

FRANCONIA LAND USE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Frequently Asked Questions

Welcome to the Franconia Land Use Advisory Committee. You have volunteered to represent your community association to provide advice and recommendations to the Franconia District Planning Commissioner on land use and zoning issues within the Franconia Magisterial District. Below, we provide information to get you started.

What is the Franconia District Land Use Advisory Committee (FDLUAC)?

- The FDLUAC is a Magisterial District Citizen Group (i.e., local planning group) made up from a loose confederation of homeowner, condominium, and civic associations in the district, each providing a volunteer representative to serve on the committee. The citizen volunteers form a unique pool of talent and experience.
- The FDLUAC monitors planning and zoning activity for the district. The FDLUAC often is involved in the review of proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments, rezoning cases, and proposals for siting of public facilities.
- The FDLUAC is not a Fairfax County chartered governmental entity. It is not bound by rules (e.g., keeping minutes or following Robert's Rules of Order Newly revised) that govern meetings for government entities.
- The FDLUAC meets on a schedule determined by the chairperson.

How did I become a member of the FDLUAC?

- Your association provided the Franconia District Supervisor with an appointment letter.
- The FDLUAC chairperson added your name to the membership list.

What are my duties as a member of the FDLUAC?

- Your primary duty is to represent your community association and to keep its members informed.
- Other duties include:
 - To be informed regarding land use in Fairfax County and particularly within the Franconia Magisterial District.
 - To prepare for and attend scheduled meetings (e.g., in-person or virtual) of the FDLUAC.
 - To offer guidance and recommendations, as member of the FDLUAC, to the District Planning Commissioner regarding land use and zoning issues.

What are the roles, responsibilities, and authority of the FDLUAC?

- The FDLUAC is the first opportunity for public engagement involving land use and zoning issues.
- The FDLUAC reviews applications for amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and reviews requests for changes in zoning.
- The FDLUAC is an advisory body. It makes recommendations only. It does not have approval authority for any action. That authority is reserved for the elected officials of the Board of Supervisors.

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What documents are pertinent to the subject of land use within the FDLUAC?¹

- Fairfax Countywide Strategic Plan, Revised May 2023.
- Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2017 Edition, as amended.
- Fairfax County Policy Plan: The Countywide Policy Element of the Comprehensive Plan for Fairfax County, Virginia, as amended.
- Fairfax County 2023 Annual Report.
- Fairfax County reports and studies addressing issues relating to land use and zoning.

What is the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan?²

“The Comprehensive Plan (the Plan) is required by state law to be used as a guide to decision-making about the natural and built environment by the county’s Board of Supervisors, and others such as the Planning Commission and the Board of Zoning Appeals. It is also a guide for county staff and the public to use in the planning process. The Comprehensive Plan consists of the Policy Plan, four Area Plan volumes, and a Plan Map. The Policy Plan volume includes general countywide policy on land use, transportation, housing, the environment, heritage resources, economic development, and public facilities, including public parks, recreation and trails. The Area Plans contain detailed long-range planning recommendations organized by geographic areas of the county. The Plan recommends how land should be used, but not when development will occur. The Plan Map illustrates the recommended land use, but must be used with the Plan books to fully understand what is planned.”

What Area Plan covers the Franconia Magisterial District and what is in it?

- Planning Area IV.
- The Area IV Plan consist of the following:³
 - Cover and Front Matter
 - Area IV Overview
 - Franconia-Springfield Area and Fort Belvoir North Area
 - Franconia-Springfield Transit Station Area (TSA)
 - Springfield Community Business Center (CBC)
 - Richmond Highway Corridor
 - Richmond Highway Corridor, Urban Design Recommendations
 - North Gateway Community Business Center (CBC)
 - Penn Daw Community Business Center (CBC)
 - Beacon/Groveton Community Business Center (CBC)
 - Hybla Valley/Gum Springs Community Business Center (CBC)
 - South County Center Community Business Center (CBC)
 - Woodlawn Community Business Center (CBC)
 - Suburban Neighborhood Areas (SNAS)
 - Rose Hill Planning District
 - Van Dorn Transit Station Area (TSA)
 - Kingstowne Community Business Center (CBC)

¹ These can be found by accessing the Fairfax County website www.fairfaxcounty.gov.

² ‘fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development’

³ Some may not directly relate to the District, however, decisions made in the areas may effect land use issues within the Franconia Magisterial District.

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- Springfield Planning District: I-95 Industrial Corridor

What is the relationship between the FDLUAC, the Franconia District Planning Commissioner, and the FDLUAC and the Franconia District Supervisor?

- There is neither a direct relationship between the FDLUAC and the Franconia District Planning Commissioner nor a direct relationship between the FDLUAC and the Franconia District Supervisor. That is, the FDLUAC does not report to either party and neither party issues instructions on how the FDLUAC conducts its business.
- The FDLUAC chairperson informs the Franconia District Planning Commissioner of actions, in the form of advice, taken on motions before the FDLUAC. The Franconia District Planning Commissioner evaluates this advice and uses it, among other data points (i.e., Goals and Objectives established in the Fairfax County Strategic Plan and the Policy Plan portion of the Comprehensive Plan), when in deliberations with the other members of the Fairfax County Planning Commission.
- The Franconia District Supervisor, while aware of land use issues within the district, engages the FDLUAC at his discretion. For example, the Supervisor may request a special session of the FDLUAC in order to facilitate further discussion on an issue.

What is the “land use” policy of Fairfax County?⁴

“The county's land use policies should maintain an attractive and pleasant quality of life for its residents; provide for orderly and coordinated development for both public and private uses while sustaining the economic and social well-being of the county; provide for an adequate level of public services and facilities, including a system of transportation facilities, to sustain a high quality of life; and ensure sound environmental practices in the development and redevelopment of land resources. Growth should take place in accordance with criteria and standards designed to preserve, enhance, and protect an orderly and aesthetic mix of residential, commercial/industrial facilities, and open space without compromising existing residential development. The Comprehensive Land Use Plan should set forth long-range recommendations and implementation techniques to ensure the envisioned coordination of harmonious development, while still achieving our economic goals. Densities and heights in excess of those compatible with these goals should be discouraged, nor should these policies be construed as incompatible with the county's affordable housing goal.”

What is meant by character when referring to the Franconia Magisterial District?

- Webster’s Dictionary defines “character” as “a distinctive trait, quality, or attribute...an essential quality.” And “characteristic” as “a distinguishing trait, trait, feature or quality...”
- The look and feel of the Franconia Magisterial District is not readily apparent when reading the Comprehensive Plan, as the plan describes the District in general terms. There is no description of actual distinguishing traits, features, or unique qualities that distinguish the District from the others in Fairfax County. The Comprehensive Plan states how things should be based on the aspirational policy goals and objectives of the Board

⁴ Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan – Policy Plan > Land Use [Amended Date: 2022.06.28]

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of Supervisors and those goals and objectives contained in the Fairfax County Strategic Plan.

- The Franconia Magisterial District has three distinct areas within its boundaries, making defining a general District character challenging. These are the Route 1 corridor (i.e., the west side of Route 1), with a mixture of residential, commercial, and retail. Strip malls, motels, and some residential distinguish the area. A major project focuses on transforming the area along a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) route. The Springfield Town Center, the Franconia-Springfield Transit Station Area, and the Springfield Community Business Center (CBC) are on the District's western end. It is another mixture of commercial, retail, and residential. The center of the District is predominately residential (seventy-six associations). It also contains the Van Dorn Transit Station Area, the Franconia District Park and recreation area, Huntley Meadows, the Rose Hill Center and Kingstowne Town Center. Along Franconia Road are eight gas stations, five schools, and eleven houses of worship. Along Kingstowne Boulevard are three grocery stores, a Walmart, and other retailers. The Festival at Manchester Lakes, a retail mall dominated by a grocery store and restaurants, is at the corner of Manchester Lakes Boulevard and Beulah Street.

How can I best participate as a committee member?

- Be knowledgeable, open-minded, engaged, and courteous.
- Be supportive. Form relationships with other FDLUAC members.
- Share ideas.