

The Berkley Group met with City of Hopewell staff, Planning Commission, and City Council on Tuesday, October 17, 2023 to introduce the Land Use Tools Report project and collect feedback on key issues and concerns for the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances, along with feedback on Comprehensive Plan elements and strategies. The Berkley Group also provided an overview of the project, including discussion of the project purpose, schedule, and structure.

A summary of the worksession discussion is included below. Feedback will serve to guide the Berkley Group during the diagnostic process and can also help guide future updates to the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances and the Comprehensive Plan.

Topic	Discussion Summary
Project Purpose and Schedule	Presented the purpose of the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances, reasoning for diagnostics, and schedule for this project. <i>No questions or discussion.</i>
Elements of a Diagnostic + Policy Report	Presented elements that will be reviewed and included as part of the diagnostic process and shared example matrices and policy report images. Question asking if the full Zoning Ordinance would be reviewed as part of the diagnostic process. BG clarified that the full Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, and Comprehensive Plan will be reviewed.
Initial Findings	Presented examples of initial findings that have emerged from staff and BG review of the Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and Subdivision Ordinance. <i>No questions or discussion.</i>
Comprehensive Plan Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Commission is currently reviewing the 2018 Comprehensive Plan. Chapter 3 strategies are taking the most time for review, but the Planning Commission can share what they have discussed thus far. The 2018 Plan expanded on many topics and was a great improvement from what Hopewell had in the past. • Hopewell has drafted a climate resiliency plan; could this be reflected as part of the Comprehensive Plan? BG replied affirmatively and stated that the Code of Virginia now requires all Comprehensive Plans to address resiliency. • Article 18 of the Zoning Ordinance has a lot of inconsistencies with the Comprehensive Plan. The largest goal is to ensure that there are no inconsistencies between the Plan and the Ordinances. • The Comprehensive Plan provides the necessary guidance for the City, but it does not explain how to measure progress or prioritize the strategies. • The annual budgeting process should include the Comprehensive Plan as a greater part of the process. • Support addressing transportation more specifically in the Comprehensive Plan. • Desire to have a clear vision for the Comprehensive Plan so that it can better guide focus and implementation. Priorities/objectives seem to have changed from the 2018 Plan to now.
Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The low-hanging fruit to address includes conditional use processes, nonconforming issues, and use permissions. • Recently, a photography studio was not allowed; it was defined in the Ordinance and allowed in one business district, but not allowed in the business district that was being requested. This is one of the many examples of how the Zoning Ordinance is currently hindering business development. • Feel that there is a lack of strong housing policy (in both the Comprehensive Plan & Zoning Ordinance), but virtually everything relates back to housing. Ensuring there is enforcement and that there is quality assurance is also important. We have preapproved house designs for nonconforming lots; this is a benefit/improvement for the community.

Topic	Discussion Summary
Emerging Issues Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resiliency, housing, capital improvements planning, and transportation planning were all mentioned as emerging issues that need to be addressed.• Use permissions need to be reviewed, along with the types of uses that are provided.• Group Homes are not addressed appropriately in the Zoning Ordinance, but they are conducted in practice in compliance with the Code of Virginia.• Desire to address and allow truck stops with standards and to prevent “unofficial” truck stops. Addressing crime prevention through environmental design is desired.• The Planning Commission has conducted extensive research regarding short-term rentals, but the Plan and Zoning Ordinance currently do not address.• The diagnostic should address all the ways that dwellings can be occupied.• A preventative maintenance program is needed for city assets.

Next Steps

- First staff checkpoint to discuss diagnostic matrices: WO November 6 or 13
- Second staff checkpoint to discuss the draft Land Use Tools Report: WO December 11
- Joint Worksession #2: January 2024
- Final Deliverables: January 31, 2024