



# TOWN OF OCCOQUAN

Circa 1734 | Chartered 1804 | Incorporated 1874

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## PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

May 28, 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. **Election**
  - a. Election of Secretary
4. **Approval of Minutes**
  - a. April 23, 2024 Meeting Minutes
5. **Reports**
  - a. Town Council Report
  - b. Deputy Town Manager Report
  - c. Architectural Review Board Report
6. **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
7. **Adjournment**

Eliot Perkins  
Chair, Planning Commission



# TOWN OF OCCOQUAN PLANNING COMMISSION

## Agenda Communication

<b>3. Election</b>	<b>Meeting Date:</b> May 28, 2024
<b>3A: Election of Secretary</b>	

**Attachments:** a. N/A

**Submitted by:** Matt Whitmoyer  
Deputy Town Manager

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### **Explanation and Summary:**

This item is for the nomination and election of a Secretary for the Planning Commission, pursuant to § 33.06(H) of the Town Code.

The Secretary's duties are to keep the minutes of the Commission's proceedings and other records and file with the Town Clerk as part of the public record.

On April 19, 2024, Commissioner Somma resigned from the office of Secretary and from the Planning Commission. As such, the position needs to be filled for the remainder of his term, ending with the annual officer election in January 2025.

### **Proposed/Suggested Motion:**

"I would like to nominate: [NAME] for Secretary." Follow nomination and roll call process as outlined in Chair's agenda.

OR

Other action the Planning Commission deems appropriate.



# TOWN OF OCCOQUAN PLANNING COMMISSION

## Agenda Communication

<b>4. Approval of Minutes</b>	<b>Meeting Date:</b> May 28, 2024
<b>4A:</b> April 23, 2024 Meeting Minutes	

**Attachments:** a. April 23, 2024 Meeting Minutes

**Submitted by:** Matt Whitmoyer  
Deputy Town Manager

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**Explanation and Summary:**

This is a request to approve the meeting minutes from April 23, 2024 for the Planning Commission Meeting.

**Proposed/Suggested Motion:**

"I move to approve the meeting minutes from April 23, 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: 2024-04-23**

**MEETING TIME: 6:30 PM**

**Present:** Chairperson Eliot Perkins, Commissioners Ann Kisling, Robert Love, Ralph Newell, Ryan Somma, Don Wood

**Absent:** Darryl Hawkins

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

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 pm

**2. Citizen Comments**

Chairperson Perkins recognized Walt Seiberling and expressed the Commission's delight that he had returned to attending meetings.

The Chair then recognized former Commissioner Ryan Somma and announced that he would be leaving the Planning Commission effective immediately. The Chair expressed his appreciation to Mr. Somma for his 7 years of service to the Commission and spoke about his character and the skills that he brought to the Commission. The Chair then listed all the items that Mr. Somma had brought to fruition as a member and Secretary of the Commission, including the Mill at Occoquan, the Town's parking strategy, and the Trail Town programming. The Commission congratulated and thanked Mr. Somma.

Mr. Somma thanked the Chair for his words and expressed his belief that the Planning Commission will continue to do great work. Mr. Somma then left the meeting.

Chairperson Perkins encouraged the Commissioners to follow up and thank him for his service.

**3. Approval of Minutes**

a. March 26, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Kisling motioned to approve the minutes as presented. Commissioner Wood seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

**4. Reports**

a. Town Council Report

Chairperson Perkins explained that the Town Council is currently working on the budget and that the Town Council accepted the Planning Commission's Strategic Planning Recommendations. He said that the Town Council will review and provide feedback soon. The Chair highlighted that one of the items, the glass recycling bin, is already in the works; however, the County will place it at the Rt. 123 and Old Bridge Commuter lot just outside of town and not under the Rt. 123 Bridge, due to noise concerns.

Commissioner Newell asked if the single stream recycling bin would be removed from under the Rt. 123 Bridge and commented on its redundancy since commercial properties already have recycling. Chairperson Perkins and Mr. Whitmoyer responded that the current recycling bin will remain under the bridge as it does not handle glass and there are no noise concerns. The new glass bin will replace the single stream bin currently at the commuter lot so both sites will act as recycling points for the larger area. Commissioner Newell explained that he does see the bin being used. Commissioners Love and Kisling stated that many businesses and residents use the bin for bulk and excess recycling.

Chairperson Perkins thanked the Commissioners for all their work on the Strategic Planning Recommendations. He then explained the minor differences that were made to the report between its approval by the Commission and submission to Town Council, such as bike lanes that proved infeasible due to VDOT standards.

#### b. Deputy Town Manager Report

Mr. Whitmoyer informed the Commission that there will be a mural dedication on Wednesday, April 24<sup>th</sup> at 2 pm for a new mural on the LOVEwork in River Mill Park. The Commissioners discussed the new mural.

#### c. Architectural Review Board Report

None

### 5. Discussion Items

Chairperson Perkins received the approval of the other Commissioners to remove the Belmont Bay Expansion Project from future agendas as the project has changed in nature and will not affect the town.

#### a. Zoning Administrator Report on Potential Zoning Text and Comprehensive Plan Amendments Relating to Accessory Dwelling Units and Density

Chairperson Perkins reviewed the two focus areas for the discussion. He asked the Commissioners to compare the costs and benefits of increasing density in Occoquan, weighing the increased tax base and residents against limited amount of buildable land in town and the affects of density on traffic, infrastructure, and the character of the town. He also asked them to think about how the regulations for accessory dwelling units can and/or should vary in each zoning district based off each district's existing characteristics.

Mr. Harvey gave a presentation on potential amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance that would increase density. Mr. Harvey focused on the low-density residential parcels

along Washington Street that are surrounded by medium-high residential parcels on the Future Land Use Map. Chairperson Perkins asked for an explanation of the different levels of density on the map. Mr. Harvey explained how each density level corresponds to a zoning district designation.

Mr. Harvey iterated how each goal of the Comprehensive Plan influences the decision-making process for increasing density, including concerns of traffic and circulation, coordination with the County and VDOT, and environmental concerns. He also explained that some of the affected parcels would actually be downzoned if following the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Harvey recommended that the Commission and Town Council decide whether to amend the Comprehensive Plan now or do it with the required 5-year update for 2026. No matter which choice, he explained the various items that that the Town will need to address before making a Comprehensive Plan update, including traffic impacts, public improvements, and community character concerns.

Commissioner Wood asked why this particular area along Washington was the focus of this discussion on density. Mr. Harvey explained that this area was identified by Council and staff but that the Commission is welcome to focus on other areas. Chairperson Perkins clarified that the overall discussion is about increasing density for the town in general and then secondarily would be about which parcels to address.

Commissioner Newell asked what the source of the discussion was, from Town Council or homeowners, and what currently exists on the discussed parcels. Chairperson Perkins explained that a Town Council request was the impetus of this discussion and that certain parcels have single family homes and a significant amount of space for denser development.

Chairperson Perkins asked Mr. Harvey what the benefits of increased density are. Mr. Harvey highlighted increased tax value, connecting parts of the community, and potentially meeting the housing goals of the community, such as a mix of housing types and affordability. Chairperson Perkins argued that it may also help make the town younger and boost the economy.

Commissioner Love asked if there is a downside to waiting until 2026 to amend the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Harvey responded that it would be up to the Town Council to decide if this is an urgent issue or not.

Chairperson Perkins and Commissioner Love discussed that they did not want any amendments to be a knee-jerk reaction and that they want to thoroughly discuss all the impacts of increased density on the town. Mr. Harvey clarified that a Comprehensive Plan update for 2026 is not that far away.

Commissioner Love asked about the need for zoning changes for the parcel east of the Rt. 123 Bridge. Chairperson Perkins explained that no zoning change is needed for any public improvements to the property.

Mr. Harvey gave a presentation on accessory dwellings. He emphasized that the Code is currently inconsistent on accessory buildings and dwellings in the B-1 district. He recommended that the Planning Commission decide how it wants to define accessory dwellings, whether and how it wants to allow them, and in which districts to allow them.

Chairperson Perkins asked Mr. Harvey to provide examples of how to decide in which zoning districts accessory dwellings should be allowed. Mr. Harvey provided examples, weighing the pros, cons, and questions for each.

Mr. Harvey recommended allowing accessory dwelling units in residential districts and correcting the inconsistencies for the B-1 district. He then discussed current accessory dwelling examples in town. Chairperson Perkins asked about allowing businesses in accessory buildings. Mr. Harvey recommended that, if allowed, the Town should create some kind of permitting process to address the potential impacts of that use. He then discussed the enforcement processes for confirming accessory dwelling units comply with the Code and efforts to mitigate the negative impacts of these units. Chairperson Perkins asked about parking requirements and Mr. Harvey said that parking would be a greater issue in residential areas and explained how required spaces could be allotted.

Mr. Harvey then discussed the factors in determining what size, character, and number of units the Town would want to allow.

Chairperson Perkins provided an overview of next steps and asked the Commissioners on their preference for having staff craft a draft amendment pursuant to this meeting or at a later date once the Commission has taken time to review and define its preferences for recommendations to Town Council.

The Commission instructed staff to finalize a definition for accessory dwelling units and present it with recommendations for a zoning text amendment and recommendations for density-related comprehensive plan amendments at the next Planning Commission meeting.

## **6. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:32 pm

*Minutes Prepared by Matt Whitmoyer, Planning Commission Liaison*



# TOWN OF OCCOQUAN PLANNING COMMISSION

## Agenda Communication

<b>6. Discussion Items</b>	<b>Meeting Date:</b> May 28, 2024
<b>6A: Zoning Administrator Presentation on Potential Zoning Text and Comprehensive Plan Amendments Relating to Accessory Dwelling Units and Density</b>	

**Attachments:** a. Zoning Administrator Presentations  
b. Draft Language

**Submitted by:** Matt Whitmoyer  
Deputy Town Manager

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### **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 April 23<sup>rd</sup> Planning Commission meeting, the Planning Commission reviewed the items with the Zoning Administrator and directed staff to draft a recommended accessory dwelling definition and make recommendations on related regulations as well as make recommendations on when to address density concerns with a comprehensive plan amendment.

### **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 27<sup>th</sup> 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.



At the March 26<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>nd</sup> 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.

**Proposed/Suggested Motion:**

"In order to serve the public necessity, convenience, general welfare, and good zoning practice, I move to initiate a zoning text amendment to add a definition and regulations for accessory dwellings to the Zoning Ordinance based off the Planning Commission's draft definition and discussion. I further move to request that the Town Council set a joint public hearing date when staff has reduced the zoning text amendment to writing.

OR

Other action the Planning Commission deems appropriate.

# Accessory Dwelling Amendment



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# Objective

1. Review proposed definition and the zoning districts where they would be permitted.
2. Provide feedback to staff regarding the draft amendment.
3. Ask Town Attorney to finalize amendment.
4. Provide a recommendation Town Council.



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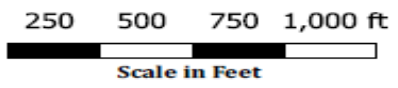
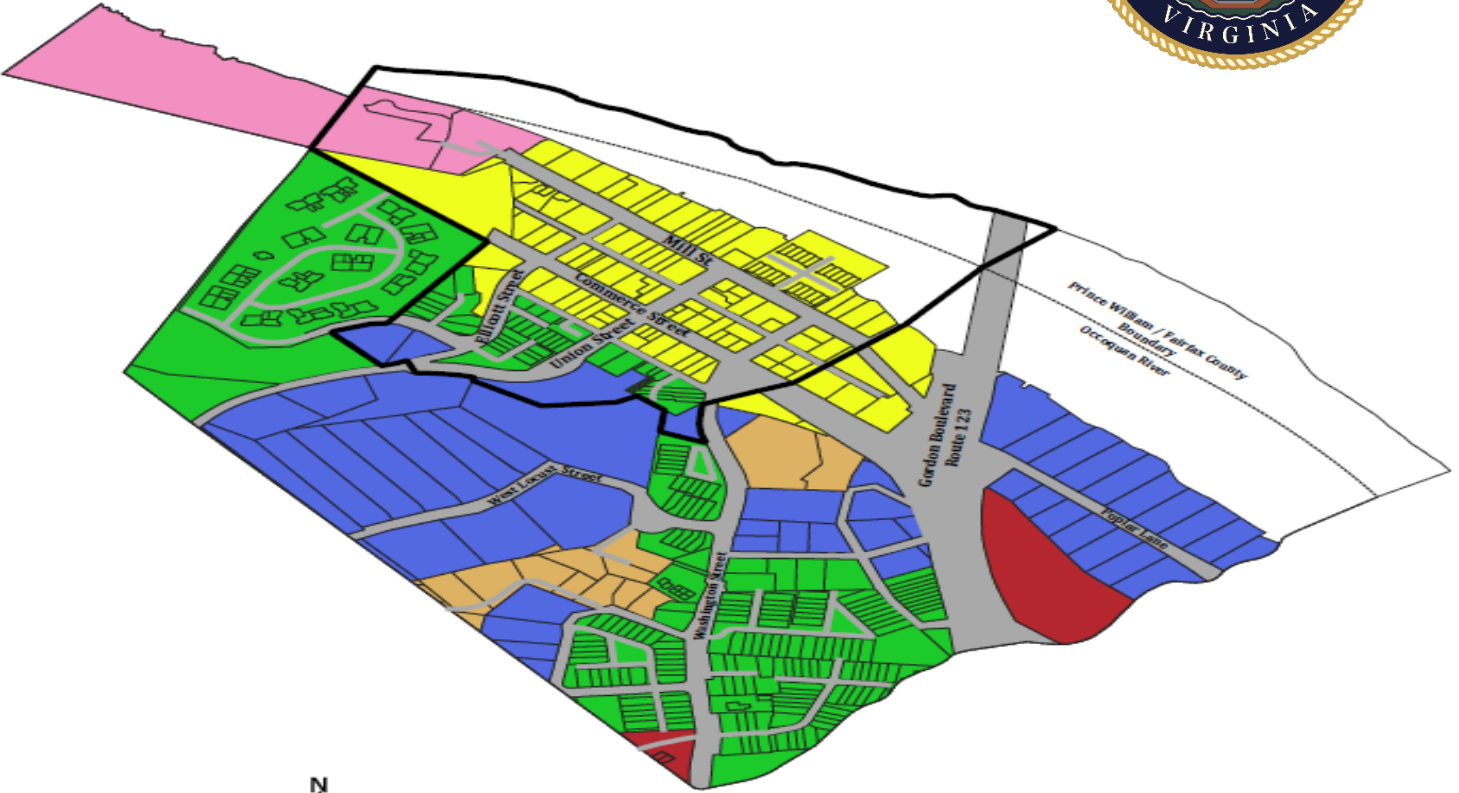
# Draft Amendment

- Define Accessory Dwelling Unit – limit size to maximum 750 square feet. Can be located inside a single-family detached dwelling or in an accessory building.
- To be permitted by-right in R-1, R-2, R-3, B-1 districts
- One accessory dwelling per single family detached dwelling or one per commercial lot.
- Permit accessory buildings in the B-1 zone.



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



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# Rationale

- Accessory dwellings are intended to be for the convenience of the property owner and subordinate in size and scale to the principal use (single-family detached home).
- There should be only one accessory dwelling allowed per single-family detached dwelling in a residential zoning district or per lot in a commercial zoning district to keep the use subordinate.
- An accessory dwelling can be located inside a single-family detached building or a commercial building with its own entrance and cooking facilities or be in a detached building.
- An accessory dwelling unit is typically intended for occupancy by one or two persons and not families.
- An accessory dwelling should be limited in size preferably to accommodate an efficiency unit or a one-bedroom unit.
- Recommend limiting the square footage of accessory dwellings to a maximum of 750 square feet. An on-line pole of 10 apartments for rent near the Town indicates that one-bedroom rental units vary in size from 642 square feet to 880 square feet. The predominant size was approximately 725 square feet. 750 square feet would be a generous size for a one-bedroom unit.
- Accessory dwellings are traditionally seen in residential districts that allow for single-family detached homes and commercial districts. It is recommended that they be permitted in the R-1, R-2, R-3, and B-1 zones and not the R-4 zone. The R-4 zone is exclusive to apartment dwellings. An accessory dwelling is often referred to as an accessory apartment.
- Accessory buildings are not permitted in the B-1 zone. This appears to be an oversight in the code. It is recommended that accessory buildings be added as a by-right use in the B-1 zone.
- Per Sec. 157.197, an accessory dwelling would be adding one bedroom to an existing single-family unit and would require one additional off-street parking space. For commercial buildings in the historic district, an accessory dwelling would require one additional parking space. (1 per 800 square feet). For commercial buildings located outside of the historic district, an accessory dwelling would require two parking spaces (1 per 400 square feet).



# 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 finalize a code amendment.
- Refer code amendment to Town Council.



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## Occoquan Accessory Apartment Amendment

### CHAPTER 157: ZONING

#### Sec. 157.008. Definitions.

Dwelling, Accessory. A dwelling unit not to exceed 750 square feet located in a single-family dwelling unit or in an accessory building located on the same lot as a single-family dwelling unit.

#### R-1 District

##### Sec. 157.041 Uses Permitted.

Structures to be erected or maintained, or land to be used, shall be restricted to one or more of the following uses.

(A) Uses permitted by-right. Uses permitted by right are as follows:

(10) Accessory dwelling; one unit per detached single-family dwelling.

#### R-2 District

##### Sec. 157.061 Uses Permitted.

Structures to be erected or maintained, or land to be used, shall be restricted to one or more of the following uses.

(A) Uses permitted by-right. Uses permitted by right are as follows:

(9) Accessory dwelling; one unit per detached single-family dwelling.

#### R-3 District

##### Sec.157.081 Uses Permitted

Structures to be erected or maintained, or land to be used, shall be restricted to one or more of the following uses.

(A) Uses permitted by-right. Uses permitted by right are as follows:

(12) Accessory dwelling; one unit per detached single-family dwelling.



## B-1 District

Structures to be erected or maintained, or land to be used, shall be restricted to one or more of the following uses.

(A) Uses permitted by-right. Uses permitted by right are as follows:

(24) Accessory buildings; except that a garage or other accessory structure, such as a carport, porch or stoop, when attached to the main building, shall be subject to property line or setback restrictions in effect within the town;

(25) Accessory dwelling; one unit per lot.

DRAFT

# Comprehensive Plan - Potential Land Use Density Changes



Town of Occoquan, VA  
Presentation by Legacy Engineering



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# Goals



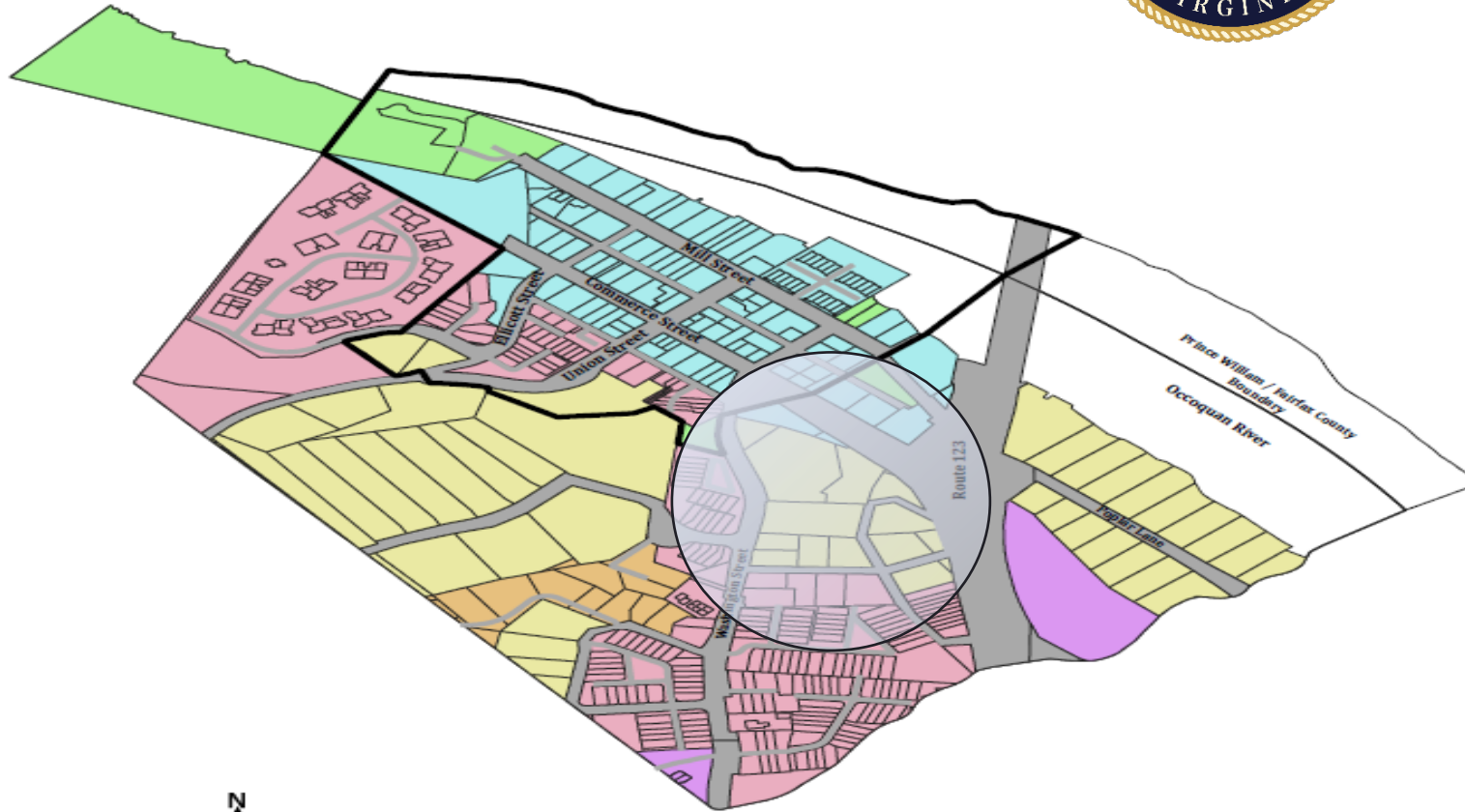
GOALS

1. Consider pros and cons of amending the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Densities prior to or in conjunction with the scheduled 2026 5-year Update.
2. 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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# State Code



- 15.2-2229 - Plan Amendments can be initiated by Town Council or Town Council direct the Planning Commission to prepare an amendment.
- 15.2-23230.1 – The Planning Commission may conduct a study of public facilities including but not limited to sewer and water facilities, schools, public safety facilities, and streets.
- 15.2-2230 – the Planning Commission must review the plan every 5-years to determine whether it is advisable to amend the plan.
- 15.2-2228 – Town Council may approve and adopt parts of a Comprehensive Plan.
- 15.2-2224 – Studies to be made in preparation of the plan – Use of land, preservation of agricultural and forestal land, production of food and fiber, existing development, trends for growth, natural resources, historic areas, groundwater and surface water, geology, population, employment, environment and economic factors, existing public facilities, drainage, flood control and prevention, dam break inundation zones, and potential impacts to downstream properties, electricity, broadband, transportation facilities, need for affordable housing.
- 15.2-2223.5 – Comprehensive Plan shall address manufactured housing.
- 15.2-2232.2 – Comprehensive Plan shall include coastal resource management guidance developed by (VIMS).
- 15.2-2223 – Requires development of a transportation plan that identifies infrastructure needs and new and expanded facilities to support planned development. The plan must be reviewed by VDOT.



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# Opportunities and Challenges of Amending the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map Now

## Opportunities

- Allows the Town to take advantage of a community need in a timely fashion.
- Allows the Town to be supportive of a desired development proposal.
- Allows the Town to take advantage of infrastructure funding opportunities.
- Can be focused on a specific area of the Town for the needs of that neighborhood or area (small area plan).

## Challenges

- May be narrow focused and not addressing broader community desires and needs.
- Limited community participation if “not in my back yard”.
- Detailed infrastructure planning may lag behind the land use decision.



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# Opportunities and Challenges of Amending the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map as part of the 5-Year Update

## Opportunities

- Provides a community-wide view of the proposed change.
- Can be a comprehensive view of the change in the context of other changes being proposed in the Plan.
- Potential for broad community engagement and support.

## Challenges

- The process can take a substantial amount of time to come to conclusion.
- The proposed map change could become a low priority in the scheme of the Plan Update.
- Support for the map change could lessen over time.



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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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