



COUNTY OF LOUISA

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Chris Coon, Deputy County Administrator

DATE: June 25, 2026

RE: Proposed Ordinance Amendment – Humanitarian Shelter

Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to present a proposed amendment to Chapter 86 of the Louisa County Land Development Regulations to establish a comprehensive regulatory framework for Humanitarian Shelters.

The amendment modernizes the County's existing shelter regulations by replacing the current Emergency Shelter definition with Humanitarian Shelter use, establishing clear Conditional Use Permit (CUP) standards, and providing an emergency response exemption for religious assemblies and nonprofit organizations during declared emergencies.

Background

Since 2019, the County has regulated Emergency Shelters through the Conditional Use Permit process. While the existing ordinance established a basic definition for Emergency Shelters, it provided limited guidance regarding application requirements, operational expectations, and review criteria.

In response to increased interest from organizations seeking to provide temporary shelter services within Louisa County, staff initiated an ordinance review to create a more transparent and consistent framework for evaluating Humanitarian Shelters. The proposed amendment expands upon the existing ordinance by establishing a broader use definition, standardized application requirements, and operational standards that assist applicants, neighboring property owners, staff, the Planning Commission, and the Board of Supervisors during the review process.

Throughout the ordinance review process, staff received comments from community members, faith-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and legal advocacy organizations. Those comments were considered throughout the review process and resulted in several revisions to the proposed ordinance, including the addition of an emergency response exemption for religious assemblies and nonprofit organizations during declared local or state emergencies.

The proposed amendment was reviewed by County legal counsel throughout its development. Following legal review and public input, the Planning Commission voted 6-0 to recommend approval of the ordinance amendment

Summary of Proposed Amendment

The proposed ordinance establishes a regulatory framework for Humanitarian Shelters.

Key components include:

1. Humanitarian Shelter Definition

- Replaces the existing Emergency Shelter definition with a Humanitarian Shelter defined as a facility providing temporary shelter and basic services to individuals or families without requiring leases or occupancy agreements.

2. Conditional Use Permit Standards

- Establishes minimum application requirements related to:
- Operational policies and procedures;
- On-site supervision;
- Intake and screening procedures;
- Community impact mitigation;
- Good Neighbor policies; and
- Compliance with applicable building, fire, health, and accessibility regulations.

These standards provide consistent expectations while allowing the Planning Commission and Board to evaluate site-specific considerations through the Conditional Use Permit process.

3. Emergency Response Provision

- Allows religious assemblies and nonprofit organizations to operate a Humanitarian Shelter during the duration of a locally declared or state-declared emergency without obtaining a Conditional Use Permit.

This provision recognizes the important role community organizations play in responding to emergencies while maintaining the Conditional Use Permit process for ongoing shelter operations outside of declared emergencies.

Relationship to Existing Regulations

The proposed amendment builds upon the County's existing Emergency Shelter regulations rather than creating a new regulatory framework.

The amendment:

- Modernizes the existing ordinance by replacing the Emergency Shelter definition with a broader Humanitarian Shelter use;
- Establishes clear and consistent application requirements where few currently exist;
- Expands opportunities for Humanitarian Shelters by allowing the use to be considered through the Conditional Use Permit process in additional zoning districts; and
- Provides a defined emergency response exemption while preserving the County's ability to evaluate long-term shelter operations through established land use procedures.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Receive the Planning Commission's recommendation for approval;
2. Consider any public comments received; and
3. Adopt the proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment establishing Humanitarian Shelters and the regulations.