County of Fairfax, Virginia
Planning Commission Meeting
October 22, 2025
Planning Commission Action

ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT – PRC Plan Exception and Minor Modifications
(Countywide)

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS:
On October 22, 2025, the Planning Commission voted 12-0 to recommend to the Board of Supervisors to adopt the proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment for PRC Plan Exceptions and Minor Modifications with the staff-recommended options as set forth in the Staff Report dated September 9, 2025, and that the amendment become effective at 12:01 am the day following adoption.

ATTACHED DOCUMENTS:
Staff Report dated September 9, 2025

MJ

FAIRFAX COUNTY

PROPOSED ZONING ORDINANCE

STAFF REPORT

PRC Plan Exceptions and Minor Modifications

September 9, 2025

Hearing Dates
Planning Commission: October 22, 2025, at 7:30 p.m.
Board of Supervisors: November 18, 2025, at 4:30 p.m.

Staff Contact
William Mayland, AICP, Assistant Zoning Administrator

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): Reasonable accommodation is available upon 48 hours advance notice. For additional information on ADA call 703-324-1334 or TTY 711 (Virginia Relay Center).

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Background

The review of PRC plans, specifically the provisions related to when a PRC plan is required, was added to the Zoning Ordinance Work Program (Work Program) as a Priority 1 item with the approval of the FY 2024/2025 Work Program. This item was added based on a follow-on motion approved by the Board of Supervisors (Board) with the readoption of the Zoning Ordinance (zMOD) in May 2023. Specifically, the Board directed staff to review the exceptions for when a PRC plan or amendment to a PRC plan is required and consider expanding or further clarifying the types of minor revisions that would not require a PRC plan, particularly as they relate to open space or community recreational facilities.

The Planned Residential Community (PRC) district was established in 1962. The communities of Burke, Cardinal Forest, and Reston are the only PRC districts in the County. PRC districts require the area to be designated as a planned residential community on the Comprehensive Plan, along with a rezoning to the PRC district and approval of a development plan (DP) by the Board. However, many PRC developments are not subject to proffers because they were established prior to the County's statutory authority to accept proffers. Historically, the DP was considered a generalized plan, lacking detail with respect to the layout of the uses, among other things, so additional details are required as part of the PRC plan process. PRC plans, formerly called "preliminary site plans," used to be administratively approved by the Director of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES) (now Land Development Services). In response to the lack of Board and public input under the administrative process, the Board amended the Zoning Ordinance in 2007 to change the PRC plan process from an administrative approval by LDS to a legislative approval by the Board.

PRC plans are currently required for all development in the PRC district, with a few exceptions. In 1994, the Board amended the Zoning Ordinance to permit exceptions for PRC plan requirements, expanding the scope and types of improvements that could be made without filing a PRC plan. Those changes were meant to provide additional flexibility and to accommodate limited changes, such as minor building additions and changes in building setbacks and are comparable to those permitted for minor modifications in other zoning districts. The exceptions established in 1994 remain mostly the same today.

Under the current provisions in Zoning Ordinance subsection 8100.2.F(3)(c), a PRC plan is required for all uses **except** the following:

1. Single-family detached dwellings if the general street and lot layout are shown on the approved development plan.
2. Additions to existing single-family attached or detached dwellings or accessory structures related to existing single-family dwellings.
3. Additions to existing buildings or uses other than single-family dwellings when the additions do not exceed 2,000 square feet or ten percent of the gross floor area of the existing building or use, whichever is less.
4. Additions or changes to non-structural site elements such as transitional screening and parking and loading when the area of the addition or change does not exceed ten percent of the existing area occupied by the site element. Parking redesignation plans and parking tabulation revisions are also exempt from the requirement for a PRC plan regardless of the area of the change.
5. Minor accessory structures in open space areas such as benches, gazebos, playground equipment, and bus shelters.
6. Those special exception and special permit uses that do not require a site plan.
7. Any permitted use on a temporary basis for a period not to exceed one year.
8. Additions and alterations to provide an accessibility improvement or other reasonable accommodation.

Developments that are not in the PRC districts are also permitted to make minor revisions to their Board approval administratively, subject to the minor modification provisions in subsection 8100.5.A.(1). The minor modification provisions essentially require a determination that the proposal is in substantial conformance with the approved development. Minor revisions to a PRC development that meet the standards above can currently be approved through either process (PRC plan exception or minor modification); a minor revision in a PRC district that does *not* meet the above standards may still be approved through the minor modification process, if it is determined to be in substation conformance.

Proposed Changes

PRC Plan Exceptions

Proposed deletions to existing text are intended to align the permitted revisions for nonresidential and multifamily uses in a PRC district with the minor modifications provisions that permit administrative revisions in all other zoning districts. The intent of the revision is to eliminate the inconsistency between the current process for PRC plan exceptions and minor modifications for nonresidential and multifamily uses, while also seeking to avoid adverse impacts on adjacent residents. If a change is permitted by a minor modification, a PRC plan is not required (because the change has been determined to be in substantial conformance). Staff is also proposing new text to permit additional flexibility for community recreational uses in common open space, which would allow a homeowners' association to make changes to respond to the needs of residents without requiring a PRC plan. In staff's opinion, additional flexibility for community recreational uses is warranted because these uses are intended to directly serve the community and are subject to an internal homeowners' association process. Furthermore, the PRC district is unique among planned districts because many of these facilities were permitted under an administrative process, and the governing DP was often a blob plan simply showing "recreation" with no further detail.

The proposed text is provided in Attachment 1, and a summary of proposed text and changes from existing is provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Proposed text and changes from existing text

PRC Plan Exception (i.e., no PRC Plan required) – Proposed Text	Change from Existing Provisions
Single-family detached dwellings if the general street and lot layout are shown on the approved development plan.	No change proposed
Additions to existing single-family attached or detached dwellings or accessory structures related to existing single-family dwellings.	No change proposed
~~Additions to existing buildings or uses other than single-family dwellings when the additions do not exceed 2,000 square feet or ten percent of the gross floor area of the existing building or use, whichever is less.~~	Additions to multifamily or nonresidential buildings would be permitted in accordance with the provisions for minor modifications or variations. Current subsection 8100.2F(3)(i) is proposed to be relocated to highlight that a PRC plan would not be required for changes permitted by minor modification or variation.
Expansion of a parking lot area by up to 10 percent. ~~Additions or changes to non-structural site elements such as transitional screening and parking and loading when the area of the addition or change does not exceed ten percent of the existing area occupied by the site element~~. Parking redesignation plans and parking tabulation revisions are also exempt ~~from the requirement for a PRC plan~~ regardless of the area of the change.	Reworded and simplified the provision and would continue to permit a ten percent increase in parking without a PRC plan. Changes to other nonstructural elements would be addressed as a minor modification unless associated with community recreation in common open space.
~~Minor accessory structures in open space areas such as benches, gazebos, playground equipment, and bus shelters.~~ Additions or changes to approved recreational uses and recreational and associated structures in common open space, limited to the following: **a.** Changes that do not reduce the effectiveness of depicted setbacks, transitional screening, buffering, landscaping, or open space. **b.** One new structure that does not exceed 2,500 ***(Option: 2,000 -4,000)*** square feet of gross floor area.	Currently, the PRC plan exceptions allow an addition equal to the lessor of 10% of the gross-floor area of the building or 2,000 SF. The new text permits a one-time addition to an existing building in common open space up to 2,500 SF and allows one new building in common open space up to 2,500 SF.

PRC Plan Exception (i.e., no PRC Plan required) – Proposed Text	Change from Existing Provisions
c. A one-time addition to an existing structure that does not exceed 2,500 ***(Option: 2,000 – 4,000)*** square feet of gross floor area. **d.** Minor accessory uses, structures, equipment, or improvements such as benches, bus shelters, gazebos, pedestrian lights, security lights, walkway lights, picnic shelters, play equipment, splash pads and/or slides when accessory to swimming pools or playgrounds, and other similar accessory uses, equipment, structures, or improvements, but not to include sports illumination lighting.	The new text expands the examples of minor accessory structures permitted without a PRC plan.
~~Those special~~ Special exception and special permit uses that do not require a site plan.	Minor editorial change proposed
Any permitted use on a temporary basis for a period not to exceed one year.	No change proposed
Additions and alterations to provide accessibility improvement or other reasonable accommodation.	No change proposed

As discussed above, staff proposes to delete the current text for minor building additions and nonstructural elements that would relate to nonresidential and multifamily uses. Staff proposes to relocate and reword subsection 8100.2.F(3)(i) to make it clear that additions or changes would be exempt from a PRC plan if approved by a minor modification or variation in accordance with subsection 8100.5. Most requests for building additions and changes to site elements for nonresidential and multifamily uses in the PRC district are already reviewed under the minor modification provisions. Additions to attached and detached dwellings would continue to not require a PRC plan (or any determination under the minor modification provisions). New text would permit additions to community recreational structures and uses in common open space without a PRC plan (without needing a determination under the minor modification provisions). These structures could be both directly related to recreational uses, such as a pool house or concession stand, or indirectly related, such as a maintenance building for the recreational uses. All other uses would be subject to the minor modification provisions and could be permitted if the change was determined to be in substantial conformance with the approval.

As discussed above, under the current provisions, an addition in the PRC district could potentially be approved in one of two ways, depending on which provisions it could meet. As depicted in Table 2 below, a building smaller than 5,000 square feet or larger than 40,000 square feet could request a PRC plan exception, but an applicant would likely use the minor modification provisions as those would permit a larger addition (as would also be permitted in other zoning districts). Conversely, a building larger than 5,000 but smaller than 40,000 square feet would be permitted a larger addition under the current PRC plan exception provisions (as compared to what could be permitted under the minor modification provisions); allowing larger additions in the PRC district than in any other zoning district. In staff's opinion, it is

appropriate to apply the same minor modification provisions to permit additions to nonresidential and multifamily buildings in both the PRC and non-PRC districts, although this does limit the size of a potential addition for a limited subset of buildings in the PRC district. Staff notes that the minor modification provisions require that notice be provided to abutting property owners, which is not currently a requirement for a PRC plan exception, enhancing transparency.

Table 2: Comparison of Potential Building Addition

Building Size	PRC Plan Not Required (lesser of 10% up to 2,000 SF)	Minor Modification Permitted (greater of 500 SF or 5% up to 2,500 SF or 1% if building is over 250,000 SF)
1,000 square feet	100 square feet	500 square feet
2,000 square feet	200 square feet	500 square feet
5,000 square feet	500 square feet	500 square feet
10,000 square feet	1,000 square feet	500 square feet
20,000 square feet	2,000 square feet	1,000 square feet
40,000 square feet	2,000 square feet	2,000 square feet
50,000 square feet	2,000 square feet	2,500 square feet
100,000 square feet	2,000 square feet	2,500 square feet
200,000 square feet	2,000 square feet	2,500 square feet
300,000 square feet	2,000 square feet	3,000 square feet

Subsection 8100.5.A(1) Minor Modifications Approved by the Zoning Administrator

Staff recommends that a new criterion be added to the minor modifications provisions to codify existing practice relating to the administrative approval of certain changes to recreational facilities. The proposed language would permit administrative approval to modify active recreational facilities to adapt to changing recreational trends (such as converting a basketball court to a multipurpose court). The proposed facility must provide similar active recreational opportunities and be of similar impact. This change would apply in all zoning districts, including the PRC district. For example, a minor modification has previously been approved to allow a homeowners' association to convert a tennis court into a basketball court (with no additional sports lights). To add or remove a recreational facility would still require Board action through a minor variation in accordance with subsection 8100.5.A.(2) or an amendment to zoning approval through a public hearing.

Fees

Staff recommends a reduced fee for homeowners' associations (HOA) that submit a request for a minor modification or minor variation or an interpretation of approved zoning application. Homeowners' association requests for minor modifications are infrequent and are typically limited to changes to recreational uses or parking. (Staff notes that a condominium association or other type of association would be treated as and permitted the same fee as an HOA). Staff recommends that the reduced fee equals half of the existing fee, which is currently $700. Staff has provided an option for the Board to consider either $0, 1/8, or 1/4 of the application fee. Staff is also proposing a new application fee of $5,515 (the current fee for a Community Swim, Tennis and Recreation Club and Club, Service Organization, or Community Center) in lieu of the PRC plan application fee of $18,415 for community recreational facilities in common open space. Many existing recreational facilities were established through the administrative PRC plan process, and there may be a desire to upgrade some of these facilities beyond what could be

permitted administratively as a PRC plan exception. These types of applications are more consistent in scope of review as a Community Swim, Tennis and Recreational Club or a Club, Service Organization, or Community Center. Staff notes that if the facility was previously approved, the PRC plan would be treated as an amendment and only require half of the fee. Staff has proposed an option of $11,045, which is the fee for a Quasi-Public Park, Playground, or Athletic Field, for the Board's consideration.

Community Outreach

In addition to meeting with the Board's Land Use Policy Committee and the Planning Commission's Land Use Process Review Committee, staff held four virtual community meetings. Staff also met several times with the Burke Centre Conservancy Board of Trustees, the Reston Association Board of Directors, and the Reston Planning and Zoning Committee. Notification for these meetings, as well as white papers and draft text, were made available during this process through a dedicated webpage for this amendment.

Summary

As described above, permitting minor changes for multifamily and nonresidential uses located in the PRC District can be accomplished using the minor modifications provisions in the Zoning Ordinance and permits the same flexibility as every other zoning district. Additional flexibility is proposed for recreational uses in common open space and recognizes that these uses are operated by a homeowners' association and in many cases were established with blob plans. The new minor modification provision related to active recreational is consistent with past interpretations. New fees for minor modifications for homeowners' associations and PRC plans for community recreational uses recognize the unique nature of these requests. It is recommended that the amendment become effective at 12:01 a.m. on the day following adoption.

Attachment

1. Proposed Text

Proposed Text

In the revisions shown below, text to be deleted is identified with ~~strike-through~~ and text to be added is underlined. Option for consideration is provided ***(in parentheses, italics, and bold)***. When an option is presented as a range, the Board may approve any number within the range. The proposed changes are based on the provision of the adopted Zoning Ordinance in effect as of July 1, 2025.

#1 INSTRUCTION: Amend subsection 8100.2.F.(3)(c) as stated below to modify existing provisions and add new provisions for when a PRC Plan is not required. Delete subsection 8100.2.(3)(I) and re-letter accordingly.

(c) A PRC plan is required for all uses, except the following:

1. Single-family detached dwellings if the general street and lot layout are shown on the approved development plan.

2. Additions to existing single-family attached or detached dwellings or accessory structures related to existing single-family dwellings.

~~**3.** Additions to existing buildings or uses other than single-family dwellings when the additions do not exceed 2,000 square feet or ten percent of the gross floor area of the existing building or use, whichever is less.~~

3~~**4.**~~ Expansion of a parking lot area by up to 10 percent. ~~Additions or changes to non-structural site elements such as transitional screening and parking and loading when the area of the addition or change does not exceed ten percent of the existing area occupied by the site element~~. Parking redesignation plans and parking tabulation revisions are also exempt ~~from the requirement for a PRC plan~~ regardless of the area of the change.

~~**5.** Minor accessory structures in open space areas such as benches, gazebos, playground equipment, and bus shelters.~~

4. Additions or changes to approved recreational uses and recreational and associated structures in common open space, limited to the following:

a. Changes that do not reduce the effectiveness of depicted setbacks, transitional screening, buffering, landscaping, or open space.

b. One new structure that does not exceed 2,500 ***(Option: 2,000 - 4,000)*** square feet in gross floor area.

c. A one-time addition to an existing structure that does not exceed 2,500 ***(Option: 2,000 - 4,000)*** square feet in gross floor area.

d. Minor accessory uses, structures, equipment, or improvements such as benches, bus shelters, gazebos, pedestrian lights, security lights, walkway lights, picnic shelters, play equipment, splash pads and/or slides when accessory to swimming pools or playgrounds, and other similar accessory uses, equipment, structures, or improvements, but not to include sports illumination lighting.

5. Additions or changes approved as a minor modification in accordance with subsection 8100.5.

6. ~~Those special~~ Special exception and special permit uses that do not require a site plan.

7. Any permitted use on a temporary basis for a period not to exceed one year.

8. Additions and alterations to provide an accessibility improvement or other reasonable accommodation.

~~**(i)** Minor modifications to PRC plans may be approved in accordance with subsection 8100.5.~~

#2 INSTRUCTION: Amend subsection 8100.5.A.(1) to add new provision 12 as shown below

(1) Minor Modifications Approved by the Zoning Administrator

(a) The Zoning Administrator may approve minor modifications to proffered conditions, final development plans, PRC plans, special exceptions, and special permits when the Zoning Administrator determines that they substantially conform to the approved application and do not materially alter the character of the development. In making this determination, the Zoning Administrator may consider factors such as topography, engineering, and design. Minor modifications may not:

….

12. Materially change approved active recreational facilities except to replace an active recreational facility with another such facility that provides similar recreational opportunities and that has similar impacts.

#3 INSTRUCTION: Amend Table 8102.1 to permit a reduced fee for a Homeowners' Association to submit an interpretation of an approved zoning application or minor variation and a new fee for a PRC plan for community recreation uses in common open space.

8102. FEE SCHEDULE

1. Fee Schedule

TABLE 8102.1: FEE SCHEDULE This table includes standard fees related to approvals under the Zoning Ordinance. Additional fees may apply related to review or approval by other County departments or governmental or quasi-governmental agencies, or in accordance with Appendix Q of the County Code.	
APPLICATION TYPE	**FEE**
MISCELLANEOUS PERMITS AND APPROVALS	
General	
Interpretation of Approved Zoning Application or Minor Variation to Proffered Conditions	$700
Interpretation of Approved Zoning Application or Minor Variation to Proffered Conditions submitted by a Homeowners' Association	1/2 of Application Fee ***(Option: $0, 1/8 or 1/4)***

ZONING MAP AMENDMENTS		
District Requested		
PRC District	Rezoning with Concurrent Development Plan	$36,830 plus $1,230 per acre
	Rezoning with Concurrent Development Plan and PRC Plan	$36,830 plus $1,815 per acre
	PRC Plan	$18,415 plus $585 per acre
	PRC Plan for Community Recreation in Common Open Space	*$5,515* ***(Option: $11,045)***
	PRC Plan with Concurrent DPA, PCA, Special Exception, or Special Permit	$22,105 plus $585 per acre