

Commission on Local Government

Estimate of Local Fiscal Impact

2025 General Assembly Session | 1/16/25

In accordance with the provisions of 30-19.03 of the Code of Virginia, the staff of the Commission on Local Government offers the following analysis of legislation impacting local governments.

HB2499: Comprehensive plan; subdivision ordinance; local approvals. (Patron: David Owen)

Bill Summary: Comprehensive plan; subdivision ordinance; local approvals. Provides that a locality's comprehensive plan shall not constitute the basis, in whole or in part, whether directly or through incorporation into any zoning ordinance, subdivision ordinance, or other ordinance or manual, for the disapproval of a site plan, subdivision plat, or other administrative approval that is otherwise in conformity with duly adopted standards, ordinances, and statutes. The bill also shortens the timeframes for various local government approvals of subdivision plats and site plans. Additionally, the bill calls on the Virginia Code Commission to convene a work group consisting of various stakeholders to review existing provisions related to the submission, review, and approval of subdivision plats and site plans. The work group shall develop recommendations to (i) organize procedural steps in a clear, logical, and sequential order to enhance ease of reference; (ii) clarify the processes, requirements, and timelines applicable to each type of plat or plan; (iii) standardize terminology to ensure consistency, reduce ambiguity, and minimize misinterpretation; and (iv) identify and eliminate redundant or duplicative provisions to streamline the Code and improve its usability and shall submit a report by November 1, 2025.

Local Fiscal Impact: Net Additional Expenditure: x Net Reduction of Revenues:

Summary Analysis:

Number of Localities Responding: 3 Cities, 10 Counties, 3 Towns, 1 Other

Localities estimated a negative fiscal impact ranging from \$750 to \$500,400 million over the biennium.

Localities identified the bill's fiscal impact as primarily the additional staff or consultants needed in order to process subdivision plats and site plans at an expedited pace. The City of Richmond recently adopted an ordinance in compliance with current statute, so they would have to amend that ordinance. Chesterfield County pointed out that there are capital expenditures, like infrastructure, associated with approving more developments than they currently do, and the downstream effects of more development are difficult to quantify.

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Net Increase in Expenditures: Itemized Estimates by Responding Localities									
Locality	Nonrecurring Expense - Operating		Nonrecurring Expense - Capital		Nonrecurring Expense - Other		Total Increase in Expenses (Biennium Total)	Response Totals	
	FY26	FY27	FY26	FY27	FY26	FY27			
Albemarle County							150,000	Cities:	3
Amherst County							0	Counties:	10
Bedford County							0	Towns:	3
Charlotte County							0	Other:	1
Chesterfield County						0	500,400	Total:	17
City of Alexandria						0	0		
City of Richmond							400,000		
City of Winchester							0		
Fauquier County	750						750		
Gloucester County							65,000		
Mecklenburg County							0		
Northern Neck PDC							0		
Prince George County	2500						239,739		
Rappahannock County							0		
Town of Chincoteague							136,690		
Town of Christiansburg							0		
Town of Rocky Mount							0		

Locality	Expenditure Narrative by Responding Localities
Albemarle County	The proposed legislation would result in increased operating expenditures by shortening "the timeframes for various local government approvals of subdivision plats and site plans." Increased costs could come in the form of additional personnel being hired to help expedite processes or in the form of outside contractors/consultants being hired to complete work resulting from existing staff being reassigned to expediting existing processes. More important than the legislation's fiscal impacts, this bill intrudes on the County's traditional land use authority.
Amherst County	n/A
Bedford County	Our Planning Commission does not review Site Plans and Plats, so this will not affect us unless the governing body decides they want to review those in the future (extremely doubtful). The shortened timeframes for preliminary plans are not ideal but Bedford County only sees 1-2 of those a year and they are not as difficult for us to review since they are a concept plan for a subdivision. There is zero fiscal impact anticipated; just minor procedural impacts.
Charlotte County	
Chesterfield County	With many of the current timeframes being shortened significantly, there would need to be additional staffing and potential overtime to meet new deadlines. The expenditure figures represent the cost for three additional planner positions starting at \$60,000. Another potential increase in expenditures would be capital related to the infrastructure needed to support more new developments than would currently be approved. While there are certain proffered conditions that can allow for the offsetting of these costs, the downstream effects of increased developments are difficult to quantify.
City of Alexandria	There is considerable potential for extensive staff work, especially to follow/participate in the work of the Virginia Code Commission through 2025, as any locality would want to follow its work closely and conduct internal analysis about the potential effect of these proposed changes. The potential fiscal impact of this legislation is unquantifiable at this time; however, it is anticipated to have a significant impact on staffing resources.
City of Richmond	From a policy perspective, the City adopted a new site plan ordinance (ORD. 2024-314), which establishes timelines consistent with those in Code of Virginia. It is set to become effective 1 July 2025. This legislation significantly shortens the time the City has to review and respond to site plans. We would be required to amend this ordinance. Implementation of the proposed legislation will require the city to hire additional staff & planners specializing in zoning to meet the deadlines. We conducted 34 reviews in CY24. We anticipate more in CY25, along with additional zoning entitlement requests.
City of Winchester	
Fauquier County	please see the one-time non recurring costs related to this bill.
Gloucester County	If a tighter turnaround is required then additional staff could be required. All of our subdivision and site plan approvals are done administratively, so this would possibly put additional burden on staff. Cost estimate is based on the median salary of a Full Time Zoning Specialist including and estimate of fringe benefits.

Locality	Expenditure Narrative by Responding Localities
Mecklenburg County	While this bill contemplates changes to deadlines and may impact the allocation of staff time, it is unlikely that such actions would cause the need for additional staff, thereby preventing such a cost from occurring from this legislation, unless there is a locality that has a lot of proposed zoning activities that also have proposals that are repeatedly out of line with the locality's development codes.
Northern Neck PDC	Planning districts have no jurisdiction over land use.
Prince George County	We estimated that the County would need to add at least one Planner II to meet the requirements of this proposed legislation. Estimated salary and benefits are noted in personnel. Addition of training and ongoing device (cell phone, i-Pad) are in recurring operating costs, and a one-time non-recurring cost of \$2,500.00 is added for a computer and office furniture.
Rappahannock County	Erosion of local authority, but no direct monetary cost.
Town of Chincoteague	This plan would require the hiring of additional staff.
Town of Christiansburg	I would not anticipate any expenditures from this change.
Town of Rocky Mount	