



# VACo Supervisors' Forum – Planning & Land Use

VACo Training Center  
Richmond, Virginia

May 18, 2024



# Where Did Land Use Planning and Zoning Begin?

Would you believe 17th Century?

- **Private Property Rights**

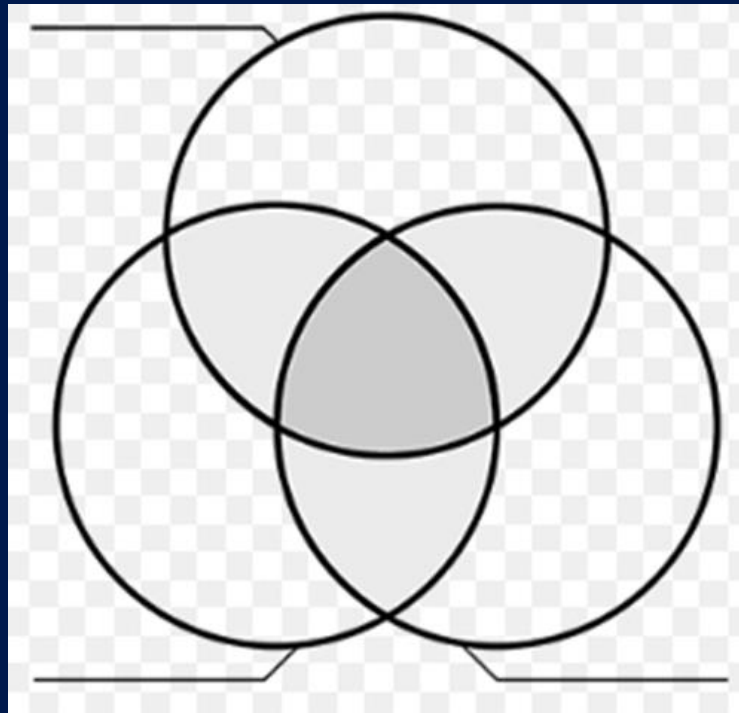
“What gives government the right to tell me what I can do with my property?”

- **Rights of Others**

“Your project impacts me”

“Put it somewhere else”

NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard)



- **Design of Communities**

General health, safety  
& welfare

# What is a Comprehensive Plan?

Since 1980, each VA locality is required to have a comprehensive plan.

- A community-guided vision for the physical development of a locality
- A showcase of a locality's assets and areas for improvement
- A practical roadmap to achieve identified vision and goals
- Legally required by Virginia State Code §15.2-2223



# Change, Visioning & Comprehensive Planning

Spend time in the future

Change is inevitable; the future will not be a repeat of the past

Important to understand what is changing

Determine the future you desire and then

**PLAN FOR IT!**

Analyze – Demography, Technology, Social Aspects to develop “strategic foresight”

# Overall Land Use Tools

Comprehensive Planning & Implementation Strategies



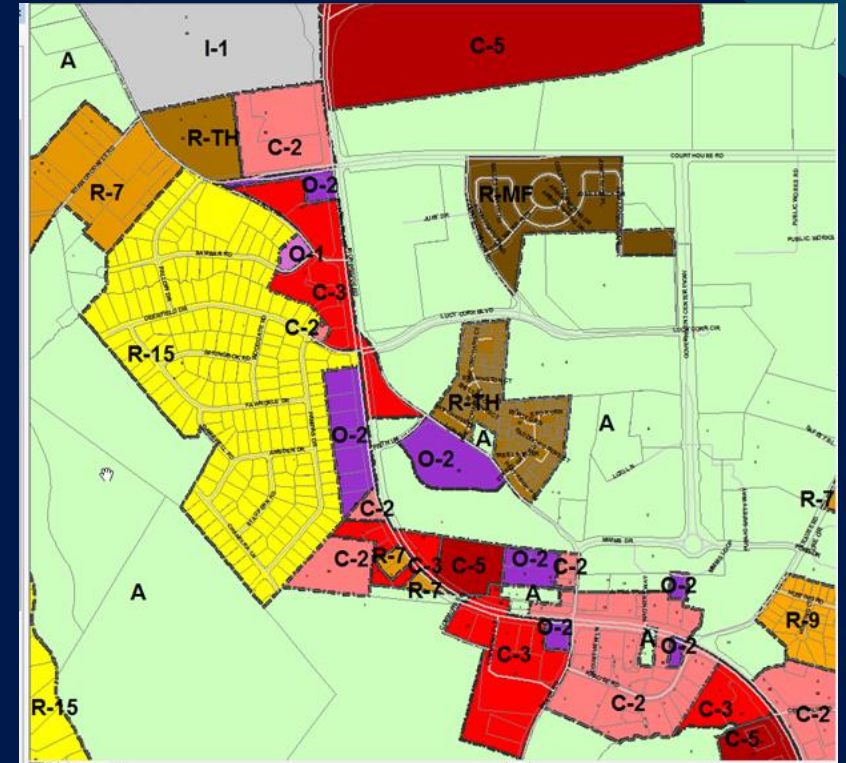
Zoning/ Case Management (Rezoning, Special/Conditional Use)



Development Review Processes

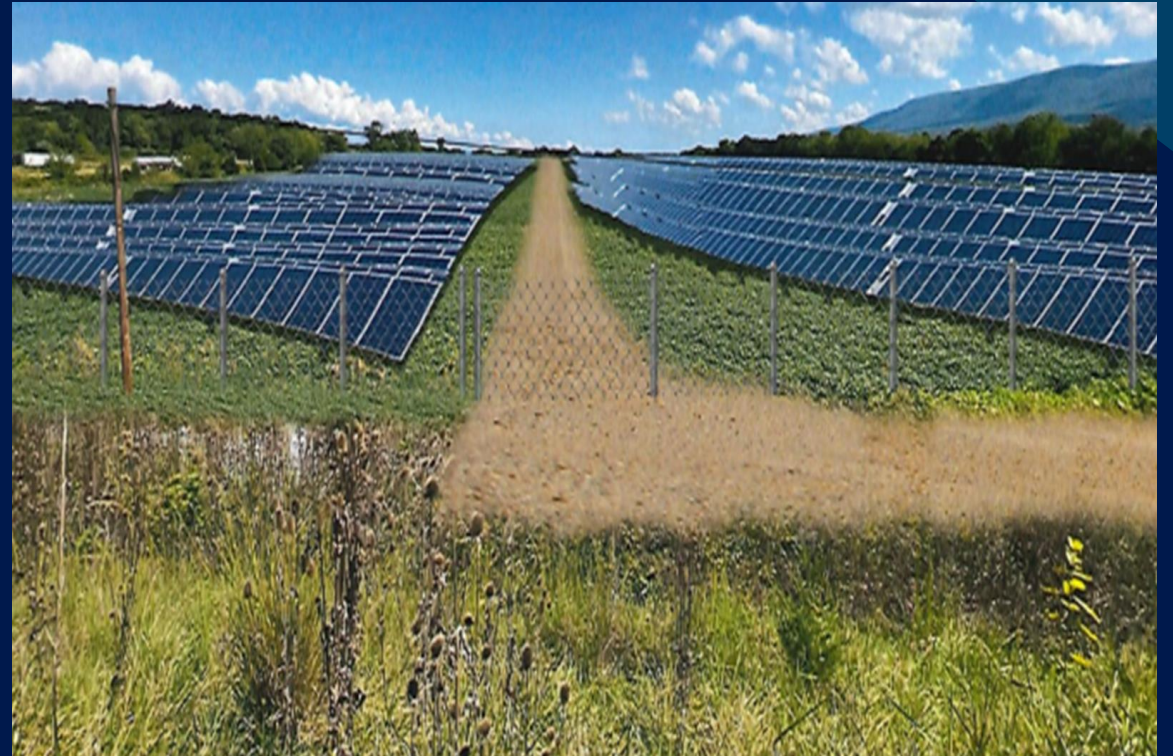


Enforcement



# Utility-scale solar

BIGGEST LAND USE CHANGE IN VA SINCE WWII



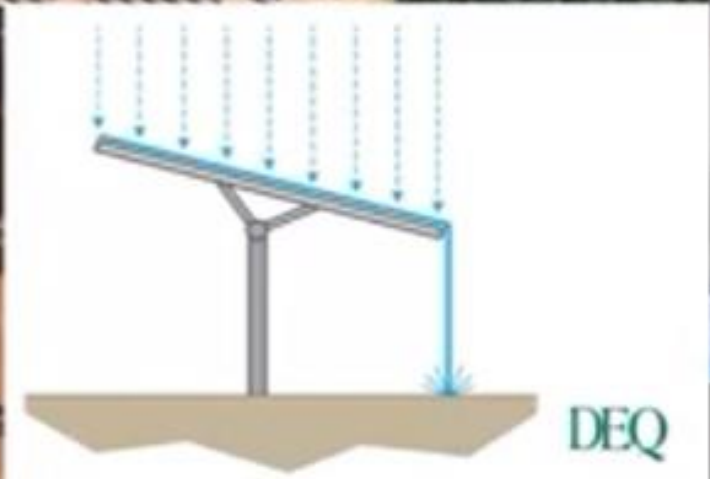


# Comprehensive Plan policies, Ordinance Regulations and Enforcement

## Utility-Scale Solar, Wind Energy, Data Centers and Battery Storage Facilities

- Ensure strong policies in Comprehensive Plan
- 15.2-2232 review – educate Planning Commission
- Zoning Ordinance regulations – Special/Conditional Use





# HOUSING NEEDS

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- Affordable Housing
- Essential Worker Housing
- Housing for the Ages



# Comprehensive Plan Strategies

Strategies to Preserve Existing  
Housing

Strategies to Increase Housing  
Affordability

Strategies to Diversify the Housing  
Supply

Strategies to Create Livable  
Communities



## Housing Affordability and Diversity

Homeowners and renters in Northampton County face high levels of cost burden, meaning that housing is unaffordable to many residents. Cost-burdened households are often forced into difficult financial tradeoffs and may be unable to meet other basic needs. In Northampton County, housing affordability is further complicated by the proliferation of vacation homes and short-term rentals, which drive up rental prices beyond the reach of low- to moderate-income individuals and families. Historically significant areas, such as Bayview, and those areas which are home to minority groups, are particularly subject to unbalanced housing cost. Addressing housing affordability is a complex issue that requires strong partnerships and identification of alternative solutions that can be adapted to changing conditions and resource availability.

Like many rural communities, Northampton County's housing stock is primarily single-family detached homes. Through the Comprehensive Plan community outreach process, residents expressed desire for expanded housing opportunities, including more options for cost-burdened households and aging residents. Adding housing supply and diversity of housing options can help alleviate housing cost burden by making units available at different price points and create opportunities for aging residents who wish to downsize or require additional care.

### Strategies to Increase Housing Affordability

7. Continue participating in the Eastern Shore Regional Housing Coalition, working collaboratively with regional partners to support and implement affordable and workforce housing initiatives that benefit Northampton County residents.
8. Develop a comprehensive housing study that identifies barriers to housing affordability and recommendations for code reform, infrastructure improvements, and capacity building.
9. Participate in programming, loan, and grant initiatives that support affordable housing, such as Tax-Exempt Bond Financing, the Housing Choice Voucher Program, and the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program.
10. Work with state and regional housing partners to leverage funds for conversion of vacant or underutilized buildings to low-moderate income housing.
11. Consider the effects on underserved and minority communities, including but not limited to gentrification and housing affordability, when assessing housing and development in Northampton County.

### Strategies to Diversify the Housing Supply

12. Diversify housing stock by allowing small-lot, attached, and multifamily residential in appropriate areas as identified in the Future Land Use Plan, including Town Edges.
13. Examine opportunities to streamline residential permitting processes and timelines.
14. Consider reducing minimum parking requirements for residential uses, which may be a barrier to development due to associated stormwater management costs.
15. Review the zoning ordinance to consider allowing accessory dwelling units by-right to provide affordable rental options and ease cost burden for homeowners.
16. Review the zoning and subdivision ordinances to expand housing opportunities for senior, elderly, multigenerational households, and special needs populations, both with and without care.



# REGULATION INFLUENCE

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- Land Use Regulations?
  - Exclusionary zoning
  - Lot sizes & square footage
  - Use prohibitions
  - Comprehensive Plans
  - Infrastructure
- Improve Affordability?
  - Increase housing supply
  - Rehabilitate existing housing
  - Other initiatives

Figure 3. Increasing Housing Supply and Affordability in Virginia



Adapted from the HB854 Statewide Housing Study

# ANALYSIS & IMPLEMENTATION

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- Lack of housing diversity is common in rural areas
- Housing diversity is critical
- Zoning regulations promote or inhibit new home construction
- No one single strategy, must be assortment of efforts
- Solutions identified to remove barriers
- Plans, zoning, uses, density, infrastructure and ACTION!

“Today's housing challenges demand new tools and better planning. The housing options we plan for today will foster the homes that families will grow, thrive, and dream in tomorrow.”

American Planning Association





# BERKLEY

## G R O U P

OUR EXPERTISE – YOUR SUCCESS

Thank you!  
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