

HOUSE BILL NO. 2499

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

(Proposed by the House Committee on Counties, Cities and Towns

on _____)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Delegate Owen)

A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 15.2-2259 and 15.2-2260 of the Code of Virginia, relating to subdivision ordinance; local approvals.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 15.2-2259 and 15.2-2260 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 15.2-2259. Local planning commission to act on proposed plat.

11 A. 1. Except as otherwise provided in subdivisions 2 and 3, the local planning commission or other agent
12 shall act on any proposed plat within 60 days after it has been officially submitted for approval by either
13 approving or disapproving the plat in writing, and giving with the latter specific reasons therefor. The
14 Commission or agent shall thoroughly review the plat and shall make a good faith effort to identify all
15 deficiencies, if any, with the initial submission. However, if approval of a feature or features of the plat by a
16 state agency or public authority authorized by state law is necessary, the commission or agent shall forward
17 the plat to the appropriate state agency or agencies for review within ~~10 business~~ five days of receipt of such
18 plat. The state agency shall respond in accord with the requirements set forth in § 15.2-2222.1, which shall
19 extend the time for action by the local planning commission or other agent, as set forth in subsection B.
20 Specific reasons for disapproval shall be ~~contained~~ *provided to the applicant* either in a separate document or
21 on the plat itself. ~~The reasons for disapproval and~~ shall (i) identify *all* deficiencies in the plat that ~~cause~~
22 *caused* the disapproval by ~~reference to~~ *referencing* specific duly adopted ordinances, regulations, or policies
23 and shall (ii) identify *all* modifications or corrections as will permit approval of the plat. The local planning
24 commission or other agent shall act on any proposed plat that it has previously disapproved within 45 days
25 after the plat has been ~~modified, corrected and~~ resubmitted for approval.

26 2. The approval of plats, site plans, and plans of development solely involving parcels of commercial or
27 residential real estate by a local planning commission or other agent shall be governed by subdivision 3 and
28 subsections B, C, and D. For the purposes of this section, the term "commercial" means all real property used
29 for commercial or industrial uses, and the term "residential" means all real property used for single-family or
30 multifamily use.

31 3. The local planning commission or other agent shall act on any proposed plat, site plan or plan of
32 development within 60 40 days after it has been officially submitted for approval by either approving or
33 disapproving the plat in writing, and giving with the latter specific reasons therefor. The local planning
34 commission or other agent shall not delay the official submission of any proposed plat, site plan, or plan of
35 development by requiring presubmission conferences, meetings, or reviews. The Commission or agent shall
36 thoroughly review the plat or plan and shall in good faith identify, to the greatest extent practicable, all
37 deficiencies, if any, with the initial submission. However, if approval of a feature or features of the plat or
38 plan by a state agency or public authority authorized by state law is necessary, the commission or agent shall
39 forward the plat or plan to the appropriate state agency or agencies for review within 40 business five days of
40 receipt of such plat or plan. The state agency shall respond in accord with the requirements set forth in §
41 15.2-2222.1, which shall extend the time for action by the local planning commission or other agent, as set
42 forth in subsection B. Specific reasons for disapproval shall be ~~contained~~ *provided to the applicant* either in a
43 separate document or on the plat or plan itself. ~~The reasons for disapproval and~~ shall (i) identify *all*
44 deficiencies in the plat or plan that caused the disapproval by ~~reference to~~ *referencing* specific duly adopted
45 ordinances, regulations, or policies and shall (ii) identify, to the greatest extent practicable, modifications or
46 corrections that will permit approval of the plat or plan.

47 In the review of a resubmitted proposed plat, site plan or plan of development that has been previously
48 disapproved, the local planning commission or other agent shall consider only deficiencies ~~it had~~ identified in
49 its review of the initial submission of the plat or plan that have not been corrected in such resubmission and
50 any deficiencies that arise as a result of the corrections made to address deficiencies identified in the initial
51 submission. In the review of the resubmission of a plat or plan, the local planning commission or other agent
52 shall (i) identify all deficiencies with the proposed plat or plan that caused the disapproval by ~~reference to~~ *referencing*
53 specific duly adopted ordinances, regulations, or policies and shall (ii) identify *all* modifications
54 or corrections that will permit approval of the plat or plan. Upon the second resubmission of such
55 disapproved plat or plan, the local planning commission or other agent's review shall be limited solely to the
56 previously identified deficiencies that caused its disapproval.

57 *All deficiencies identified during a third or subsequent resubmission of any plat, site plan, or plan of
58 development shall be provided concurrently to the applicant and the director of planning or the equivalent
59 official having supervisory authority over the agent. Within 14 days of receipt, such director or equivalent*

60 *official shall either:*

- 61 1. *Approve the plat, site plan, or plan of development as submitted;*
- 62 2. *Permit the applicant to address any deficiencies deemed minor by the director or equivalent official, and resubmit the plat, site plan, or plan of development for administrative approval. The director or equivalent official shall complete the administrative approval within seven days of receipt of the resubmission; or*
- 63 3. *Disapprove the resubmission, and identify all deficiencies that caused the disapproval by referencing specific duly adopted ordinances, regulations, or policies and identify all modifications or corrections that will permit approval of the plat, site plan, or plan of development.*

64 The local planning commission or other agent shall act on any proposed plat, site plan or plan of development that it has previously disapproved within 45 30 days after the plat or plan has been modified, corrected and resubmitted for approval. The failure of a local planning commission or other agent to approve or disapprove a resubmitted plat or plan within the time periods required by this section shall cause the plat or plan to be deemed approved. *Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, the locality's designated agent, with the concurrence of all applicable local reviewing agencies, may administratively approve any resubmitted site plan or subdivision plat that the designated agent deems to be in compliance with local ordinances and state law.*

65 Notwithstanding the approval or deemed approval of any proposed plat, site plan or plan of development, any deficiency in any proposed plat or plan, that if left uncorrected, would violate local, state or federal law, regulations, mandatory Department of Transportation engineering and safety requirements, and other mandatory engineering and safety requirements, shall not be considered, treated or deemed as having been approved by the local planning commission or other agent. Should any resubmission include a material revision of infrastructure or physical improvements from the earlier submission or if a material revision in the resubmission creates a new required review by the Virginia Department of Transportation or by a state agency or public authority authorized by state law, then the local planning commission or other agent's review shall not be limited to only the previously identified deficiencies identified in the prior submittals and may consider deficiencies initially appearing in the resubmission because of such material revision.

66 B. Any state agency or public authority authorized by state law making a review of a plat forwarded to it under this article, including, without limitation, the Virginia Department of Transportation and authorities

89 authorized by Chapter 51 (§ 15.2-5100 et seq.), shall complete its review within 45 30 days of receipt of the
90 plat upon first submission and within 45 30 days for any proposed plat that has previously been disapproved,
91 provided, however, that the time periods set forth in § 15.2-2222.1 shall apply to plats triggering the
92 applicability of said section. The Virginia Department of Transportation and authorities authorized by
93 Chapter 51 (§ 15.2-5100 et seq.) shall allow use of public rights-of-way dedicated for public street purposes
94 for placement of utilities by permit when practical and shall not unreasonably deny plat approval. If a state
95 agency or public authority authorized by state law does not approve the plat, it shall comply with the
96 requirements, and be subject to the restrictions, set forth in subsection A, with the exception of the time
97 period therein specified. Upon receipt of the approvals from all state agencies and other agencies, the local
98 agent shall act upon a plat within 35 20 days.

99 C. If the commission or other agent fails to approve or disapprove the plat within 60 days after it has been
100 officially submitted for approval, or within 45 days after it has been officially resubmitted after a previous
101 disapproval or within 35 days of receipt of any agency response pursuant to subsection B *the timeframes*
102 *prescribed in this section*, the subdivider, after 10 days¹ 10 days' written notice to the commission, or agent,
103 may petition the circuit court for the locality in which the land involved, or the major part thereof, is located,
104 to decide whether the plat should or should not be approved. The court shall give the petition priority on the
105 civil docket, hear the matter expeditiously in accordance with the procedures prescribed in Article 2 (§
106 8.01-644 et seq.) of Chapter 25 of Title 8.01 and make and enter an order with respect thereto as it deems
107 proper, which may include directing approval of the plat.

108 D. If a commission or other agent disapproves a plat and the subdivider contends that the disapproval was
109 not properly based on the ordinance applicable thereto, or was arbitrary or capricious, he may appeal to the
110 circuit court having jurisdiction of such land and the court shall hear and determine the case as soon as may
111 be, provided that his appeal is filed with the circuit court within 60 days of the written disapproval by the
112 commission or other agent.

113 **§ 15.2-2260. Localities may provide for submission of preliminary subdivision plats; how long valid.**

114 A. Nothing in this article shall be deemed to prohibit the local governing body from providing in its
115 ordinance for the mandatory submission of preliminary subdivision plats for tentative approval for plats
116 involving more than 50 lots, provided that any such ordinance provides for the submission of a preliminary
117 subdivision plat for tentative approval at the option of the landowner for plats involving 50 or fewer lots. The

118 local planning commission, or an agent designated by the commission or by the governing body to review
119 preliminary subdivision plats shall complete action on the preliminary subdivision plats within ~~60~~ 45 days of
120 submission. However, if approval of a feature or features of the preliminary subdivision plat by a state agency
121 or public authority authorized by state law is necessary, the commission or agent shall forward the
122 preliminary subdivision plat to the appropriate state agency or agencies for review within ~~10 business~~ five
123 days of receipt of such preliminary subdivision plat.

124 B. Any state agency or public authority authorized by state law making a review of a preliminary
125 subdivision plat forwarded to it under this section, including, without limitation, the Virginia Department of
126 Transportation and authorities authorized by Chapter 51 (§ 15.2-5100 et seq.), shall complete its review
127 within ~~45~~ 30 days of receipt of the preliminary subdivision plat upon first submission and within ~~45~~ 30 days
128 for any proposed plat that has previously been disapproved, provided, however, that the time period set forth
129 in § 15.2-2222.1 shall apply to plats triggering the applicability of said section. The Virginia Department of
130 Transportation and authorities authorized by Chapter 51 (§ 15.2-5100 et seq.) shall allow use of public
131 rights-of-way for public street purposes for placement of utilities by permit when practical and shall not
132 unreasonably deny plat approval. If a state agency or public authority authorized by state law does not
133 approve the plat, it shall comply with the requirements, and be subject to the restrictions, set forth in
134 subsection A of § 15.2-2259 with the exception of the time period therein specified. Upon receipt of the
135 approvals from all state agencies, the local agent shall act upon a preliminary subdivision plat within ~~35~~ 20
136 days.

137 C. If a commission has the responsibility of review of preliminary subdivision plats and conducts a public
138 hearing, it shall act on the plat within ~~45~~ 30 days after receiving approval from all state agencies. If the local
139 agent or commission does not approve the preliminary subdivision plat, the local agent or commission shall
140 (i) set forth in writing ~~the reasons for such denial and shall state what corrections or modifications will permit~~
141 ~~approval by such agent or commission~~ *all deficiencies in the plat that caused the disapproval by referencing*
142 *to specific duly adopted ordinances, regulations, or policies and (ii) identify modifications or corrections that*
143 *will permit approval of the plat.* With regard to plats involving commercial or residential property, as those
144 terms are defined in subdivision A 2 of § 15.2-2259, the review process for such plats shall be the same as
145 provided in subdivisions A 2 and A 3 of § 15.2-2259. ~~However, no commission or agent shall be required to~~
146 ~~approve a preliminary subdivision plat in less than 60 days from the date of its original submission to the~~

147 commission or agent, and all *All* actions on preliminary subdivision plats shall be completed by the agent or
148 commission and, if necessary, state agencies, within a total of 90 days of submission to the local agent or
149 commission.

150 D. If the commission or other agent fails to approve or disapprove the preliminary subdivision plat within
151 90 days after it has been officially submitted for approval, the subdivider after 10 days' written notice to the
152 commission, or agent, may petition the circuit court for the locality in which the land involved, or the major
153 part thereof, is located to enter an order with respect thereto as it deems proper, which may include directing
154 approval of the plat.

155 E. If a commission or other agent disapproves a preliminary subdivision plat and the subdivider contends
156 that the disapproval was not properly based on the ordinance applicable thereto, or was arbitrary or
157 capricious, he may appeal to the circuit court having jurisdiction of such land and the court shall hear and
158 determine the case as soon as may be, provided that his appeal is filed with the circuit court within 60 days of
159 the written disapproval by the commission or other agent.

160 F. Once a preliminary subdivision plat is approved, it shall be valid for a period of five years, provided the
161 subdivider (i) submits a final subdivision plat for all or a portion of the property within one year of such
162 approval or such longer period as may be prescribed by local ordinance, and (ii) thereafter diligently pursues
163 approval of the final subdivision plat. "Diligent pursuit of approval" means that the subdivider has incurred
164 extensive obligations or substantial expenses relating to the submitted final subdivision plat or modifications
165 thereto. However, no sooner than three years following such preliminary subdivision plat approval, and upon
166 90 days' written notice by certified mail to the subdivider, the commission or other agent may revoke such
167 approval upon a specific finding of facts that the subdivider has not diligently pursued approval of the final
168 subdivision plat.

169 G. Once an approved final subdivision plat for all or a portion of the property is recorded pursuant to §
170 15.2-2261, the underlying preliminary plat shall remain valid for a period of five years from the date of the
171 latest recorded plat of subdivision for the property. The five year period of validity shall extend from the date
172 of the last recorded plat.

173 **2. That the Virginia Code Commission shall convene a work group to review existing provisions of the**
174 **Code of Virginia related to the submission, review, and approval of subdivision plats and site plans,**
175 **including any amendments adopted during the 2025 Session of the General Assembly. The work group**

176 shall consist of representatives from the Home Builders Association of Virginia, Virginia Association
177 for Commercial Real Estate, Virginia REALTORS, Virginia Municipal League, Virginia Association
178 of Counties, and other relevant stakeholders. The work group shall develop recommendations to (i)
179 organize procedural steps in a clear, logical, and sequential order to enhance ease of reference; (ii)
180 clarify the processes, requirements, and timelines applicable to each type of plat or plan; (iii)
181 standardize terminology to ensure consistency, reduce ambiguity, and minimize misinterpretation; and
182 (iv) identify and eliminate redundant or duplicative provisions to streamline the Code and improve its
183 usability. The Virginia Code Commission shall submit a report to the Chairs of the House Committee
184 on Counties, Cities and Towns and the Senate Committee on Local Government detailing any
185 recommendations of the work group by November 1, 2025.