

## Summary of Zoning Amendments

### Introduction

Roanoke City Council is pursuing three high-priority initiatives. These Council Member Initiatives include review of:

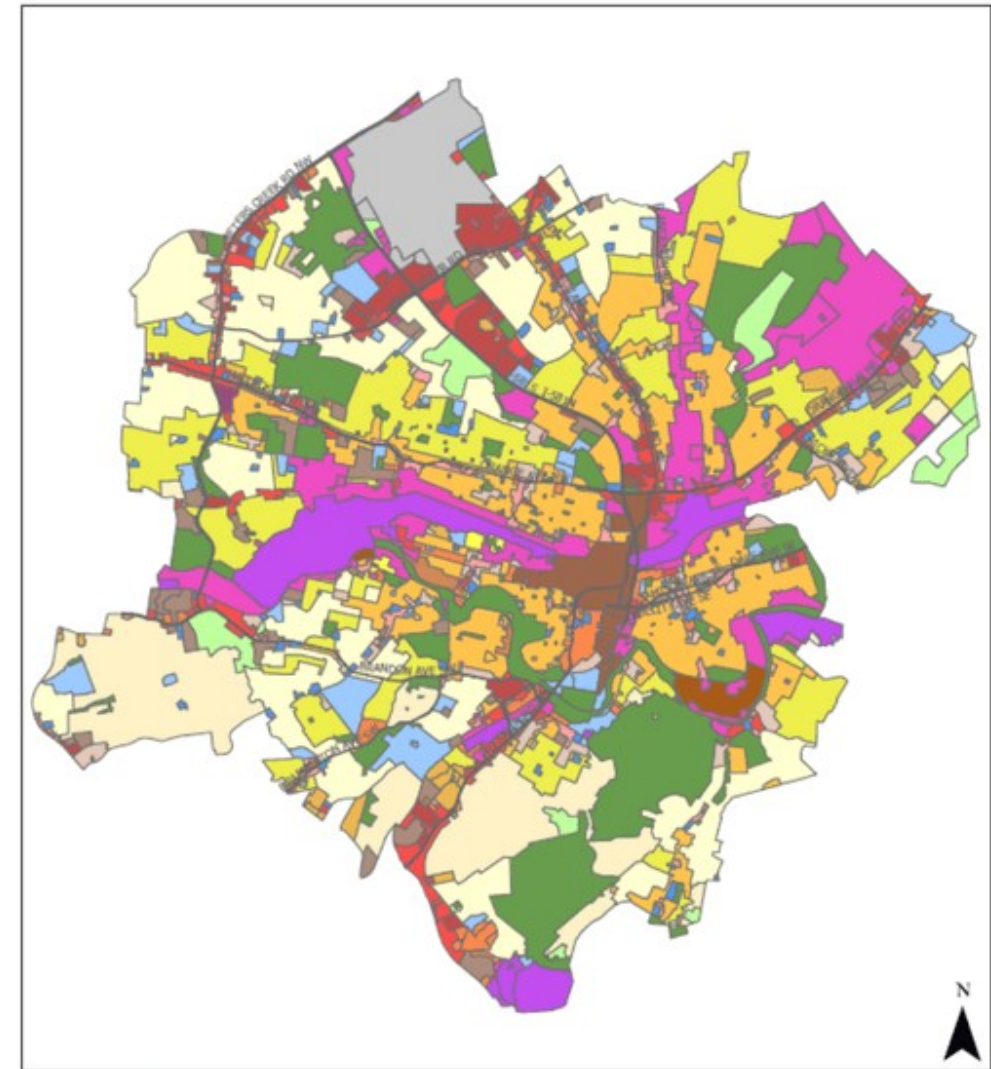
- The 2024 Zoning Amendments, which primarily relate to residential zoning
- A new Vape and Tobacco Establishment ordinance
- The Evans Spring Plan

In January and February of 2026, the City of Roanoke engaged the public on these initiatives through hosting a series of public meetings, conducting a survey, and attending neighborhood meetings upon request. Staff have reviewed and incorporated input received through this engagement and have proposed some zoning amendments in response.

This document provides a summary of the zoning amendments, their purpose, and how they align with the City's broader planning framework. The following headings can provide links to key subject areas throughout the document.

- [Residential Zoning Updates](#)
- [New Uses](#)
  - [Vape and Tobacco Establishments](#)
  - [Data Center and Data Processing Facility](#)
  - [Inpatient Mental Health and Substance Abuse Clinic](#)
  - [Self Storage Uses](#)
- [Clean Up Items](#)

City of Roanoke Zoning Map



#### Legend

— Arterial Streets and Freeway

#### Zoning

AD: Airport Dev	MGPD: Mixed Use Planned Unit Dev
CG: Commercial-General	R-12: Residential
CLS: Commercial-Large Site	R-3: Residential
CN: Commercial-Neighborhood	R-5: Residential
D: Downtown	R-7: Residential
I-1: Light Industrial	RA: Agricultural
I-2: Heavy Industrial	RM-1: Residential
IN: Institutional	RM-2: Residential
INPUD: Institutional Planned Unit Dev	RMF: Residential
IPUD: Industrial Planned Unit Dev	ROS: Recreation and Open Space
MU: Mixed Use	UF: Urban Flex
	UC: Urban Center

## Residential Zoning Updates

Section	Summary of Changes	Reasoning	Tie to Comprehensive Plan
Sec. 36.2-312. - Dimensional regulations for residential districts	Increase the lot area per dwelling unit and reduce the maximum number of units per lot in certain residential districts ( <a href="#">see proposal</a> ).	Maintain community character while allowing additional opportunities for missing middle housing.	<p>THEME: Livable Built Environment</p> <p>Priority One: Growth Through Preservation and Context Sensitive Design</p> <p>As a steadily growing city, Roanoke recognizes the need to plan for increasing population. Policies for this priority focus on compact development that takes into account surrounding neighborhood characteristics and patterns, and nearby natural assets.</p> <p>Policy 1: Encourage development, redevelopment, and revitalization through preservation and context sensitive design</p> <p>Action Items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Proposed development (infill development, alterations, renovations, and additions) should create or enhance a distinctive character that relates well to the surrounding community</li> <li>-Develop design standards reflective of the most-beloved examples of local community character</li> <li>-Increase compact development patterns in neighborhoods while retaining community character</li> <li>-Allow multiunit and cluster housing types that are compatible in scale and character with detached single-family homes</li> </ul>
Sec. 36.2-312. - Dimensional regulations for residential districts	Incorporate a maximum lot area in RM-1 and RM-2 Districts as 15,000 and 24,000 sq ft, respectively.	Limit the combination of lots to discourage development of larger scaled buildings that do not align with existing neighborhood character.	
Section 36.2-409.1 Supplemental Regulations for Dwellings	<b>Parking Minimum:</b> For all apartment buildings and townhomes with 3 or more dwelling units, one parking space required per unit with reductions permitted for street frontage and access to transit line.	Address community concern regarding congestion on streets from additional dwelling units.	
Section 36.2-409.1 Supplemental Regulations for Dwellings	Add standards for apartment buildings with 9 or more units in CN, MX, RMF, and RM-2, including: - building recess or offsets throughout - changes in roof pitch - transparency requirements - location of garage door - parking requirement	To enhance compatibility of apartment construction with existing neighborhoods.	
Sec. 36.2-312. - Dimensional regulations for residential districts	Increase rear yard setback to 10'.	Improve opportunity for parking off of the alley, and reduce potential conflicts with principal structures constructed by rear lot lines.	
Appendix B. B-1. Basic Development Plan	A survey to be required for the construction of a new principal building or accessory dwelling unit.	Surveys are often not submitted for infill lots, where a survey is most needed to protect a future homeowner from land disputes. As density increases, it is increasingly important for accurate building placement.	
Sec. 36.2-205. - Dimensional regulations	Remove required feet of frontage in the culs-de-sac exception.	The minimum stated amount is greater than the lot frontage required in some districts. Having a standard using feet in this section creates an inconsistency between sections.	
Sec. 36.2-205. - Dimensional regulations	Clarify maximum front yard requirements in Table 205-2 to residential districts.	Multiple principal structures are now permitted on residential lots. In the code today, all new principal structures on residential lots are subject to the maximum setback requirement. This runs counter to allowing multiple principal structures on residential property.	

City Council Member Initiatives 2026

Section	Summary of Changes	Reasoning	Tie to Comprehensive Plan
Sec. 36.2-205. - Dimensional regulations	Add of the section name when referencing section 36.2-313 - <b>Front yard dimensions for infill development.</b>	Improves readability.	N/A

## New Uses

### Vape and Tobacco Establishments

Section	Summary of Changes	Reasoning	Tie to Comprehensive Plan
APPENDIX A. – DEFINITIONS	Add definition of vape and tobacco establishments. Definition includes businesses where 10% of the floor area, display merchandise, sign area, inventory, or sales are dedicated to vape or tobacco products.	This use is currently classified as general retail, which does not allow the City to appropriately account for the impact of this use on the community.	Chapter: Healthy Communities   Priority 1: Wellness  Policy 1: Manage community wellness holistically
Sec. 36.2-315. Use table for multiple purpose districts.	Allow vape and tobacco establishments in CG, CLS, and D districts by special exception.	A special exception allows for review by the Board of Zoning Appeals, and the opportunity to place conditions on the use as needed.	
Sec. 36.2-426.1 - Supplemental Regulations for retail sales of vape and tobacco establishment	Supplemental regulations prohibit their location within 2,000 ft of school, religious institution, childcare center, public park, or an existing vape and tobacco establishment.	Members of the community have expressed concern about the detrimental impact of this use on youth and nearby properties.	

### Data Center and Data Processing Facility

Section	Summary of Changes	Reasoning	Tie to Comprehensive Plan
APPENDIX A. – DEFINITIONS	Add definitions for data center and data processing facility.	It is best practice to have a definition for identifiable use classifications. Without a definition, it would be classified under an existing use and be more permissive than the proposed locations.	Chapter: City Design   Land Use priorities Priority: Design for permanence Policy 2: Promote development patterns that contribute to places of enduring value  Priority: Purposeful Land Use Policy 2: Encourage active, productive uses of land and preclude unproductive uses of land
Section 36.2-327. Use table for planned unit development districts	Data Centers - permitted by special exception in IPUD. Data processing facility - permitted in INPUD and IPUD.	Data Center - This zoning method would allow for the highest level of public input in the development process.	
Sec. 36.2-322. Use table for industrial districts.	Data processing facility - permitted in I-1.	Data processing facilities exist in the City today are a less intensive use than data centers.	
Sec. 36.2-315. Use table for multiple purpose districts.	Data processing facility - permitted by special exception in CG, CLS, D, UF, UC.		
Sec. 36.2-407.3 – Supplemental Regulations for Data Centers	Supplemental regulations for Data Centers will regulate the setbacks, hours of operations, landscaping/screen, building design, noise, and submittal requirements for data centers.	Data centers are known for having negative externalities to adjoining properties that are important to regulate through zoning standards. Additionally, they are infrastructure and resource intensive uses. It is important to understand their impact during submittal requests for development.	

### Inpatient Mental Health and Substance Abuse Clinic

Section	Summary of Changes	Reasoning	Tie to Comprehensive Plan
APPENDIX A. – DEFINITIONS	Add use definition for a clinic offering temporary stays (less than 30 days) to people in substance use withdrawal and recovery.	This use is currently classified as Regional Housing Services, which does not appropriately characterize the use. Having a definition that better aligns with the use allows for proper regulation.	Chapter: Healthy Community   Priority 3: Access to Health and Support Services  Policy 1: Family health, mental health, and substance abuse treatment facilities should be considered as essential community needs and location decisions for such facilities should be driven by factors such as scale, geographic distribution, and accessibility
Sec. 36.2-315. Use table for multiple purpose districts.	Inpatient mental health and substance abuse clinic permitted by special exception in CLS and IN.	A special exception allows for review by the Board of Zoning Appeals and the opportunity to place conditions on the use as needed.	
Sec. 36.2-327. Use table for planned unit development districts.	Inpatient mental health and substance abuse clinic permitted by special exception in INPUD.		

### Self Storage Uses

Section	Summary of Changes	Reasoning	Tie to Comprehensive Plan
Sec. 36.2-322. - Use table for industrial districts.	Remove <b>Self-storage facility</b> as a permitted use in AD and as a use by special exception in I-1 and I-2.	Self-storage facilities are land consumptive and do not facilitate active, pedestrian-oriented development.	Chapter: City Design   Land Use priorities Priority: Design for permanence Policy 2: Promote development patterns that contribute to places of enduring value  Priority: Priority: Purposeful Land Use Policy 2: Encourage active, productive uses of land and preclude unproductive uses of land
Sec. 36.2-327. - Use table for planned unit development districts.	Add <b>Self-storage Facility</b> to IPUD requiring special exception.	Self-storage facilities are land consumptive and do not facilitate human-scale development. This zoning method would allow for the highest level of public input in the development process.	
Sec. 36.2-327. - Use table for planned unit development districts.	Remove <b>Self-storage building</b> from MXPUD.	MXPUDs are intended to create innovative development patterns between residential and commercial uses. Self-storage is more of an industrial use and does not facilitate active, pedestrian-oriented development.	

## Clean Up Items

Section	Summary of Changes	Reasoning	Tie to Comprehensive Plan
Sec. 36.2-315. - Use table for multiple purpose districts	In the UC and UF districts, <b>microbrewery or microdistillery abutting a residential district</b> is a permitted use. Update to requiring a special exception for the use.	Aligns the use with the standards for eating and drinking establishments and entertainment uses in the UC and UF districts. These uses have similar potential conflicts with residential properties.	Chapter: City Design   Land Use priorities Priority: Purposeful Land Use Policy 1: Promote compatibility of different land uses through building design, building orientation, and thoughtful arrangement of accessory activities on the site
Sec. 36.2-315. - Use table for multiple purpose districts	Remove <b>Training facility for police, fire, or emergency services</b> as a use classification.	The use will follow the standards for Fire, police, or emergency services broadly.	Chapter: City Design   Land Use priorities Priority: Purposeful Land Use Policy 1: Promote compatibility of different land uses through building design, building orientation, and thoughtful arrangement of accessory activities on the site
Sec. 36.2-322. - Use table for industrial districts.			
Sec. 36.2-327. - Use table for planned unit development districts.			
Sec. 36.2-322. - Use table for industrial districts.	Add the <b>Office, general or professional use</b> to the AD district.	Office is a compatible use with the AD district. Uses in the AD district are more restrictive than other industrial districts to support the needs and constraints of the airport.	Chapter: City Design   Transportation Priority: Regional Transportation Networks Policy 4: Support the Roanoke Regional Airport Authority
Sec. 36.2-322. - Use table for industrial districts.	Add <b>junkyard and wrecker yards</b> as a use requiring a special exception in I-1 and I-2 districts.	It is best practice to identify where uses are permitted within the City, even if limited.	Chapter: City Design   Land Use priorities Priority: Priority: Purposeful Land Use Policy 2: Encourage active, productive uses of land and preclude unproductive uses of land
Section 36.2-327. Use table for planned unit development districts	Update <b>financial institutions</b> to be <b>financial services</b> in planned unit development districts.	Scrivener's Error	Scrivener's Error
Sec. 36.2-403. - Accessory uses and structures.	Recognize <b>portable storage containers</b> as permitted by-right in some industrial districts, and reference their supplemental regulations.	Include supplemental regulations that have been removed in error.	Scrivener's Error
Sec. 36.2-405. Bed and breakfast, homestay, and short-term rental establishments.	Update length of stay to be a maximum of 30 days and limit to owners being on site.	Ensure consistency with the definition for temporary occupancy and improve enforceability.	Chapter: City Design   Land Use priorities Priority: Purposeful Land Use Policy 1: Coordinate future land use and zoning to encourage arrangement of land uses in identifiable and predictable patterns
Section 36.2-429. Temporary Uses.	Add <b>produce stand</b> as temporary use in multiple purpose districts.	Community markets are a permitted use in all multiple purpose districts and have a similar impact on the community.	Chapter: Healthy Community Priority Four: Access to Affordable Healthy Food Policy 2: Facilitate local food production and distribution
Section 36.2-540 - Zoning amendments	Clarify zoning amendment procedure.	Align with existing staff procedure.	N/A
Section 36.2-625 - Outdoor lighting standards.	Separate one sentence into two sentences.	Improve readability.	Scrivener's Error

City Council Member Initiatives 2026

Section	Summary of Changes	Reasoning	Tie to Comprehensive Plan
Section 36.2-644 - Overall tree canopy requirement	Correct street trees to reference the correct code section.	Scrivener's Error	Scrivener's Error
Sec. 36.2-646. Façade planting.	Remove façade planting requirement from buildings with dwellings downtown and buildings with a zero foot setback.	Façade plantings are more standard on buildings further setback from the street.	City Plan 2040   City Design: Urban Design, Downtown
APPENDIX A. – DEFINITIONS	Add definition of portable storage container.	Clarify the use and specify its uses as a building material.	N/A