Attachment 4 - Drafted Definitions
Albemarle County Zoning Ordinance Modernization
21 July 2026

ZONING MODERNIZATION — Drafted Uses Definitions

Recommended Definitions for New and Consolidated Uses

Drafted Uses Definitions

Accessory apartment. "Accessory apartment" means a separate, independent dwelling unit contained within the structure of, and clearly subordinate to, a detached single-family dwelling, as distinguished from a two-family dwelling.

Accessory battery energy storage facility. "Accessory battery energy storage facility" means a battery energy storage facility not exceeding a combined total area of 500 square feet.

Accessory renewable energy system. "Accessory renewable energy system" means a renewable energy generation system, including a solar or wind system, that is accessory to a principal use on the same lot and produces energy primarily for use on site.

Accessory solar energy facility. "Accessory solar energy facility" means a solar energy facility that is both (a) either roof- or ground-mounted and (b) producing energy primarily for use on site.

Accessory wind turbine. "Accessory wind turbine" means a wind energy conversion system, including its tower, that is accessory to a principal use on the same lot and produces energy primarily for use on site.

Agricultural operation. "Agricultural operation" means any operation devoted to the bona fide production of crops, animals, or fowl, as provided in Virginia Code § 15.2-2288.6, including standard production agriculture and agritourism activities.

Agricultural operational uses. "Agricultural operational uses" means the primary operational activities conducted at an agricultural operation, including: the production and harvesting of fruit, produce, animal products, and other agricultural products; the manufacturing of wine, beer, or distilled spirits; on-site farm sales; direct-to-consumer sales and shipping; commercial distribution of agricultural products; storage and warehousing of an agricultural operation's products; and the tasting and consumption of alcoholic beverages produced under a farm winery, brewery, or distillery license.

Agricultural processing plant. "Agricultural processing plant" means an establishment where raw agricultural, silvicultural, or horticultural products are cleaned, packed, treated, or otherwise processed. This term does not include slaughterhouses or meat-packing establishments.

Agricultural service occupation. "Agricultural service occupation" means an occupation in which skill and expertise in an agriculturally related field are applied to serve others engaged in agriculture, provided that the sale of goods is limited to goods incidental to performing the service.

Animal sales and show grounds. "Animal sales and show grounds" means a permanent facility for the sale, showing, or exhibition of horses or other animals, including associated rings, stables, and spectator facilities.

Artisan manufacturing. "Artisan manufacturing" means the production, display, and sale of individually crafted tangible goods such as artwork, jewelry, furniture, sculpture, pottery, leathercraft, hand-woven articles, baked or prepared food and drink, watercraft, and similar items. Artisan manufacturing does not include mass production.

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Boarding house. "Boarding house" means a use composed of a building arranged or used for lodging for 30 consecutive days or longer, with or without meals, for compensation.

Campground. "Campground" means a parcel or tract of land used for the placement of tents, recreational vehicles, camping cabins, or similar temporary or seasonal accommodations for recreational or vacation use, and/or facilities for extensive outdoor recreation.

Community center. "Community center" means a place, structure, area, or facility used for cultural, educational, or recreational activities that is open to the public and intended to serve the local community. A community center is different from a neighborhood center, which is a use that is typically accessory to a residential development.

Cultural amenities. "Cultural amenities" means an establishment for the presentation of artistic, scientific, cultural, or historical materials, music, or live theatrical or musical productions, including but not limited to museums, noncommercial art galleries, arboreta, aquariums, botanical or zoological gardens, auditoriums, and music conservatories.

Detached single-family dwelling. "Detached single-family dwelling" means a dwelling designed for and occupied by one family that is not attached to any other dwelling.

Energy and communications transmission facility. "Energy and communications transmission facility" means a facility for the transmission (as distinguished from local distribution) of electric power, other energy, or communications, including transmission lines and associated structures.

Event at an agricultural operation, farm winery, farm brewery, or farm distillery. "Event at an agricultural operation, farm winery, farm brewery, or farm distillery" means an event conducted at, and subordinate to, an agricultural operation or a licensed farm winery, brewery, or distillery, such as a wedding or similar gathering, that is regulated separately from standard agritourism.

Farm winery, farm brewery, or farm distillery. "Farm winery, farm brewery, or farm distillery" means an establishment located on one or more lots in Albemarle County that is licensed as a farm winery under Virginia Code § 4.1-207, as a limited brewery under Virginia Code § 4.1-208, or as a limited distillery under Virginia Code § 4.1-206.

Fire and rescue squad station (volunteer). "Fire and rescue squad station (volunteer)" means a station operated by a volunteer fire company or volunteer rescue squad for the housing of fire or emergency medical apparatus and personnel.

Floodway fringe. “Floodway fringe” means the portion of the floodplain subject to a one percent or greater chance of flooding in any given year that lies between the regulatory floodway and the outer limits of the special flood hazard area shown on the Flood Insurance Rate Map.

Game preserve. "Game preserve" means an area of land maintained in a natural state for the protection and propagation of wildlife, on which hunting, fishing, or trapping may be regulated or prohibited.

Heavy manufacturing and processing. "Heavy manufacturing and processing" means the manufacturing, processing, fabrication, or assembly of goods or materials in a manner that, because of scale, external effects, or the nature of the materials or processes involved, is not conducted wholly within an enclosed building or is not compatible with surrounding uses without mitigation.

Hog farms. *[Reserved.]*

Homestay. "Homestay" means an accessory residential use providing transient lodging, and rooms for dining and meetings for use by homestay guests, provided that the dining and meeting rooms are subordinate to the homestay use. A homestay use may offer no more than five guest rooms for lodging.

Hydroelectric power generation. "Hydroelectric power generation" means an establishment for the generation of electricity using water sources.

Indoor commercial recreation. "Indoor commercial recreation" means a recreational or entertainment use operated for profit and conducted wholly within an enclosed building, including but not limited to bowling alleys, indoor theaters, fitness centers, arcades, and similar facilities.

Junkyard. "Junkyard" means any land or structure used for the abandonment, baling, collection, dismantling, maintenance, recycling, sale, salvaging, storage, or wreckage of junk.

Landfill. "Landfill" means a place for the disposal of solid waste approved in accordance with the regulations of the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality.

Light industrial. "Light industrial" means the processing, fabrication, assembly, or disassembly of items that takes place wholly within an enclosed building and that is compatible with, and does not detract from, surrounding uses. Light industrial uses may involve the use of tools or machinery. Large-scale storage or warehousing of materials is not a light industrial use.

Motor vehicle repair, major. "Motor vehicle repair, major" means a facility, other than a private garage, designed or used for the repair, replacement, or restoration of the body or chassis parts of motor vehicles, including collision repairs and body shops, and including mechanical repair.

Motor vehicle repair, minor. "Motor vehicle repair, minor" means a facility, other than a private garage, designed or used for the servicing and minor mechanical repair of motor vehicles, not including body work, collision repair, or painting.

Neighborhood retail and services. "Neighborhood retail and services" means small-scale retail sales and personal or business service establishments intended primarily to serve the daily needs of the surrounding neighborhood, conducted wholly within an enclosed building.

Outdoor athletic facility. "Outdoor athletic facility" means a facility located primarily outdoors for participation in athletic or recreational activity, including a swimming facility, golf course, tennis facility, or similar athletic facility.

Outdoor commercial recreation. "Outdoor commercial recreation" means a recreational or entertainment use operated for profit and conducted primarily outdoors, including but not limited to golf courses, driving ranges, miniature golf, go-kart tracks, water parks, and similar facilities.

Outdoor performance area. "Outdoor performance area" means a place of open-air assembly consisting of a central space or stage for performances, which may be open to the sky or partially covered or enclosed.

Public service. "Public service" means a service provided to the general public by, or under franchise or contract with, a local, state, or federal agency or a public utility, including the delivery of water, sewer, energy, and communications service.

Public use. "Public use" means a use, building, or structure — including, but not limited to, schools, offices, parks, playgrounds, and roads — that is owned or operated by, or receives a majority of its operating budget from, a local, state, or federal agency, including temporary or mobile facilities for these purposes; and public water and sewer transmission, main or trunk lines, treatment facilities, pumping stations, and similar facilities owned or operated by the Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority.

Public utility. "Public utility" means any plant or equipment for the conveyance of telephone messages, or for the production, transmission, delivery, or furnishing of heat, chilled air, chilled water, light, power, or water, or for sewerage facilities, either directly or indirectly, to or for the public. This term includes the water, sewer, energy, and communications distribution facilities described in current Sec. 10.2.1.6, but not transmission facilities (reference Sec. 5.1.12).

Renewable energy system, major. "Renewable energy system, major" means a renewable energy generation facility that is a solar energy facility occupying more than 21 acres, or a hydroelectric power generation facility.

Renewable energy system, minor. "Renewable energy system, minor" means a renewable energy generation facility that is a solar energy facility occupying 21 acres or less, or a small wind turbine.

Research and development. "Research and development" means a facility primarily used for the administration and conduct of investigation, examination, prototype production, experimentation, testing, or training aimed at the discovery and interpretation of facts and theories, or the practical application of those to products or processes.

Regulatory floodway. "Regulatory floodway" means the channel of a river or other watercourse, and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved to discharge the base flood without cumulatively raising the water surface elevation more than one foot.

Residential facility. "Residential facility" means a facility that provides residential care, including an assisted living facility, a skilled nursing facility, a children's residential facility, or a similar institution (reference Sec. 5.1.13).

Retail sales and service, general. "Retail sales and service, general commercial" means an establishment engaged in the sale or rental of goods, or the provision of services, directly to the general public and conducted wholly within an enclosed building.

Site-intensive commercial. "Site-intensive commercial" means a commercial use characterized by reliance on substantial outdoor area or large-scale site infrastructure to conduct its primary operations. Site-intensive commercial uses include those involving the outdoor display, storage, sale, service, or distribution of large goods, bulk materials, vehicles, or equipment, as well as uses that require permanent site infrastructure such as wash bays, fueling facilities, or service yards. A site-intensive commercial use generally cannot be conducted entirely within an enclosed building.

Special event. "Special event" means an event that is typically conducted on a single day, but which may be conducted for up to three consecutive days, for which attendance is permitted only by invitation or reservation, including but not limited to meetings, conferences, banquets, dinners, weddings, and private parties.

Special lot. "Special lot" means a lot created to be used exclusively for public or private streets; railroad rights-of-way and railroad lines; public utilities; publicly owned or operated public facilities;

publicly owned or operated parks; publicly or privately owned sites for personal wireless service facilities; central water supplies and central sewerage systems as those terms are defined in Chapter 16; stormwater management facilities shown on an approved final site plan or subdivision plat; cemeteries existing on June 8, 2011; conservation areas; preservation areas; open space; and greenways.

Structure. "Structure" means anything constructed or erected whose use requires a permanent location on the ground, or attachment to something with a permanent location on the ground, such as dwellings and buildings. Signs are excluded when determining setbacks. For floodplain-management purposes, "structure" means a walled and roofed building that is principally above ground, including a gas or liquid storage tank and a manufactured home.

Subordinate. "Subordinate" means clearly secondary and incidental to a principal use or structure in area, extent, and purpose.

Temporary event, major. "Temporary event, major" means a temporary event of larger scale or longer duration, as distinguished from a minor temporary event by thresholds set in the supplementary regulations.

Temporary event, minor. "Temporary event, minor" means a temporary event of limited scale and duration, as distinguished from a major temporary event by thresholds set in the supplementary regulations.

Two-family dwelling. "Two-family dwelling" means a structure arranged or designed to be occupied by two families, the structure having only two dwelling units.

Wholesale distribution. "Wholesale distribution" means an establishment where goods or merchandise are received, stored, and sold or transferred in bulk primarily to other businesses or to wholesalers for resale or commercial use.

Wildlife sanctuary. "Wildlife sanctuary" means an area of land or water set aside for the protection of wildlife, in which the taking of wildlife is prohibited and habitat is preserved.