



# The Alliance

Development Services Newsletter For Industry Professionals

Volume 1, Issue 4, January 2011

Prince William County Virginia

## Also In This Issue

- Page 2  
Schedule of Upcoming Events
- Page 3  
Comprehensive Plan Updated
- Page 3  
Address Assignment by GIS
- Page 3  
Planning Director Departs
- Page 3  
New OIT Director
- Page 4  
PWC DOT Completes Eleven Projects in 2010
- Page 4  
VDOT Moves to a New Address
- Page 5  
FMO Winter Safety Advisory
- Page 5  
VDOT's Snow Removal Policy



December 2009

## Proposed Amendments to the Design and Construction Standards Manual (DCSM)

Due to economic conditions, the Board of County Supervisors approved landscaping standards (Sections 800 and 100) at the December 7, 2010 meeting; however, the effective date of the landscaping standards will be January 2012. On December 7, County staff requested the Board of County Supervisors to approve the proposed amendments to the Design and Construction Standards Manual (DCSM). The DCSM is the ordinance that regulates the design, review and approval of land development plans, plats and site construction in Prince William County.

Staff has been working on proposed amendments to the DCSM based on direction from the Board of County Supervisors and requests from the development community. The most significant proposed changes are for the Landscaping/Buffer Section (Section 800) to improve the visual appearance of new development in the County.

Staff conducted a jurisdictional comparison of landscaping requirements of four other localities including Loudoun, Fairfax, Albemarle and James City Counties. We then followed up with site visits to those jurisdictions led by local representatives.

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Why Partnership?

Prince William County's Department of Development Services (DDS) has been working hard to promote a partnership culture. Department Director, Wade Hugh has reached out to many groups not only to discuss efforts to streamline processes but to promote industry participation in the streamlining efforts.

Why does the Department of Development Services encourage representatives of industry and the public to participate in representative committees and forums?

*(Continued on page 6)*

### Links to Agencies:

#### Department of Development Services:

[www.pwcgov.org/DDS](http://www.pwcgov.org/DDS)  
(703) 792-6930

#### Planning Office:

[www.pwcgov.org/Planning](http://www.pwcgov.org/Planning)  
(703) 792-6830

#### Department of Public Works:

[www.pwcgov.org/PublicWorks](http://www.pwcgov.org/PublicWorks)  
(703) 792-6820

#### Department of Transportation:

[www.pwcgov.org/Transportation](http://www.pwcgov.org/Transportation)  
(703) 792-6825

#### Department of Fire & Rescue Fire Code Compliance and Permits

[www.pwcgov.org/FMOPlanReview](http://www.pwcgov.org/FMOPlanReview)  
(703) 792-6360

#### Office of Information Technology Geographic Information Systems Division

[www.pwcgov.org/GIS](http://www.pwcgov.org/GIS)  
(703) 792-6840

Department of Fire & Rescue Winter Safety Advisory on Page 5

*DCSM Amendments (continued from page 1)*

list of concepts and practices in other jurisdictions, staff proposed a number of amendments to Sections 800 and 1000. Virginia Cooperative Extension and Master Gardeners assisted by analyzing proposed plant unit increases and creating new plant lists for perennials and ornamental grasses.

The amendments were reviewed by various advisory committees and customers. In addition, the amendments were presented to the Planning Commission and a public hearing was held. Based on this feedback, the Planning Commission recommended approval. Here is a recap to highlight the proposed amendments:

- **Section 100 – General Information and Policies**
  - Create the DCSM/Zoning Ordinance Advisory Committee
  - Define the roles of the Directors for Development Services and Planning
- **Section 300 – Fire Safety Systems**
  - Add revisions to establish standards for access gates installed within private travel ways
  - Increase the radius of a turnaround for firetrucks
- **Section 600 – Transportation Systems**
  - Require the installation of pre-emption equipment for emergency vehicles at signalized intersections
  - Add requirements for signage in residential and mobile home developments
  - Clarify the timing on the installation of guardrails
- **Section 800 – Buffer Areas, Landscaping and Tree Cover Requirements**
  - Improve the appearance of the County through better landscaping standards
  - Implement the first phase of a three-phase improvement effort for landscaping (Phase 1 is road frontage, Phase 2 is interior landscaping and Phase 3 is buffers, stormwater ponds and miscellaneous requirements)
  - Increase plant units within landscaping strips and buffers
  - Allow plant unit credits for ornamental grasses and perennials
  - Require existing and proposed easements to be shown on landscape plans
  - Limit the circumstances under which utility easements are allowed to encroach into landscaping strips, such as utilities placed in conduits

Increase plant units required when a berm is used
- **Section 1000 – Highway Corridor Overlay District Regulations**
  - Revise landscaping requirements to match the changes in Section 800 and allow greater variability in buffer width under limited circumstances

For more information about the DCSM or the proposed changes, please visit:

[www.pwcgov.org/DCSM](http://www.pwcgov.org/DCSM)

*The Alliance*

Prince William County Development Services Building, 5 County Complex Court, Suite 120, Prince William, Virginia 22192

Phone: (703) 792-6930 Fax: (703) 792-5285 E-mail: [DDS@pwcgov.org](mailto:DDS@pwcgov.org) Attention: Newsletter Editor

*Your input is welcome!*

*Upcoming Events*

**Commercial Development Committee Quarterly Meeting**

Development Services Building  
Conference Room 107 A&B  
Jan 12 2:00pm

*For more information*  
Contact Wade Hugh  
[whugh@pwcgov.org](mailto:whugh@pwcgov.org)

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**Planning Commission Meeting**

McCoart Administration Building  
Board Chambers  
Jan 19 7:00pm

*For more information*  
Contact Chris Thompson  
[cthompson@pwcgov.org](mailto:cthompson@pwcgov.org)

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**Planning Commission Meeting**

McCoart Administration Building  
Board Chambers  
Feb 2 7:00pm

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**Planning Commission Meeting**

McCoart Administration Building  
Board Chambers  
Feb 26 7:00pm

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**Builder Developer Advisory Group**

McCoart Administration Building  
Board Chambers  
March 9 2:00pm

*For more information*  
Contact Oscar Guzman  
[oguzman@pwcgov.org](mailto:oguzman@pwcgov.org)

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## Comprehensive Plan Update



The Prince William County Comprehensive Plan contains a strategy for responsible, fiscally-sound growth to produce a vibrant, prosperous, stable, "livable" community. It contains recommendations for future land use, transportation systems, schools, parks, libraries, historic and environmental resources, and other resources, facilities, and services. It is implemented through plan maps, a capital improvements program, a subdivision ordinance, and a zoning ordinance and map.

The Code of Virginia requires every governing body to adopt a comprehensive plan for the physical development of the territory within its jurisdiction. The Code further requires that comprehensive plans be reviewed every five years to ensure that the plan is responsive to current circumstances and that its goals are still supported by the citizenry.

The 2008 Prince William County Comprehensive Plan was officially adopted by the Board of County Supervisors on March 18, 2008. The Comprehensive Plan is available for purchase from the Planning Office. Comprehensive Plan maps are available for purchase from the Mapping Office. You may also view and print versions of the Plan documents [here](#).

The 2008 Comprehensive Plan update process was divided into several components: a technical update, which was completed in March of 2008, an update to the Housing Chapter, which was completed in February of 2009, updates to the Long-Range Land Use and Transportation Chapters, which were approved in February 2010, and the Environment Chapter, which was approved in December 2010. For more information on these updates, click [here](#).

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## Address Assignment By GIS Division

As development occurs in Prince William County, often it requires new addresses to be assigned to parcels and multiple tenant buildings, such as apartments, condominiums, retail and office space. When a developer submits a Subdivision or Site Plan to the County for plan review, part of the review process is to have these addresses created and assigned for the project. This is done by the GIS Division within the Office of Information Technology.

GIS staff will clearly notate the new addresses on the plan prior to approval. Once the plan has completed the review process and has been approved, the addresses shown on the plan are the only ones that should be used and posted on the property. It is important that Engineering Firms and Surveyors provide these addresses to the Developer/Owner, as well as the Architects for annotation on the architectural plans. This will help to facilitate a smooth customer service experience and avoid any conflicts or confusion when customers try to obtain permits in the future.

For more information about addressing, please contact OIT/GIS at (703) 792-6840 or by email at [pwcmaps@pwcgov.org](mailto:pwcmaps@pwcgov.org).



The development services agencies wish Prince William County's former planning director, **Stephen K. Griffin** well on his new job as Director of Community and Economic Development for the City of Evanston, IL. Steve accomplished many things in his 8-year tenure as Planning Director including ushering in sweeping changes to the Comprehensive Plan, improving customer service, and shepherding many important projects through the planning process. He has left behind an efficient and effective Planning Office that weathered some years of tough budget decisions and some years of unprecedented growth. **Thomas Blaser**, the Director of Transportation is serving as Acting Planning Director.



**Thomas A. McQuillan** is Prince William County Government's new Chief Information Officer. Mr. McQuillan comes to Prince William County from New Mexico where he was appointed by Governor Bill Richardson to serve as the state's Deputy Cabinet Secretary for the Department of Information Technology.

## The Prince William County Department of Transportation Completes Eleven Construction Projects in FY2010-2011, with More to Come

The Prince William County Department of Transportation (PWCDOT) has completed construction of four road projects, two commuter parking projects, and five pedestrian facility projects including:

- Route 15 widening from 2 to 4 lanes from I-66 to Route 234 (Sudley Rd.)
- Old Carolina Rd. from 2 to 4 lanes from Piedmont Vista Dr. to Heathcote Blvd.
- Minnieville Rd. from 2 to 4 lanes from Cardinal Dr. to Spriggs Rd.
- Glenkirk Rd. improvements paving a gravel road from Vint Hill Rd. to the Dam
- Route 1/234 commuter parking lot addition from 300 spaces to over 800 spaces
- Broad Run VRE Station parking lot – adding 170 spaces
- Old Bridge Rd. sidewalk construction from Mohican Rd. to Oakwood Dr.
- Dale Blvd. sidewalk construction from Gideon Dr. to Ashdale Ave.
- Dale Blvd. crosswalk at Benita Fitzgerald Dr.
- Cherrydale Dr. sidewalk construction from Crag Mews to Castle Hill Dr.
- Benita Fitzgerald Dr. sidewalk construction

PWCDOT also continues to move forward with additional projects which have been awarded contracts this fiscal year. These contracts include construction and design contracts as follows:

- Route 1 widening from 4 to 6 lanes from Brady's Hill Rd. to Joplin Rd. (Construction)
- PWC Pkwy. from 4 to 6 lanes from Old Bridge Rd. to Hoadly Rd. (Construction)



- Rippon Blvd. Trail from Wigeon Wy. to Marsh Overlook Dr. (Construction)
- Route 28 widening from 2 to 4 lanes from Linton Hall Rd. to Fitzwater Dr. (Design)
- Route 28 and Piper Lane Intersection Improvements (Design)
- Springwoods Dr. at Old Bridge Rd. intersection improvements (Design)
- University Blvd./Hornbaker Rd. widenings (negotiating Design/Build contract)

Additionally, the Department is also getting ready to advertise and/or award design projects for the following facilities:

- Old Bridge Rd. pedestrian facility from Mohican Dr. to Dillingham Square
- Telegraph Rd. commuter parking lot
- PWC Pkwy./Hillendale Rd. intersection improvements

If you have any questions regarding these or any other projects, please contact PWCDOT at (703) 792-6825.

### The VDOT Northern Virginia District Office Has Moved

The VDOT Northern Virginia District Office has moved from Chantilly to Fairfax.  
The new address for the district office is:

**VDOT Northern Virginia District Office**  
4975 Alliance Drive  
Fairfax, Virginia 22030

## VDOT's Snow Removal Policy

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is responsible for snow removal on all State maintained roadways only. Any roads that are not off bond are private roads. Private roads, including pipestems, will not be plowed by VDOT. Also, VDOT does not plow or clear sidewalks or trails. VDOT asks that in cases of significant snow fall, not to report your street as "missed" until a few days have passed.

VDOT's new number for reporting snow removal is 1-800-FOR-ROAD or 1-800-367-7623 or you can e-mail them at [novainfo@vdot.virginia.gov](mailto:novainfo@vdot.virginia.gov).

VDOT has hired an additional 600 pieces of equipment, bringing this year's forces to a present total of 2,600 trucks in Northern Virginia.

This year they will have early deployment to subdivisions if the forecast calls for two (2) inches or more of snow.

This year's snow budget for the region is \$33 million, up from \$27 million last year. Last year, over \$100 million was spent in snow removal in Northern Virginia, but VDOT is hoping for a milder winter.

VDOT is responsible for plowing 17,679 miles of road just in this region, so they are asking for your patience and cooperation in making road snow removal safe and efficient this winter.

## Winter Safety Suggestions from the Fire Marshal's Office

In the instance of a fire, firefighters need to be able to quickly locate the fire hydrant or lives and property could be lost. The Fire Marshal's Office urges all residents and community groups to do the following to help keep their neighbors safe during inclement weather:

Make sure the hydrant in your neighborhood is visible. Adopt your fire hydrant. It needs to be uncovered from snow and there needs to be a clear path for access. Should extreme weather prevail resulting in snow-covered fire hydrants:

- Attempt to remove the snow from around the hydrant; if you're unable to do so, place 4-foot 1"x 2" orange-tipped stakes near the hydrants, or spray paint the word "Fire Hydrant" in large letters on the snow directly in front of the fire hydrant.

- Make sure your address is visible. Fire and Rescue responders use maps to get them to the area, but they need to be able to see house numbers to ensure they are at the correct location.
- Make sure you have at least two clear exits out of your house. Keep an eye on snow build up. When the snow melts and refreezes, it could prevent you from being able to open the door and exit from your house.
- Business operators are reminded to clear the areas around emergency exits to ensure customers can exit safely in an emergency.

By doing these things, it will help keep response times as low as possible under these challenging conditions.

## Protecting Building Sprinkler Systems

Frigid temperatures can wreak havoc on automatic sprinkler systems. Diligence in maintaining the automatic sprinkler systems during the winter months in your building can prevent costly repairs and possible interruption of building use.

To avoid the pipes from freezing, the heating devices in areas with wet pipe sprinkler should be checked and the drum drips for the dry pipe sprinkler systems should be drained often (i.e. a minimum once a week when there is a potential for freezing temperatures).

If a pipe on an automatic sprinkler system is damaged due to freezing water in the pipe, a sprinkler contrac-

tor may conduct emergency repairs to place the system back in operating condition. An emergency repair permit must be obtained at the permit counter in the Development Services Building at 5 County Complex in Woodbridge. Although the permit is not required to complete the repair work, it must be obtained the next business day following the repair work.

The fire protection permit (FPP) will allow the contractor to schedule and complete the needed fire inspection on the repair. The permit and inspection is verification the work has been completed and is in compliance with the applicable code requirements of Prince William County.

*Partnership (continued from page 1)*

There are many benefits being realized by promotion of a partnership culture:

- Provides networking for technical assistance and expertise
- Lends a broader base of support and awareness
- Provides staff an opportunity to explain the rationale behind policy
- Facilitates a positive working environment
- Provides a mechanism to collect customer feedback
- Provides options thinking for new resources and ideas

The Development Services Agencies encourage participation of industry representatives in individual Process Action Teams as well as standing committees and forums. A great example of an ongoing successful partnership can be seen in the **Commercial Development Committee (CDC)**. The Commercial Development Committee meets on a quarterly basis to develop recommendations to improve the commercial development process. This committee established five goals for the calendar year 2010:

1. Bond Release
2. SUP/Rezoning Task Force
3. Expedited Plan Review Process/Peer Group
4. FMO Inspection Process
5. Plat requirements for Metes and Bounds Projects

In an effort to accomplish these goals, the CDC membership also participated in various Process Action Teams geared toward improving specific processes. Some of the accomplishments of these representative committees are outlined below by Wade Hugh, Department of Development Services Director:

**Bond Improvement Committee**

- Revised the Bond Reduction Form & Formalized Process
- Improved the As-Built Process
- Established a Bond Phasing Pilot
- Revised Financial Rating Policy
- Extended Performance Agreements up to 36 Months
- Re-evaluated Additional Bonding Requirements for Plan Revisions
- Eliminated Requirement for Sealed Bond Reduction Forms
- Revised Drainage TV Inspection Procedure

CDC membership also participated in the **Building Plan Review Improvement Committee**. This team held its kick off meeting on August 18, 2010. At this meeting they discussed process improvement in the following areas:

- General Review of the Overall Process
- Commercial Project Management
- Early Assistance
- Issue Resolution
- Plan Review Process

*(Continued on page 7)*

**Mission Statement:**

*The Department of Development Services promotes a culture where staff and customers work in partnership to create and sustain a better quality of life and environment in which to live, work and play.*

*Our development processes are designed to be effective and efficient and ensure compliance with federal, state, and local regulations.*

*We support economic development, revitalization, infrastructure improvements, and the protection of natural resources. Our staff provides customers with the highest quality of service and respect.*

*We supply the public with development information through effective communication and education.*



*Partnership (continued from page 6)*

- Plan Review Checklist
- Plan Intake and Quality Control Process
- Plan Submission & Technical Review
- Plan Review Comment Process

CDC membership also participated in the **Land Development Plan Improvement Committee**. This team met to discuss process improvement in the following areas:

- Develop/Improve Policies
- Stockpile Policy
- Early Grading Policy
- Plan Close-Out Extension Policy

Through process streamlining the average number of plan submissions to Final Plan Approval has been reduced from 4.63 submissions in July of 2007 to 3.31 as of July 2010.

The development processes are designed to be effective and efficient and ensure compliance with federal, state and local regulations. Creating a partnership culture, county staff and customers work together toward a shared goal which is a completed project that meets all applicable regulatory requirements.

While all Commercial Development Committee meetings are open, membership is appointed to ensure that both staff and industry are appropriately represented. Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the first month of the quarter. Staff liaison for the committee is Wade Hugh. If you would like to learn how you might participate please contact Wade at [whugh@pwcgov.org](mailto:whugh@pwcgov.org).

Through process streamlining the average number of plan submissions to Final Site Plan Approval was reduced from 4.63 submissions in July of 2007 to 3.31 as of July 2010.



*Photo Credit Gary P Fleming*

*Moonrise over Bull Run Mountain*