

Stormwater Management Zoning Study

Climate Change, Energy and Environment Commission

November 21, 2022

Briefing Overview

Reduce flood risk

Zoning flexibility

Crossover with PSMP implementation

Reducing flood risk by increasing resiliency

Arlington's need for urgent action to address flooding, due to:

- Increasingly intense storms due to climate change
- Lack of sufficient space to make resilient system upgrades, or to provide safe pathways for water to flow during storm events
- Development patterns that pre-date modern stormwater management practices that have exacerbated the severity of flooding

[Stormwater Master Plan](#) (2014)

Strategy 1—Reduce flooding risks to public and private property

Strategy 2—Maintain and upgrade stormwater infrastructure

Strategy 9—Initiate climate adaptation and resilience planning



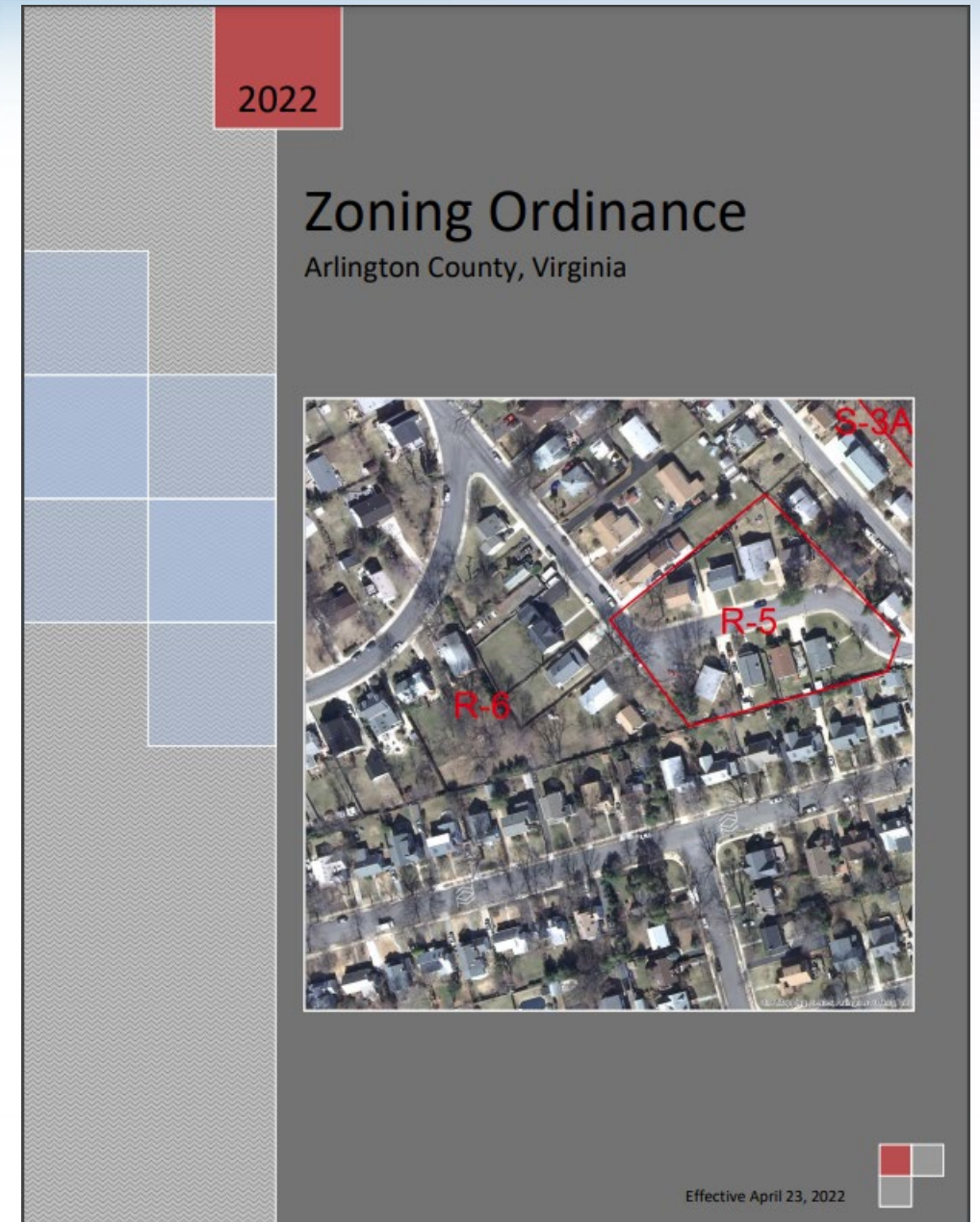
[Photo Credit: Nicole Bender via ARLNow.com](#)

[Website: Flood Resilient Arlington and the Path Forward](#)

Existing Zoning Standards

Issues with current zoning standards:

1. Lack of clarity for determining when SWM facilities are permitted or prohibited
2. Limitation in the Public districts (S-3A, P-S, and S-D) use tables for utilities
3. Setback standards prohibit structures (including SWM facilities) within setbacks
4. Taller fence heights along front lot lines (+4') needed to secure certain above ground features
5. Extra step in project management for County Board use permit
 - Duplicates similar public outreach **a)** during CIP and **b)** before/during the project



PSMP Implementation

Action Plan Recommendation:

- **1.5.10.** – Review and consider updating the County’s zoning regulations related to parks and public spaces in S-3A” and “P-S” districts, and other County codes as needed, related to setbacks, athletic field and other lighting, parking and parking options, dog parks and dog runs, signage, height, water features, fencing and temporary use of public and private property as public space.
- Identified as a priority recommendation in the County Board Guidance



PSMP Implementation Opportunity

Similar constraints for public spaces such as parks:

1. Setback standards prohibit many structures (ex. benches, seatwalls) within setbacks
2. Taller fence heights along front lot lines (+4') needed to ensure safety of play and users (ex. sport courts, dog parks, community gardens)

Publicly-owned land (ex. parks, schools) are being considered by DES for new SWM facilities to reduce flood risk

- Example: Underground vault beneath open space at Cardinal Elementary
- SWM facilities in public spaces may require rearrangement and/or replacement of amenities – added flexibility for siting supports park planning/development

Cardinal Elementary Project

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- Example: Underground vault beneath athletic fields at Cardinal Elementary
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Cardinal Elementary Exhibits



Scoping

Within scope:

1. Maximum height for fencing, particularly for front yard setbacks, in public spaces
2. Flexibility for certain public space features to be located within required setbacks
 - Benches, seatwalls, and other forms of seating
 - Athletic features, such as basketball hoops/poles
 - Playground equipment
 - Decking
 - Entry features

Outside of scope:

1. Maximum height and setback flexibility for buildings
2. Maximum height for storage sheds and similar structures
3. Regulations for athletic field lighting
4. Parking requirements
5. Signs
6. Use permit approval requirements

Schedule

Anticipated completion (tentative): **1st Quarter 2023**

1. September - October 2022
 - Introducing the study to County residents (critical watershed stakeholder groups)
 - Staff research/analysis

2. October - December 2022
 - [Complete study website](#)
 - Briefings with additional boards/commissions (ex. C2E2, PRC)
 - [12/14: Virtual community meeting](#)

3. 1st Quarter 2023
 - Zoning Committee of the Planning Commission
 - Briefings/updates with boards/commissions
 - Request to Advertise for County Board
 - Planning Commission and County Board action

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Nick Rogers, Principal Planner, CPHD
nrogers@arlingtonva.us | (703) 228-0035

Aileen Winqvist, Stormwater Communications Manager, DES
awinqvist@arlingtonva.us | (703) 228-3610