



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: Friday, April 3, 2026.** Please include this submission form as the first page of your electronic entry. Contact [Gage Harter](#) with any questions.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: _____

Program Title: _____

Program Category: _____

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: _____

Title: _____

Department: _____

Telephone: _____ Website: _____

Email: _____

SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

VACo Award Submission: ZOMod – Zoning Ordinance Modernization Project and Subdivision Ordinance Amendment

Executive Summary

In 2025 Chesterfield County completed two landmark modernization initiatives—the **Zoning Ordinance Modernization (ZOMod) Project** and the **Subdivision Ordinance Amendment**—to streamline its land development framework. ZOMod provides a modern, user-friendly zoning code effective January 1, 2026, to align with the Comprehensive Plan, while the Subdivision Ordinance Amendment updates procedures for plat submittal and processing. Both initiatives offer clarity, consistency, and predictability for residents, developers, and decision-makers across the county. ZOMod was a five plus year effort to overhaul and replace a 1970s-era zoning ordinance with a forward-thinking code that supports mixed-use development, housing diversity, and sustainable growth.

Problem/Need/Challenge

Chesterfield’s zoning ordinance, dated from the 1970s, lacked modern land-use categories such as mixed-use designations. It was also inflexible, ambiguous, and heavily reliant on a conditional use planned development process, failing to support the County’s vision outlined in the “modern” 2019 Comprehensive Plan. The misalignment with the community’s vision for many years, accompanied by a complex and confusing process, resulted in a time-consuming and administratively burdensome zoning process with inconsistent outcomes. An outdated set of codes resulted in modern growth trends being unmet. The existing code failed to accommodate a mixing of land uses, small lot

development, diverse housing types, and flexibility demanded by new demographics and market conditions.

Description of Program

ZOMod was a staff-led effort, with the assistance of an all-star consultant team led by White & Smith. The project kicked off in 2019 with the issuance of a Request for Proposal (RFP) and officially launched in January 2021. The overhaul to the decades old zoning ordinance did the following:

- Strategic alignment: Fully aligns zoning with the 2019 comprehensive plan— supporting walkable centers, housing diversity, and environmental stewardship.
- Streamlined district structure: Reduced the number of zoning districts from 24 to 14; introduced new Mixed-Use Center (MU) district to permit residential– commercial integration.
- Modernized Land Uses: Simplified land use categories and updated terminology, defined and clarified terms, and reduced reliance on the conditional use planned development process to improve predictability.
- User-Friendly Online Format: utilized online code portal platform where users can access the documents quickly and easily enhancing the user’s experience.

Cost of Program

The entire project was budgeted for just over \$1 million; however, came in under the \$1 million.

Results or Success

At the Board of Supervisors' public hearing for the new ordinance in September of 2025 there was a significant amount of support from residents, community groups, local housing advocates, the home builders, and many more. Most everyone recognized the length of time spent by the county getting the new ordinance to a good place and the need for a new modern ordinance. ZOMod was a step in the right direction for the county to be in the best possible position to handle new development requests as they come in.

The new zoning and subdivision ordinances went live January 1, 2026—marking the first comprehensive rewrite in nearly 30 years. The new code offers applicants new pathways in lieu of the old conditional use planned development process, which improves clarity for both the applicants and public by setting a more transparent regulatory framework sets clearer expectations. The ordinance supports long-term community goals—including mixed-use, walkable neighborhoods, and housing diversity—per the comprehensive plan.

Innovation/Model for Others

Chesterfield's new zoning and subdivision ordinances are a model for replication; not just for the content of the ordinances, but for the approach the county took to accomplish this task. ZOMod's methodical approach, from early engagement through strategic rewrites, serves as a national best practice. Ultimately, the lessons learned during the multi-year process are what can be helpful to others.

There are very few suburban communities able or politically willing to tackle a project of this magnitude and succeed. A complete rezoning of the entire county, approximately,

149,456 parcels, included two required mailings to every single property owner. To create an entirely new document and rezone every parcel took significant staff time and political courage, but the effort was all worth it in the end.

This document represented streamlined regulation with increased clarity and efficiency all while encouraging quality development without compromising community input and staff evaluation.

Ultimately, the new documents are built for future resilience. The updates embed flexibility to adapt to shifting demographics, market trends, and a changing landscape. By reducing complexity and improving transparency, the new ordinances strengthen government trust and confidence.