



City of Alexandria

Commercial Uses Zoning Text Amendments ZTA #2025-00007

Planning Commission
December 2, 2025



Agenda



1. Summary
2. Public Engagement
3. Regulatory Background Information
4. Proposal
 - A. Part I: Change in Use Approvals
 - B. Part II: Minor Updates
5. Zoning Text Amendment Findings
6. Recommendation



Summary



Streamline use approvals for commercial businesses while managing neighborhood impacts through standards established in the Zoning Ordinance

Recommendations based on staff experience administering City regulations and on the analysis of enforcement history



Public Engagement

Type of Outreach	Date
Planning Commission Work Sessions	September 4, 2024 and October 7, 2025
Website: https://www.alexandriava.gov/zoning/zoning-amendments	Launched August 29, 2025
Alexandria eNews	September 8 and 9, October 8 and 9
Zoning Text Amendment Open House (21 participants)	October 22
Open House video posted on website with ability to comment	October 23 to present
Bi-monthly P&Z Virtual Community Update	June 17, September 2, October 30
NAIOP (22 participants)	November 19



Background: Types of Zoning Use Approvals

Special Use Permit (SUP)

- Three-month process
- Planning Commission and City Council public hearings
- City Council approval required

Administrative SUP for New Use

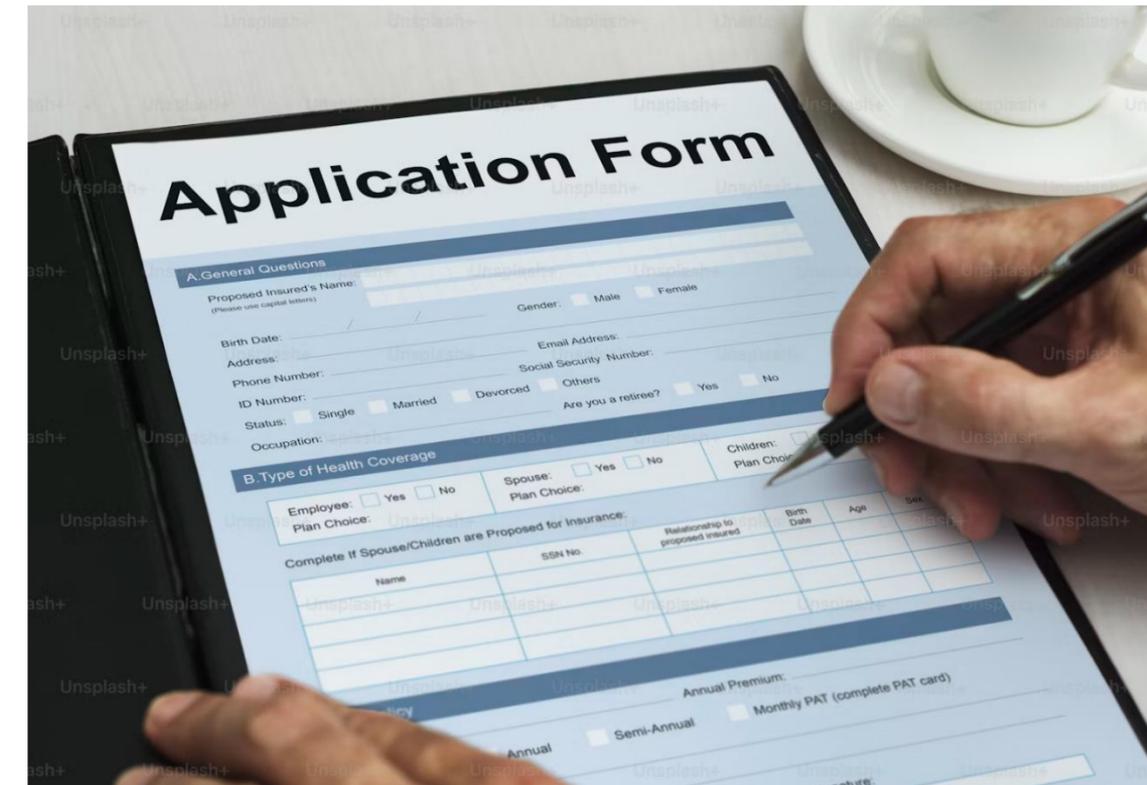
Administrative SUP for Minor Amendment

Administrative SUP for Change of Ownership

- 30-35 day process
- Staff administrative review
- with City Council approved conditions

Permitted/By-right

- No required use review





Part I: Changes in Use Approvals

Administrative SUP to Permitted

Restaurant

- Same zoning regulations would apply as for SUPs
- Use conditions added to Section 7-1900 allows for application of consistent regulations for all restaurants

City and Public School Trailers

- Approved through other departmental or City Council reviews
- Subject to site plan amendment processes
- City departments would monitor impacts and promptly resolve issues





Part I: Changes in Use Approvals

SUP to Permitted

Indoor live entertainment in 2,000 square feet or less subject to use limitations

Private academic schools in commercial and mixed-use zones with approved pick-up and drop-off plan

Public buildings

Barber shops, hair and skincare salons and spas over 30-foot frontage in King Street Retail and Mount Vernon Overlay zones

Fraternal/private clubs

Funeral homes



Part I: Changes in Use Approvals

SUP to Administrative SUP

Nonresidential temporary trailers

- Three-year term with option to reapply for an additional two years
- One trailer per lot
- Must remain in use for 90 consecutive days

Private academic schools in places of worship

- Residential zones
- Includes approval of a pick-up and drop-off plan

Use Deletion

Bus shelter on private property





Part I: Changes in Use Approvals *Administrative SUP Change of Ownership*

Reduce processing to two weeks or less

- Applies to new businesses taking over an existing SUP
- Streamlines process for new business start-ups
- Public notified through email to civic associations, and posting on the City's website
- Opportunity for appeal within 30 days after director's decision





Part II: Minor Updates

Definitions

Amended definitions

- Theater
- Automobile and trailer rental and sales
- Awning or canopy and floor area
- Business and professional office
- Live entertainment
- Manufacturing
- Motor vehicle parking and storage
- Personal service establishment
- Restaurant
- Retail shopping establishment
- Trailer
- Use, accessory

Added definition

Place of worship



Part II: Minor Updates

Use Limitations Sections

- Create process to mitigate vibration, dust, odor, smoke, gas, and fumes that rise to nuisance levels
- Require permitted indoor live entertainment in 2,000 square feet or less to operate with closed windows and doors and to cease between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m.
- Delete obsolete language and regulations covered at state or federal levels



Part II: Minor Updates

Zone Adjustments

Industrial zone

- Limit permitted storage buildings and warehouses up to 40,000 square feet or in existing buildings, regardless of size. An SUP would be required for new storage buildings and warehouses 40,000 square feet.

Add child and elder care homes to commercial zones

- Permitted for up to five children
- Administrative SUP for six to nine children
- Already allowed in all residential zones



Part II: Minor Updates

Zone Adjustments

Expand types of retail and personal service on ground floor uses in medium and high-density apartment zones (RCX, RC, RD, RMF)

- Align with CRMU/Mixed Use zones

Health and athletic club or fitness studio, outdoor

- Add as SUP use in zones where the use is now allowed



Part II: Minor Updates

Parking

- Delete requirement for interior and exterior significantly altered structures and buildings, where expenditures amount to one-third or more of the market value, to comply with current parking standards
- Reduce the parking requirement for indoor and outdoor recreation and entertainment uses and for health and athletic club or fitness studios to a minimum of one space for every 1,000 square feet
- Allow commercial and industrial use required and overflow parking on non-residential properties within 1,000 feet of business





ZTA Findings

- Maintain City's quality of life by minimizing land use impacts
- Streamline commercial and nonresidential approvals
- Update outdated terms and business practices





Staff recommends:

- 1) Planning Commission initiate the text amendment, and**
- 2) Approve the text amendment.**





Additional Information





Proposed Restaurant Use Limitations

Section 7-1900

- The restaurant operator shall conduct employee training sessions on an ongoing basis to advise employees of these use limitations.
- No food, beverages, or other materials shall be stored outside, with the exception of materials otherwise specified in this section 7-1900.
- Delivery vehicles operated and managed by the restaurant operator are permitted. Delivery vehicles must park off-street when not delivering.
- Indoor limited live entertainment and live entertainment, pursuant to the use limitations of the zone, are allowed.
- Chemicals, detergents, and cleaners stored outside the building shall be kept in an enclosure with a roof.
- If used cooking oil is stored outside, the drum shall be kept securely closed with a bung (a secure stopper that seals the drum). When the drum is not receiving used oil, it shall be placed on secondary containment, and it shall be kept under cover to prevent rainwater from falling on it.
- Trash and garbage shall be stored in sealed containers that do not allow odors to escape, invasion by animals, or leaking. No trash or debris shall be allowed to accumulate outside of those containers. Outdoor containers shall be maintained to the satisfaction of the director and the director of transportation and environmental services, including replacing damaged lids and repairing or replacing damaged dumpsters.
- Kitchen equipment, including floor mats, shall not be cleaned outside, nor shall any cooking residue or wash water be washed into the public right-of-way or storm sewers.
- All waste products including but not limited to organic compounds (solvents and cleaners) shall be disposed of in accordance with all local, state, and federal laws or regulations.
- Supply deliveries and loading and unloading activities shall not occur between the hours of 11 p.m. and 7 a.m.
- All loudspeakers are prohibited on the exterior of the building.