

CURRENT PLANNING FACT SHEET

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

COMPLETE ZONING REGULATIONS CAN BE FOUND [HERE](#).

- **Can my property be subdivided?**

This depends on several factors, including but not limited to zoning, access to public water and sewer, use of a well and septic system, and whether or not the property fronts a state-maintained road. Other factors include lot width, legal access, etc. It is recommended that you consult a land surveyor.

- **Can I place an RV/camper on my property and stay in it?**

In a zoned area of the County, staying in RVs/campers is prohibited – even temporarily. Any occupation of an RV/camper would need to occur in an RV park. RVs are permitted to be parked and stored on private property, but not occupied.

For non-zoned (NZ) areas of the County, any occupation of an RV/camper should be referred to the Franklin County Building Department.

- **What does “NZ” mean?**

“NZ” is a designation that stands for Non-Zoned. Non-Zoned areas of the County have no zoning district (land use) regulations. However, NZ areas are still subject to state regulations such as the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), as well as some countywide regulations such as front setbacks, manufactured home parks, subdivision controls, building codes, and stormwater and erosion & sediment control.

- **Do we enforce residential design restrictions, e.g., minimum square footage, shape and layout?**

Aside from height, the County does not regulate size, shape and layout of a dwelling – only the type. The County distinguishes single-family detached dwellings from duplexes, triplexes, multi-family units, apartments, and manufactured homes (mobile homes).

Tiny homes, yurts, metal homes with garages on side or below, are allowed as single-family detached dwellings provided they meet the appropriate building codes.

- **What are the building setbacks?**

The minimum building setbacks are as follows:

Front setback. The minimum distance from the nearest point of the house or principal structure (including porches or stoops or any accessory buildings) to the centerline of the specified right-of-way shall be equal to sixty (60) feet or thirty-five (35) feet from the edge of right-of-way, whichever is greater, for property adjacent to state primary roads and equal to fifty-five (55) feet or thirty (30) feet from the edge of right-of-way, whichever is greater, for property adjacent to all other roads.

Side setback. The minimum side setback, the distance from the side property line of a lot to the nearest point on the house or principal structure (including porches, stoops or accessory building) shall be ten (10) percent of the road frontage distance, with a minimum of ten (10) feet and a maximum of twelve (12) feet.

Rear yard. The minimum rear setback, the distance from the rear property line of a lot to the nearest point on the house or principal structure (including porches, stoops or accessory building) shall be a minimum of thirty (30) feet. Rear yard requirements for property contiguous with Smith Mountain Lake may be reduced to twenty (20) feet. For property bordering Smith Mountain Lake, the distance will be measured from the recognized full pond level. Accessory structures up to five hundred seventy-six (576) square feet may be located in the rear yard as long as they are at least twelve (12) feet from the rear property line. In no case shall any structure be located on or below the eight-hundred-foot contour. Walkways and steps are exempt from rear yard requirements.

Minimum distance between main buildings. For fire protection in low-density, agricultural areas, it is required that principal structures be no less than twenty (20) feet apart.

Corner lots. The minimum setback distance from the nearest point of the house or principal structure (including porches, stoops or any accessory buildings) to the centerline of the specified right-of-way shall be equal to sixty (60) feet or thirty-five (35) feet from the edge of right-of-way, whichever is greater, for property adjacent to state primary roads and equal to fifty-five (55) feet or thirty (30) feet from the edge of right-of-way, whichever is greater, for property adjacent to all other roads.

- **Can I place a manufactured home on this lot?**

Zoning districts where manufactured homes (mobile homes) are permitted:

A-1, Agricultural
R-2, Residential Suburban Subdivision
RC-1, Residential Combined Subdivision

Also allowed in Non-Zoned areas.

Note: This includes single, double and triplewide mobile homes

- **Can I put up a shed or storage building on my property without a house?**

The are considered accessory structures, which are only allowed when there is a principal use. When a property owner is planning on building a home within the next two (2) years, our office will typically allow the placement of an accessory structure if, **and only if**, they apply for their residential building permit, in addition to the accessory structure permit, for the future dwelling. The permit expires after two years, and, at that point, if no construction for the residential structure has been started, the property owner would be required to apply for a new residential building permit.

- **Can I build a garage as a principal use?**

The County does allow for private garages as a principal by-right use, subject to the following criteria (Section 25-131):

Must be on at least a 5-acre parcel / The garage cannot exceed 2,000 square feet in size / No more than one (1) garage, principal on any one parcel / Must be located no less than 50 feet from property

line (unless that property is under the same ownership) / Any future detached residential use on the lot shall be larger in total floor area than the garage, principle, and a future detached residential use on the lot shall designate the garage, principle as a garage, private.