



Planning Commission

● Basics, Roles, & Responsibilities

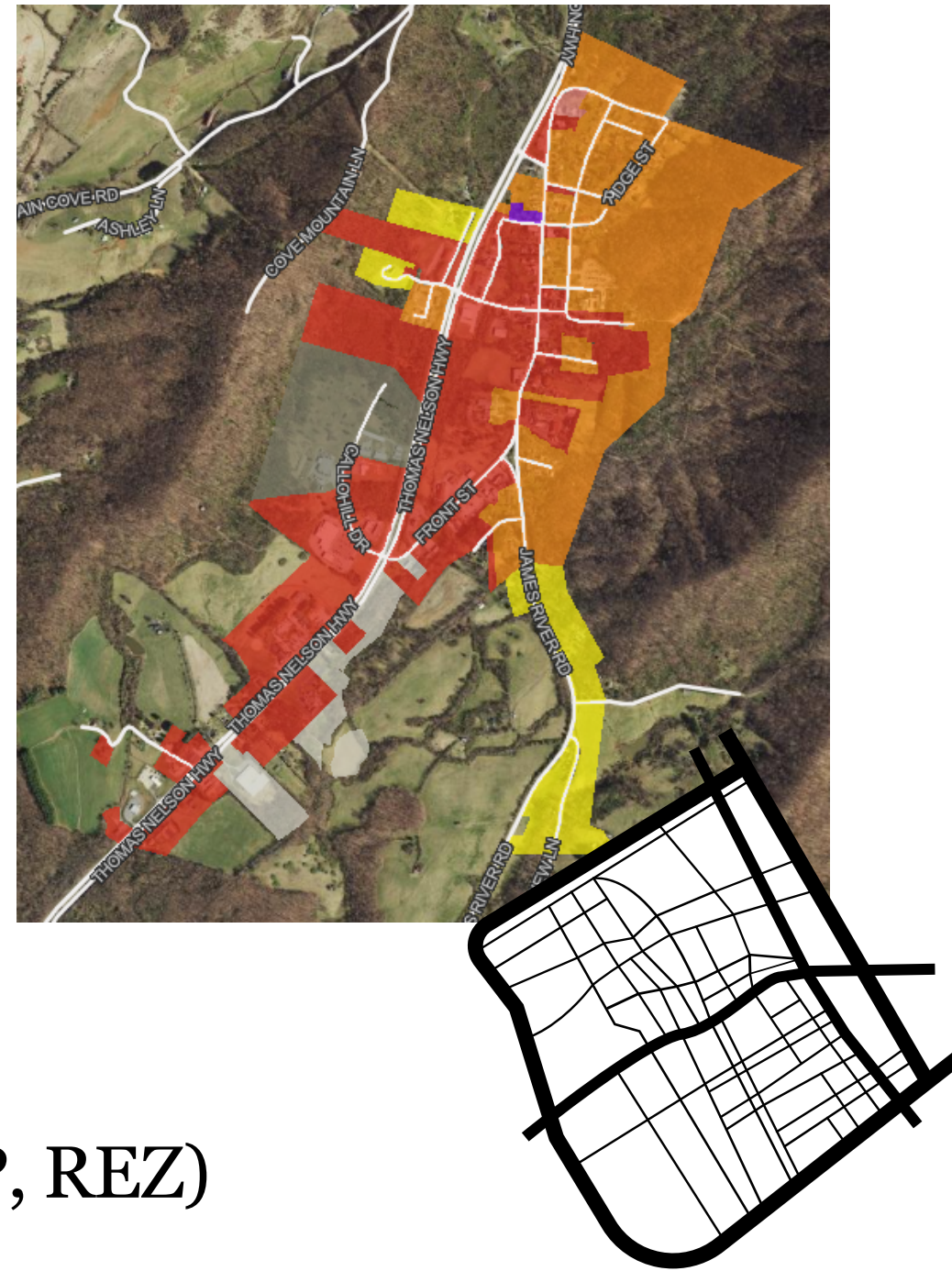
Presented By :
Dylan M. Bishop

Date
July 22, 2026

www.nelson2042.com
www.nelsoncounty-va.gov

Planning & Zoning Basics

- Comprehensive Plans
- Zoning Ordinances
- Subdivision Regulation
- Staff Administration
- Site Plans
- Land Use Applications (SUP, REZ)



Nelson County Planning & Zoning Mission Statement:

“The Planning & Zoning Department is tasked with ensuring the public health, safety, convenience, and welfare of Nelson County’s citizens, and to plan for appropriate, sustainable development. The Department maintains, administers, interprets, and enforces the comprehensive land use plan and zoning and subdivision ordinances. Staff is available to assist the public via phone, e-mail, and in-person inquiries regarding planning and zoning concepts and procedures.”

Roles & Responsibilities

- Enabling Legislation: Code of Virginia Title 15.2, Chapter 22, Article 2 governs local Planning Commissions and how they are to operate
- Ensure consistency with Comprehensive Plans
- Recommend zoning and land use
- Review transportation, utilities, and environmental impacts
- Conduct public engagement
- Advise governing body on land use decisions



Bylaws

Well-defined procedures help groups deliberate respectfully, protect members' rights, and reach legitimate decisions that participants can trust, even when they disagree with the outcome.

Amended April 23, 2025

Addresses powers and duties, membership, elections, and appointments, committees, meetings, rescheduling, minutes, quorum (4), tie votes, agenda order

FOIA, Conflicts of Interest, Rules of Order

Work Program: “Annually the Commission may recommend to the BOS a work program of major projects (i.e. plan amendments and major ordinance amendments) having priorities for the ensuing year.”

Bylaws - Robert's Rules of Order Main Themes

Principle	Purpose
Order	Conduct one item of business at a time.
Fairness	Give every member an opportunity to participate.
Majority Rule	Most decisions are made by majority vote.
Minority Rights	Protect the ability to debate and dissent.
Equal Participation	Members have equal procedural rights.
Efficiency	Follow consistent procedures to avoid confusion.
Transparency	Conduct business openly and record official actions.
Impartial Leadership	The chair enforces rules fairly and objectively.



Upcoming & Ongoing

Fee presentation and discussion

Strategic Planning for County-owned properties

Updating forms and applications for more streamlined processing and tracking

Resume Site Plan Committee review meetings and formal pre-application meetings with applicants

Create educational and resource materials for public use - increase utilization of County website page

Vacant Structure Registration Program

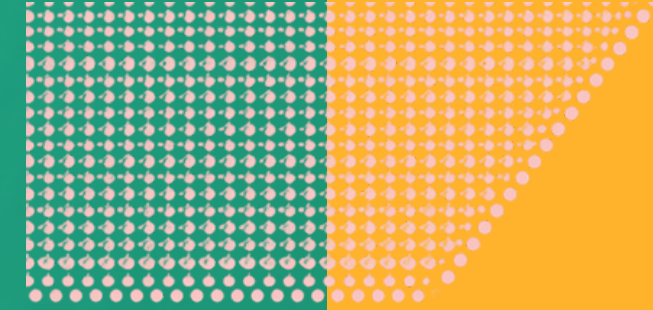
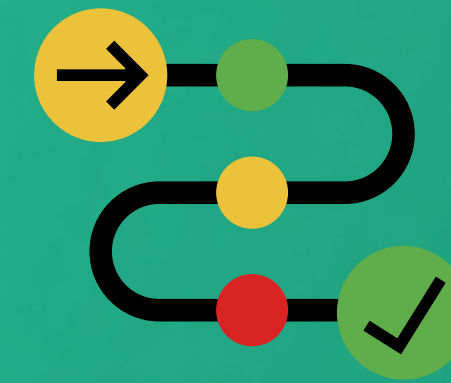
Identify and monitor availability of planning grant opportunities such as GAP-TA

Proposed Work Program



Proposed Work Program

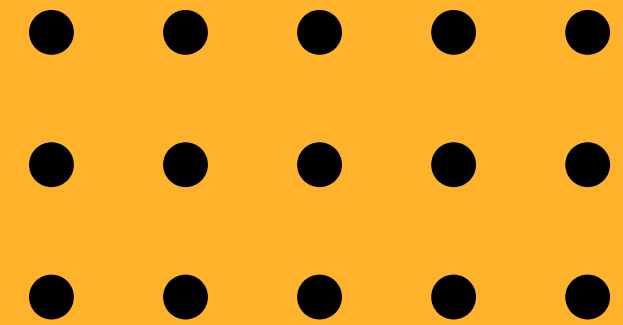
- Schedule Annual Retreat to review Comprehensive Plan and Zoning & Subdivision Ordinances (budget requests typically due in December)
- Identify and prioritize goals and projects for the upcoming fiscal year
- “Meet the Planning Commission” special public meeting at various locations, or agenda item on recurring basis - quarterly?
- Collaborate with EDA, NCSA, BOS and other departments / agencies



Focus Areas	#	Implementation Strategy	Implementation Type	Responsible Party	Priority	Resources
Protect Rural Character & the Environment	3.7	Identify opportunities to connect neighborhoods and development through sidewalks, shared use paths, and trails. Require such connections in new development or redevelopment proposals.	Regulation Updates and Enforcement	Nelson County	Short	Nelson County (Zoning Ordinance); VDOT; Bike Virginia; USDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Program; AASHTO Publications
	3.8	Encourage revitalization, repurposing, and rehabilitation of existing structures by promoting available resources, such as grants and tax credits, and pursuing funding to support such efforts.	Community Outreach and Education; Partnerships	Nelson County; Regional and Institutional Partners	On-Going	VMS; USDA Rural Development Division; Virginia's Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit (HRTC) Program
	3.9	Encourage Low Impact Development practices and alternative wastewater systems in environmentally sensitive areas to ensure the preservation of water quality in the County.	Regulation Updates and Enforcement	Nelson County	On-Going	Nelson County (Zoning Ordinance, Code of Ordinances); TJPDC
	3.10	Continue to encourage and administer cluster subdivision regulations and incentivize their use in rural areas of the County to preserve open space and reduce the impact of development. Regularly evaluate and modify cluster subdivision regulations as needed to ensure they are effective and meet County standards.	Regulation Updates and Enforcement	Nelson County	On-Going	Nelson County (Zoning Ordinance)
	3.11	Discourage the use of large-scale development in Montebello through Zoning.	Regulation Updates and Enforcement	Nelson County	On-Going	Nelson County (Zoning Ordinance)



Zoning & Subdivision Ordinance Update



● History & Timeline, Public Open House

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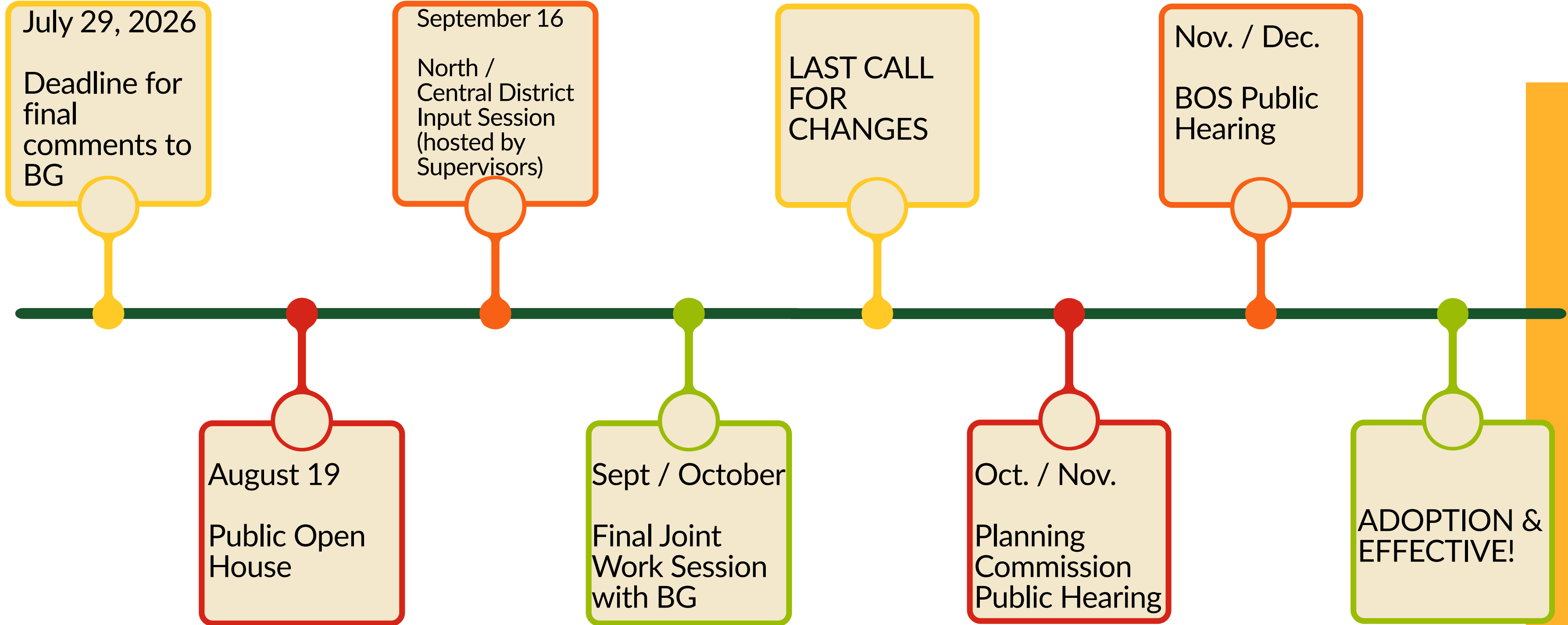
History & Timeline



- July 2019 - Dylan is hired
- July 2021 - Department secures funding for Comp Plan Update
- April 2022 - *Phase I*: Comp Plan Update Kickoff
- April 2024 - Nelson 2042 Comp Plan Adopted
- July 2024 - *Phase II*: ZOSO Update Kickoff
- Winter 2026 - Scheduled for Adoption
- Begin 2027 - *Phase III*: Zoning Map Amendments



Remaining Timeline



Public Open House

Nelson Center

Wednesday, August 19

5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.



NELSON COUNTY ZONING & SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE REVIEW

The draft Zoning & Subdivision Ordinance is ready for public review! The community is invited to a public Open House to learn about the Ordinance and give feedback. A brief presentation at 5:30 p.m. will be followed by self-guided review of displays & documents. Staff will be available to answer questions, and an exit survey will be provided.

Public Open House

Wednesday **August 19**, 2026: **5:30 - 7:30 p.m.**

The Nelson Center

8445 Thomas Nelson Hwy, Lovingston, VA 22949

Can't attend?

Visit www.nelson2042.com to
read the draft ordinance &
submit comments

Contact

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New Text: Private Recreation and Accessory Structures

Discussed at July 15 Work Session

Draft definition for “private recreation” and use standards

Other proposed revisions include adaptive reuse, ADU, STR, campgrounds, prohibition of RV storage and use on CO151

