



Falls Church Pulse

Dear Neighbors,

Happy New Year! We had a productive holiday and decided to send you a January newsletter after all.

For 2024, City Council and the Planning Commission have many big work items. Having successfully pushed through the T-Zone code changes, they now turn their attention to the single family zoning code, following in the footsteps of Arlington and Alexandria. Gene Gresko has posted a call to us all to be informed citizens on this issue. This upzoning initiative is likely to begin with accessory dwelling units. We have written a post on this topic that looks at what other jurisdictions have done.

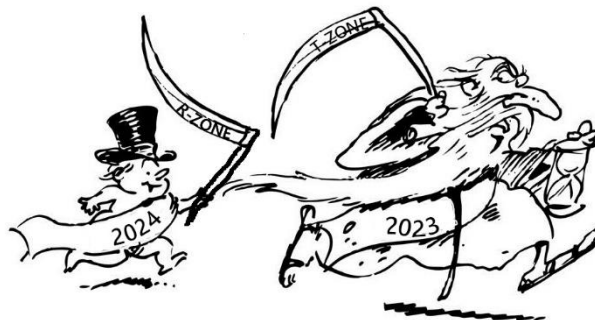
City Council and City staff conducted a postmortem on the T-Zone experience to see what lessons may be learned in the hopes of avoiding strong protests over zoning initiatives. You may or may not agree with their conclusions.

It is promising to be a busy 2024 in City Hall!

The Editors
January 2024

[Potential Falls Church City Zoning Changes Need Citizen Awareness and Involvement](#)

Recent upzoning trends in Arlington and Alexandria may lead to similar residential zoning changes in Falls Church City. Long-time Falls Church resident Gene Gresko wants us all to stay informed on efforts in the City. As always, the devil will be in the details.



[Accessory Dwelling Units Will Be a Key Focus of City Planning in 2024. What Are They? What Are Other Jurisdictions Doing?](#)

City Council has signaled that it will consider zoning changes on Accessory Dwelling Units in 2024. Accessory dwelling units are currently permitted under the City's Municipal Code, but only if in the same structure as the existing home. These units require a City permit, available under specific conditions and for a limited period of time. Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax and Montgomery have recently researched this issue, the trade-offs, and made changes to their codes.



[T-Zone Lessons Elected Officials and City Staff Plan To Apply To Future Zoning Changes](#)

City Council members and staff concluded at their October 24, 2023, “after action” meeting that future major zoning changes need to be guided by “top-down direction from Council” while acknowledging the potential benefit of more “bottom-up listening” to citizens. They discussed the need to declare and explain the “why” behind any proposed policy changes and to define how citizens can expect to be engaged in the process.



[Planning Commission Discusses 2024 Planning Agenda and Public Engagement](#)

At its organizational meeting and work session on January 3, 2024, the Planning Commission elected a new chair, Robert Puentes, and discussed proposals regarding public engagement, lessons learned from the T-Zone experience. The 2024 Planning agenda proposed by City staff included accessory dwelling units, residential parking requirements, City's bike plan and rezoning of the Tinner Hill/Southgate area.



[Stratford Gardens Restaurant – Site Plan Approved](#)

The site plan for Stratford Gardens, a proposed restaurant at the Stratford motel site, was approved by the Planning Commission on December 20, 2023. Minor changes were made primarily to plant trees at ground level instead of planter boxes and improvements to the Broad Street side of the building. This project will reduce the existing impervious area by 12%. Construction can now proceed. This post contains renditions and floorplans for the new restaurant.



Posts you may have missed

Falls Church City Population Growth Of 35% From 2020 To 2030

A new study projects a population growth of 35% from 2020 to 2030 as a result of the mixed-use developments, making the City among the densest in the region.



15% Enrollment Growth By 2030 Projected For City Schools

A City commissioned study projects enrollment growth of 15% from 2023 to 2030, within the physical capacity of the City schools.

