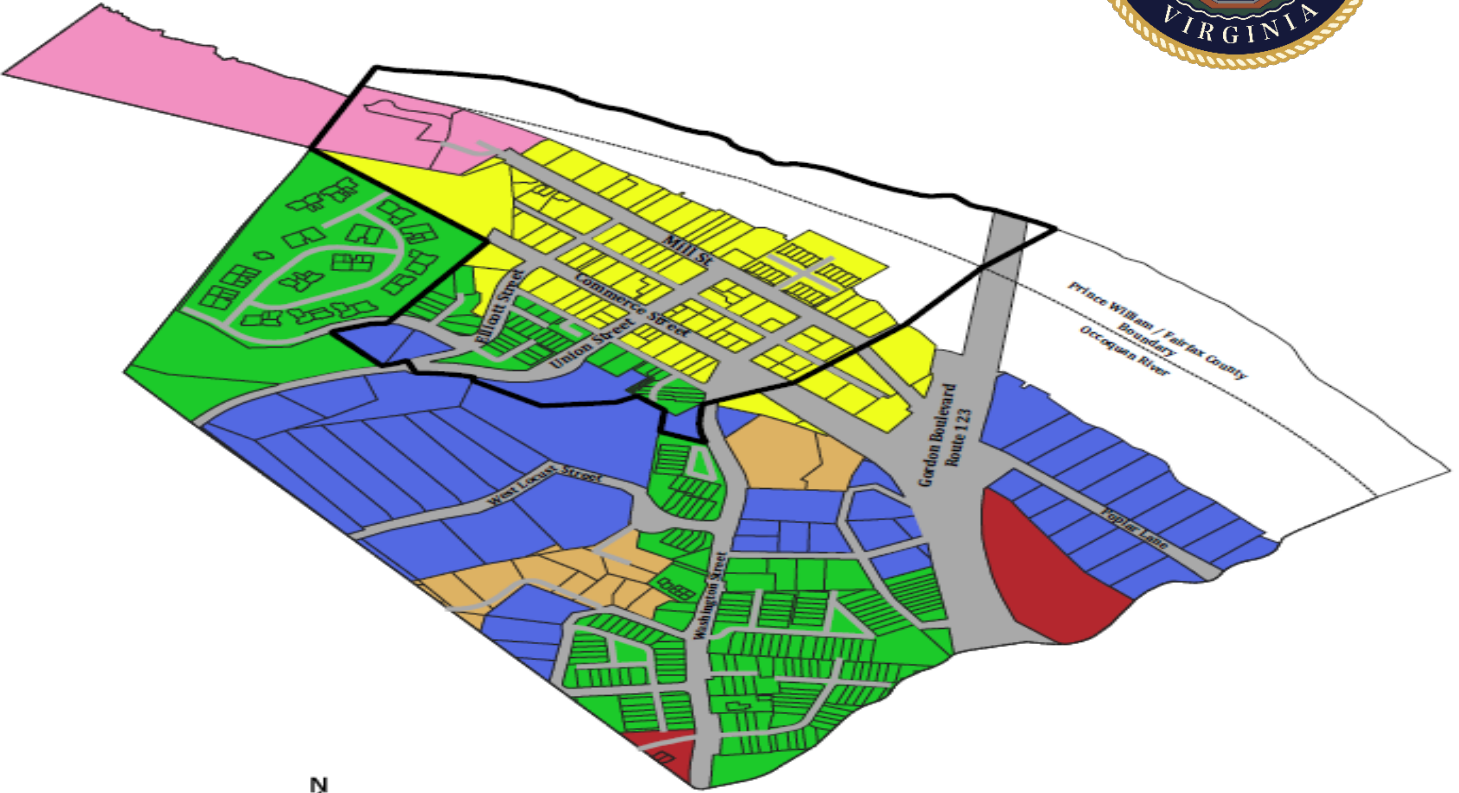
Objective

1. Review the current Zoning Ordinance for Accessory Dwellings.
2. Provide feedback on issues with current regulations.
3. Provide guidance to Town Council.



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Town of Occoquan, VA Zoning District Map



For more information on Zoning, please refer to the Town Code, Chapter 157.
Zoning update March 7, 2023

Zoning Districts	
	R-1
	R-2
	R-3
	R-4
	B-1
	PPU
	Street
	Historic District



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Findings

1. **Needed clarification to understand what an accessory dwelling is**
2. **No definition for accessory dwelling is currently provided.**
3. **Accessory buildings are defined and permitted in residential zones but not B-1 zone.**
4. **Need to be listed in appropriate zoning districts.**



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Recommendation

The Zoning Administrator recommends that the zoning requirements in the B-1 zoning district be clarified to permit accessory buildings and to permit accessory dwellings.

Accessory dwellings should be called out as use permitted in the residential zoning districts (R-1, R-2, and R-3). It would be advisable to create a definition of accessory dwelling and place limits on its size and scale to minimize community impacts.



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Existing Accessory Dwellings.

- Identify how many currently exist
- Identify the location
- Identify how they are addressed for E-911 purposes.
- Identify how they are being used (family, guests, rentals)
- Identify any potential regulations:
 - Parking
 - Setback
 - Location and Size
 - Who can reside in them



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Definition & Suggested Options

Accessory Dwelling – A habitable living unit limited to be utilized as an ancillary to a principal structure and conform to the following:

- Shall not exceed fifty (50) percent of the total gross floor area of the principal structure
- Shall be permitted by right in Zones R and B.
- Shall be no more than two accessory dwellings on one lot not exceeding fifty (50) percent of the total gross floor area of the principal structure.
- Shall be architecturally compatible to the existing principal structure.
- Shall contain the same address number as the principal structure with signification of letters (unit A, B, etc.).
- Shall comply with all accessory structure setbacks if in a detached structure.
- Shall provide 1 parking space for each unit.



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Next Steps

- Come to an agreement on how accessory dwellings should be treated in the zoning ordinance.
- Direct the Zoning Administrator to work with the Town Attorney to prepare a code amendment.
- Refer code amendments to Town Council.



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TOWN OF OCCOQUAN PLANNING COMMISSION

Agenda Communication

5. Discussion Items	Meeting Date: April 23, 2024
5B: Strategic Planning Update	

Attachments: a. Strategic Planning Recommendations to Town Council – Reported on 4/16/24

Submitted by: Matt Whitmoyer
Deputy Town Manager

Explanation and Summary:

This is a discussion item to provide an update on the Planning Commission’s Strategic Planning Recommendations to Town Council. See attached report.

The report was provided to Town Council on April 16, 2024. Town Council is currently reviewing the report and plans to have feedback for the Planning Commission’s meeting in May.



Planning Commission Strategic Planning Recommendations to Town Council

March 26, 2024

Occoquan Planning Commission

Eliot Perkins, Chair

Ralph Newell, Vice Chair

Ryan Somma, Secretary

Darryl Hawkins, Commissioner

Ann Kisling, Commissioner

Robert Love, Commissioner

Don Wood, Commissioner

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Introduction

Starting in Winter 2023, the Planning Commission, using the *Vision 2026 Comprehensive Plan* as a guide, engaged in a strategic planning effort to formulate strategic themes and corresponding goals for the Planning Commission's work over the next several years. Using those themes and goals, the Commission then worked in groups to identify and evaluate specific actions for the Town to take in order to meet the Commission's goals and build off the work of the Comprehensive Plan. To realize its goals, the Planning Commission will need the support of the Town Council and asks for its feedback, approval, and action on a number of items outlined in this report.

The following report is divided into sections based off each thematic area and corresponding goals created by the Planning Commission with a tiered list of action items for Town Council's feedback, approval, and/or action on. Action items are divided into First and Second Priority. The First Priority consists of short, near and long-term items that align with at least one theme of the Comprehensive Plan and that the Planning Commission is requesting Town Council feedback, approval, and/or action on. The Second Priority consists of longer-term items that the Commission has set aside for action at a later date but of which it wants to make the Council aware. Those First Priority items for Town Council review are contained in the green tables at the end of each section. Each table outlines the potential costs, staff time, implementation timeline, and Comprehensive Plan alignment associated with each item.

The thematic areas consist of the following:

- Leveraging the Natural Resources of the Town (Trail Town)
- Increasing Walkability, Connectivity, and Accessibility (Parking and Transportation)
- Protecting the Ecological and Public Health of the Town (Green Improvements)
- Fostering A Distinct Identity for Town (Placemaking and Beautification/Public Arts)
- Fostering Economic Development and Diversification (Business Support and Recruitment)

In the course of the strategic planning process, the Planning Commission noted a number of concepts repeated across the different work groups. The resulting action items are therefore presented in the "Cross-Cutting Recommendations" section as items to be implemented as compliments to all the other thematic areas.

Trail Town Program – Leveraging the Natural Resources of the Town

Summary:

With multiple regional and national cycling trails connecting the Town to other regional attractions; a prime location on the Occoquan River as a water trail; and a soon-to-be destination at the end of the Occoquan Greenway trail, Occoquan is a focal point for outdoor recreational traffic. This echoes Occoquan's history as a waypoint for travelers passing through over the old bridge and stopping to frequent town businesses. Occoquan is and has been a Trail Town. This recommendation includes actions to incorporate that character into the Town's programs and initiatives, promote that identity to visitors, and encourage travelers to stop in Town on their way to other destinations.

Goals:

1. Cultivate and promote Occoquan's identity as a Trail Town with historical markers, wayfinding signage, and local attractions to bring outdoors enthusiasts into Town.
2. Establish reciprocal promotion between attractions and municipalities sharing trails with Occoquan via participation in regional summits, celebrations, and trail advocacy outside of the Town's jurisdiction.
3. Increase the value and accessibility of Tanyard Hill park as a local trail destination with a volunteer maintenance plan, trail connections to the Occoquan Greenway, crosswalks, and clearly marked parking.

First Priority Action Items:

1. **Assess Community Input a Trail Town Program:** Solicit feedback from Town residents via a survey to assess community wants and needs for a trail town and use results to determine the vision and feasibility of a larger Trail Town program.
2. **Define an Occoquan Trail Town Vision:** Town Officials, Staff, and Citizens should collaborate on a shared vision of what a Trail Town program ultimately means and the "who, what, and how" of getting there.
3. **Town Council Passes a Resolution Recognizing the Community Values its Trails:** This resolution will follow the same format as previous resolutions establishing Occoquan as a Tree City USA or Bird Sanctuary.
4. **Enhance Entrance to Tanyard Hill Park:** Occoquan has a wonderful resource in this park and needs to protect and promote it. The Town should put up signage as part of entrance enhancement efforts (only item in cost estimate), a crosswalk from the parking lot due to the heavy commuter traffic, and clearly mark parking across the street from the park. Educational signage along the trail can also enhance the hiking experience.
5. **Coordinate Tanyard Hill Park Maintenance with Volunteers:** Set up a volunteer program for maintaining the trail in the park and connecting trails.
6. **Improve Trail Signage:**
 - o **Post a "Trail Town" Information Sign Near the Footbridge and/or 123 Bridge:** The model for this sign would be the signs at the trails gateway into Harper's Ferry, which provides a map of the region, illustrates the many trails connecting to the town, and the attractions to which they lead.
 - o **Post Signs for the Potomac National Heritage Trail:** As a signatory, Occoquan needs to honor its commitment to the PNHT memorandum of understanding by

placing signage for the trail at appropriate locations within Town.

Representatives at NVRC recommend having NPS install the signs.

7. **Present a Yearly Progress Update at the NVRC Trails Summit:** The NVRC has expressed a high level of interest in following Occoquan’s efforts to establish a Trail Town Program. This yearly summit provides the Town an opportunity to present an update on our progress, participate in workshops for Trails advocacy, and network with other municipalities to enhance nearby trails outside of our jurisdiction.

Second Priority Action Items:

1. **Work with Local Businesses to Promote Trail Town Status and Support Trail Users:** Encourage local businesses to take advantage of the potential business opportunities that come with the trail users who pass through Occoquan.
2. **Ensure Trail Connections Between Tanyard Hill Park and Occoquan Greenway:** A limitation for Tanyard Hill Park is that it is somewhat inaccessible on foot to Occoquan residents, who must walk outside of Town along Old Bridge Road to reach the park. Connecting the park to the Occoquan Greenway will provide an accessible route to residents. The trails could be created by professionals and maintained by volunteers.
3. **Lobby State for a Trail Town Designation:** The Town of Damascus in Shenandoah also considers itself a Trail Town servicing hikers on the Appalachian Trail. Occoquan can coordinate with this municipality to have Virginia create a Trail Town Designation.

Items for Town Council Approval/Budget Consideration:

Recommendations	Cost Estimate	Staff Effort (Low, Medium, High)	Timeline (Short, Near, and Long-term)	Comp Plan Alignment
Assess Community Input on a Trail Town Program	-	Low	Short	Circulation and Mobility
Define an Occoquan Trail Town Vision	-	Low	Short	Circulation and Mobility
Town Council Passes a Resolution Recognizing the Community Values its Trails	-	Low	Short	Circulation and Mobility
Enhance Entrance to Tanyard Hill Park	\$250	Medium	Short	Circulation and Mobility
Coordinate Tanyard Hill Park Maintenance Plan with Volunteer Entities	-	Medium	Near	Circulation and Mobility
Improve Trail Signage	\$3,000	Medium	Near	Circulation and Mobility
Present a Yearly Progress Update at the NVRC Trails Summit	-	Low	Near	Circulation and Mobility, Regional Coordination

Parking and Transportation – Increasing Walkability, Accessibility, and Connectivity

Summary:

With a downtown attractive to pedestrian traffic, friendly neighboring attractions and private businesses, and the commercial incentives to enhance parking and transportation within and without Town, Occoquan has many creative opportunities to improve accessibility to its attractions.

Goals:

1. Increase pedestrian safety and navigability in Town with a Town map brochure, an online interactive map, targeted traffic calming measures, and standardized signage.
2. Increase multi-modal transportation alternatives with an OmniRide connection, prominent bike racks, electric bike services, and a water taxi.
3. Increase parking options in Town by incentivizing private-parking owners to allow paid parking in their unused spots and seeking additional parking outside of Town.
4. Increase connections to existing and future regional developments and attractions by pursuing synergistic events with Occoquan Regional Park and the Workhouse Arts Center.

First Priority Action Items:

1. **Evaluate an Occoquan-based OmniRide Bus Stop:** The Town should research establishing an Occoquan connection for the OmniRide bus service. Occoquan is an ideal stop for OmniRide, given the number of local visitors who encounter very limited parking, particularly during weekends. In addition, the Prince William Community Energy and Sustainability Master Plan calls for upgrading public transportation infrastructure. Currently, OmniRide’s Lakeridge-Woodbridge and Woodbridge-Washington DC routes completely bypass Occoquan, a fairly high-density residential area, and a concentrated shopping locale. The closest bus stop is at the 123/Old Bridge commuter lot and pedestrian options to and from the stop are very unpleasant. Additionally, the Town should research either an OmniRide bus route or shuttle service connecting Occoquan to the Woodbridge Train Station to encourage visitors from outside the area.
2. **Standardize Parking Signage:** To better advertise existing Town parking lots, the universal “P” for parking sign should replace public parking signs to conform with visitor expectations.
3. **Apply for the League of American Bicyclists "Bicycle Friendly Community" Status (deadline June 5, 2024):** This will be a draft application and will likely be rejected this year, but the exercise of filling out the application and receiving feedback will inform the Town of what specific actions it can take to attract and promote cycling in Occoquan. The application from this year can then be revised and re-submitted each year to track progress.

Second Priority Action Items:

1. **Enhance Biking Infrastructure and Awareness:** To increase driver awareness of cyclists and encourage more cycling in town, the Town should pursue the following:

- **Apply Annually for the League of American Bicyclists "Bicycle Friendly Community" Status:** Process will inform the Town of what specific actions it can take to promote cycling in Occoquan and track progress on those actions.
 - **Town Bike Rack Improvements/Signage:** The Town should better advertise the bike racks with signage or move them to more prominent locations. Also, the Town should invest in bike repair stations.
2. **Enhance Pedestrian Connections to Occoquan Regional Park, Workhouse Arts Center and Other Regional Attractions and Developments:** To better connect with neighboring attractions like the Workhouse Arts Center, Occoquan Regional Park, and future Fairfax Peaks facility, the Town should engage in the following activities:
 - **Advocate for a Trail Under the 123 Bridge in Fairfax County:** A trail from Old Ox Road that goes down along the hill beside the 123 Bridge, under the bridge, and into Occoquan Regional Park will connect Occoquan to that attraction.
 - **Pursue Diverse Mobility Connections to Local Attractions:** this includes promoting local electric bike rentals, shuttle services, and local water taxi services that would connect communities on the Occoquan River.
 3. **Evaluate and Advocate for Parking Outside of Town:**
 - **Evaluate Parking Opportunities on Fairfax County Side of River:** The Town should talk with Vulcan, Occoquan Regional, and other property owners about using sites, such as the service road parallel to 123, for parking.
 4. **Continue Targeted Traffic-Calming Measures:** The Town should pursue targeted traffic-calming measures at the intersection of Mill and Washington streets, and Center Street in the mornings to address cut-through traffic running stop signs and endangering pedestrians. Additionally, the Town should continue to seek traffic-calming measures, such as additional crosswalks and pedestrian safety signage on Washington Street.

Items for Town Council Approval/Budget Consideration:

Recommendations	Cost Estimate	Staff Effort (Low, Medium, High)	Timeline (Short, Near, and Long-term)	Comp Plan Alignment
Evaluate an Occoquan-based OmniRide Bus Stop	TBD	High	Near	Circulation and Mobility; Regional Coordination
Standardize Parking Signage	\$300	Low	Short	Circulation and Mobility
Apply for the League of American Bicyclists "Bicycle Friendly Community" Status	\$50	Low	Short	Circulation and Mobility

Green Improvements - Protecting the Ecological and Public Health of the Town

Summary:

Occoquan's vision is to create, and be widely recognized as, a sustainable and vibrant green town, where eco-friendly practices harmonize with the tranquil setting of our town. We aspire to cultivate a community that values environmental stewardship, embraces renewable energy, promotes green spaces, and encourages a sense of responsibility for the well-being of our planet. Through education, innovation and collaboration with local residents, business and visitors, we aim to reimagine Occoquan as a town that thrives in balance with nature, inspiring residents to lead environmentally conscious lives for a healthier and greener future.

Goals:

1. Create and expand green spaces as a means of improving stormwater runoff as well as to improve the environmental and social health of the Town and the Occoquan River.
2. Reduce water waste and solid waste as a means of lowering costs and reducing the environmental impact of the Town.
3. Encourage carbon-reducing activities as a means of promoting energy efficiency and reducing town carbon emissions.

First Priority Action Items:

1. **Continue to implement a sustainable water quality monitoring program for the Occoquan River:** Implementing a sustainable all-volunteer, summertime water sampling program that publicizes sampling results weekly will burnish the Town's green credentials by demonstrating to river users such as boaters and fishers that the Town is monitoring the health of the river. Although the State Department of Environmental Quality (VA DEQ), Fairfax Water, and the PrinceWilliam County Soil and Conservation District tests the river for various safety parameters, the resulting data is not easily found. Volunteers can partner with the Potomac River Keepers Network to test the water weekly during the summer with results published each Friday on the internet and through a "Swim App."
2. **Protect Occoquan River from non-point source pollution and sediment through implementation of the Flood Protection Study:** Review the results of the current study and budget and implement recommended green stormwater BMPs that will reduce pollution and flood risks in the town.
3. **Use public engagement and demonstration to encourage reduction or elimination of one-time use utensils and boxes at Town eateries:** Providing encouragement and education to abandon one-time use plastic will add luster to Occoquan's well-deserved reputation as home to a lively retail and restaurant scene. The Town can provide resources like [Beyond Plastics'](#) "[Hold The Plastic, Please: A Restaurant's Guide to Reducing Plastic](#)" and [one-pager](#) on the Town's "[Doing Business in Occoquan](#)" webpage, sponsor informational events on reducing one-time use plastics, pass resolutions in support of reduction, and task the Planning Commission to explore ideas and network with local towns and vendors that are moving forward with non-ordinance related encouragement.
4. **Work with County to place a glass recycling bin next to the present recycling bin:** Town residents and others nearby must travel several miles to recycle glass. Locating a

glass recycling trailer would be a significant convenience for Town residents and residents of surrounding communities, burnish the Town's green credentials, and likely drive an increase of visitors to Town. A bin in Occoquan, near the current Single Stream Bin (which excludes glass) under the Route 123 Bridge, would be closer for all residents in Occoquan than any other current sites.

5. **Consult with Prince William County staff to see how Occoquan can contribute to the success of the Prince William County Community Energy and Sustainability Master Plan:** Many of the action items above are related to actions items in the County Plan. The Town should designate a lead to assess the plan and provide feedback to Town Council on how the Town can coordinate with the County on its High Priority Actions that significantly impact Occoquan (e.g. encouraging energy efficient building, improving pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, improving public transit, and multiple climate resiliency and stormwater actions).

Second Priority Action Items:

1. **Create educational programing on best environmental practices:**
 - **Create a Plaque or Award system to recognize good environmental actors in Town:** Historic districts are special areas in town that are highly visible and subject to various architectural restrictions. Rewarding those who implement various low energy solutions on or on their structures provides incentives and is a good look for the town.
 - **Plan and promote existing and future town facility improvements as demonstrations for various green practices (solar, rain collection system, lighting, low flush toilets, etc.):** Town Hall is a highly visible building in Town and would provide a good branding opportunity if cost effective green practices could be implemented and advertised.
2. **Establish food composting site (with PWC or a private contractor) to encourage residents and nonresidents to come into Town to recycle their food scraps:** Occoquan's high density of restaurants and residents is an ideal location for a food scrap recycling program, which would benefit the environment, increase visits into Town, and burnish the Town's green credentials. The Town should explore centralized drop-off locations and curbside pickup programs for collecting composting.
3. **Continually revisit options for solar/LED bulbs for street lighting:** Experience with "green" options for lighting has been mixed; however, as technologies change and improve, there may be future possibilities for renewable energy source street lighting in Town. This is in-line with the Prince William County goals for renewable energy usage.
4. **Evaluate existing conditions and create a plan for tree management and increasing native species:** Focus on key areas with a high presence of invasive tree and plant species (e.g. Furnace Branch Park, Commerce Street shoulder) and create a plan, utilizing outside grant funding for proper tree management and the restoration of native species.

Items for Town Council Approval/Budget Consideration:

Recommendations	Cost Estimate	Staff Effort (Low, Medium, High)	Timeline (Short, Near, and Long-term)	Comp Plan Alignment
Continue to implement a sustainable water quality monitoring program for the Occoquan River	\$2,500	Low	Short	Environmental Stewardship
Protect Occoquan River from non-point source pollution and sediment through implementation of the Flood Protection Study	TBD	High	Long	Environmental Stewardship
Use public engagement and demonstration to encourage reduction or elimination of one-time use utensils and boxes at Town eateries	-	Medium	Near	Environmental Stewardship
Work with County to place a glass recycling bin next to the present recycling bin	TBD	Medium	Near	Environmental Stewardship
Consult with Prince William County staff to see how Occoquan can contribute to the success of the Prince William County Community Energy and Sustainability Master Plan	-	Low	Near	Environmental Stewardship

Placemaking, Beautification, and Public Art – Fostering A Distinct Identity for Town

Summary:

Placemaking and Beautification in Occoquan would focus on creating attractive, engaging public spaces that foster social interaction and community engagement. Projects can improve the quality of life for residents by creating spaces that are welcoming and enjoyable to use. Beautifully designed public spaces can increase civic pride, promote social connections, and provide a sense of place and belonging. Such programs can additionally boost economic development by creating attractive and engaging public spaces, Occoquan can attract more visitors and businesses, which can help stimulate economic growth.

A Public Arts Program is a key ingredient in Placemaking for Occoquan. Public art adds enormous value to the cultural, aesthetic, and economic vitality of the community. It is now a well-accepted principle of urban design that public art contributes to a community's identity, fosters community pride and a sense of belonging, and enhances the quality of life for its residents and visitors. Public art also highlights what is unique about the places where people live, work, and play.

Artists can bring innovation and creative insight that can strengthen Occoquan's competitiveness within a regional marketplace and that can build and sustain a vibrant economy and community. The Public Arts Program will strive to support local artists and other creatives within the area and encourage their role as a member of the community.

Goals:

1. Increase Placemaking/ Beautification efforts through budgeted projects and volunteer programming.
2. Increase public art installations in the Town to one to two installations every two years.
3. Diversify the types of public art to include both temporary and permanent installations on public and private properties
4. Commission public art that responds to community goals and priorities by incorporating participatory measures into the planning and implementation processes.

First Priority Action Items:

1. **Conduct public art surveys as needed to ensure community input, including on themes and locations:** Solicit feedback from Town residents using a survey to determine public arts preferences, placement locations, and other relevant factors.
2. **Fund and create public art program:** Leveraging budgeted funds as seed money for outside grants, create a public arts program with a work plan based off staff, community, and political bodies input that outlines the goals of the program, community preferences on art installations, future placements (private and public locations) over a number of years and other relevant information.
3. **Create a prioritized list of projects including plantings, lighting, and pocket parks:** Create an inventory of all locations in town where there are beautification challenges and opportunities, including improvements to lighting at River Mill Park, flower baskets on gaslights and the footbridge, the creation of pocket parks, and beautification of public buildings as appropriate. Develop a theme e.g. "Making Occoquan Beautiful" to

encompass many Placemaking/Beautification activities. Possibly create competition with awards and recognition for businesses, property owners of businesses, private homes/townhouses, and individuals.

4. **Increase Placemaking and Beautification Funding for Pilot Projects:** In the short term, reappropriate to or increase FY25 funding for the Historic District to support the implementation of a pilot of the project list, including flower baskets on gaslights and the footbridge. In the long term, the Town should assess the results of the pilot and consider dedicated funding for beautification efforts, utilizing all applicable grant opportunities, Public/Private partnerships, and individual donor funding options. Town may also want to contact local jurisdictions who are experienced and successful in funding such projects.
5. **Expand volunteer corps to include beautification for private and public properties:** Build off existing and future volunteer opportunity communication tools to develop most effective interaction methods. Create opportunities for beautification on both public and private properties by hosting volunteers for regular assignments, special volunteer events (like FOTO cleanups), and/or adopt a business programs.

Items for Town Council Approval/Budget Consideration:

Recommendations	Cost Estimate	Staff Effort (Low, Medium, High)	Timeline (Short, Near, and Long-term)	Comp Plan Alignment
Conduct public art surveys as needed to ensure community input, including on themes and locations	-	Low	Short	Community Character/Life
Fund and create public art program	\$2,500	Medium	Short	Community Character/Life
Create a prioritized list of projects including plantings, lighting, and pocket park(s)	-	Medium	Near	Community Character/Life
Increase Placemaking and Beautification Funding for Pilot Projects	\$1,200	Low	Short	Community Character/Life
Expand volunteer corps to include beautification for private and public properties	-	Medium	Near	Community Character/Life

Business Support and Recruitment - Fostering Economic Development and Diversification

Summary:

Economic development makes our community a better place to live and work by creating a more dynamic, robust, unique local business community that meets the wants and needs of residents and visitors alike. This can be accomplished by breaking down silos between the Town and local businesses in order to better understand and be able to meet the needs of local businesses; by leveraging historic assets as a means of boosting the Town's economic resources; and by recruiting businesses that further the strategic goals of the Town and meet the wants and needs of residents and visitors.

Goals:

1. Encourage and recruit businesses that meet the needs and wants of residents and visitors
2. Increase business and tax revenues by attracting more visitors
3. Increase the resilience of the local economy by encouraging the diversification of business types
4. Improve the sustainability of existing businesses by improving business support

First Priority Action Items:

1. **Encourage the preservation and commercial use of the Town's historic buildings and structures:** The town's numerous historic structures both offer opportunities for unique commercial uses and create the historic small-town charm of Occoquan that underlies its tourism-based economy. The Town should engage with property owners to identify opportunities to maintain, improve, and increase commercial uses for these historic properties.
2. **Evaluate the creation of a property owner to tenant matching system:** The Town should work to connect commercial property owners with prospective business owners interested in expanding their reach into Occoquan in order to maximize mutual benefit to the Town and both parties. The Town should explore options to create a notification system with current property owners and engage with the local business community to curate a list of prospective businesses.
3. **Initiate a listening campaign with the community to assess the Town's business needs:** Lead discussions with Visit Occoquan, business owners, and property to owners focused on the challenges to starting a business in Occoquan and the pros and cons of running one. Craft a business support plan based off those discussions.

Second Priority Action Items:

1. **Create business recruitment and support programming:** Based off the results of the listening campaign, the Town should work with relevant stakeholders, such as Visit Occoquan, to create business support programming to help address the stated needs of the business community and attract outside businesses and organizations to the Town. Programming would consist of two types of events: trainings on specific areas of need for local businesses and informational talks that market the Town (for example, topics could include: The Merits of Doing Business in Occoquan, The Founding of Occoquan in

the 18th Century, The Role of Local Native Tribes, The Civil War & Occoquan, Hurricane Agnes, etc). Both would be available to the wider community and raise awareness of Occoquan. Town should partner with the Prince William Chamber of Commerce, hospitals, universities, and experts on specific areas of need to host events like guest speakers, panel discussions, luncheons, etc. at little to no cost to the Town.

Items for Town Council Approval/Budget Consideration:

Recommendations	Cost Estimate	Staff Effort (Low, Medium, High)	Timeline (Short, Near, and Long-term)	Comp Plan Alignment
Encourage the preservation and commercial use of the Town's historic buildings and structures	-	Low	Short	Economic Vitality/ Diversity
Evaluate the creation of a property owner to tenant matching system	-	High	Long	Economic Vitality/ Diversity
Initiate a listening campaign with the community to assess the Town's business needs	-	Medium	Near	Economic Vitality/ Diversity

Cross-Cutting Recommendations

Summary:

In the course of the strategic planning process a number of concepts repeated across the different work groups. Below are those action items relating to regional coordination and marketing.

First Priority Action Items:

1. **Expand marketing efforts to include promoting the Town in the strategic planning areas:** Assign a lead to create and publish media via multiple mediums promoting the Towns revitalization efforts (highlighting ease of doing business, tourism, and events), green practices (building improvements, EV charging, tree city, etc.), trails and trail town status, public art and beautification. Possibly include the creation of an interactive map and /or "adventure map" of town trails and attractions. Assess the creation and inclusion of volunteer brand ambassadors into existing volunteer and marketing efforts.
2. **Re-engage with existing NOVA Arts and Cultural District stakeholders and other regional partners:** Meet with NOVA Arts and Cultural District counterparts in order to create a clear understanding of individual and group goals. Make sure that existing founding documents provide a clear and accurate reflection of those shared goals. Create a Plan of Action and hold regularly scheduled meetings that allow for short term progress and medium/long term successful collaboration. Focus particular attention on coordinating public arts programming, events, parking, and regional trail connections.

Items for Town Council Approval/Budget Consideration:

Recommendations	Cost Estimate	Staff Effort (Low, Medium, High)	Timeline (Short, Near, and Long-term)	Comp Plan Alignment
Expand marketing efforts to include promoting the Town in the strategic planning areas	TBD	High	Near	-
Re-engage with existing NOVA Arts and Cultural District stakeholders and other regional partners	-	High	Long	Regional Coordination