

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY

# 2024 END OF THE YEAR REPORT

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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE  
NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY PLANNING  
COMMISSION



SUBMITTED BY:  
THE OFFICE OF BUILDING & ZONING  
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### BACKGROUND

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This report is submitted as required by Title 15.2, Chapter 22, Section 2221 of the Code of Virginia, which requires an annual report submitted to the Governing Body concerning the operation of the Planning Commission and the status of planning within Northumberland County. This report will also include other items to aid in decision making for the year 2024.

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### PLANNING COMMISSION

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During the past year, the Northumberland County Planning Commission held twelve (12) meetings, every month of the year. Items considered by the Commission during 2024 are as follows:

#### *Amendments Considered:*

A revision to the Northumberland County Zoning Ordinance § 148-151, Boathouses, to add a definition for Boat Canopies, and add exceptions to items 5, 6 and 8 that do not apply to Boat Canopies in order to allow them in Northumberland County. In addition, add Boat Canopies as a use in the zoning usage table to make them a conditional use in A-1, Agriculture, C-1 Conservation, R-2 Residential Waterfront, R-3 Residential Restricted, R-4 Residential Recreational, B-1 Business and M-1 Industrial zoning districts.

Per the 4-17-23 Memo from the BOS requesting the Commission review any and all uses in all zones within the Zoning Ordinance to determine if certain uses should be allowed by right, conditional use, or not at all, based on the definitions of the zoning district and the Comprehensive Plan.

The result from the Commission review of the Zoning Ordinance, a revision to the Northumberland County Zoning Ordinance § 148 to revise Attachment A: Usage Table: Office Buildings from a by-right use in R-1, Residential General and R-2 Residential Waterfront to conditional use in R-1, Residential General and R-2 Residential Waterfront.

A revision to the Northumberland County Zoning Ordinance § 148-155, Solar Energy Facilities, to increase the minimum setback from 25 feet to 50 feet, revise the first decommission plan review period to two years after completion, and thereafter every five years, and to state that after decommissioning plan review that if the cost to decommission has increased, then the decommissioning surety must increase by the same amount

Regarding the memo request of the Board of Supervisors requesting a one mile prohibition of utility scale solar energy facilities from tidal waters, the Planning Commission considered a revision to the Northumberland County Zoning Ordinance § 148-155, Solar Energy Facilities, to add a prohibition of Utility Scale Solar Energy Facilities within 0.75 mile from tidal waters. The utility scale solar energy facility applicant, upon request by the zoning administrator, may

be required to provide documentation by a Virginia Licensed engineer, surveyor or landscape architect that no part of the utility scale solar energy facility shall be closer than 0.75 mile from tidal waters in the county. This was a compromise, as the one mile prohibition from tidal waters did not have enough votes for passage by the Planning Commission.

### *Rezoning:*

There were no rezoning requests for 2024.

### *Other Public Hearings:*

The Planning Commission held a public hearing for the County's first Capital Improvement Plan on April 18, 2024, which it then sent to the Board of Supervisors for adoption.

A Request by Roger M. Evans, Jr., owner, for a Conditional Use Permit to allow construction of a boathouse on property zoned R-2, Residential Waterfront. The property is shown as Tax Map Parcel #11-(1)-29-C and is located at 485 Clark Lane.

A request by James Robert Caudle, Jr., owner, for a Conditional Use Permit to allow a small retail business, furniture repair shop on property zoned A-1, Agricultural. The property is shown as Tax Map Parcel #9-A(1)-34, is one acre in size, and is located at 2829 Northumberland Highway.

### *Other Considerations:*

The Planning Commission, whilst working on the Comprehensive Plan revision, had questions about the Chapter 1, Existing Development map and wanted to know if the map was an accurate representation of businesses in the county. Staff stated it was a desktop exercise, so staff stated they were not sure of the accuracy of the E911 address data as it relates to active businesses in the County. The Planning Commission discussed how to get an accurate snapshot of businesses in the county and discussed the possibility of the county requiring a business license for businesses to operate in the county. To that end, the Planning Commission sent a memo to the Board of Supervisors on June 6, 2024, requesting permission to investigate the pros and cons of adopting a business license requirement for the county. The Board of Supervisors granted permission to the Planning Commission to investigate the pros and cons of a county business license. The Planning Commission over several meetings discussed the advantages and disadvantages of requiring a business license and ultimately decided that the county did not need to require a business license to get data on existing businesses, as the Commission of the Revenue has a list of active taxable businesses in the county. The Planning Commission presented their conclusion to the Board of Supervisors, and they agreed a business license was not needed.

In response to a Board of Supervisors Memo, the Planning Commission discussed conditions relating to conditional use permits in A-1, Agriculture for cargo containers used for storage in order for them to blend into the landscape. The Planning Commission unanimously voted to approve the following suggested condition for cargo containers when applications come to the Board of Supervisors for conditional use permits on A-1, Agricultural zoned parcels: A storage container that is visible from the road or a neighbor's

property must be painted to blend in with the existing scenery and/or establish natural vegetative screening to hide such a unit, so that it is significantly less visible.

The Planning Commission, as noted above, has been working on revising the Comprehensive Plan. The Commission is examining each chapter of the Comprehensive Plan, and has made revisions to Chapter 1 through Chapter 4. Work will continue on revising the Comprehensive Plan in 2025.

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#### BOARD REQUESTS

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The Board of Supervisors, Board of Zoning Appeals and the Wetlands Board considered a combined total of 72 requests during the 2024 calendar year.

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<b>Boathouse Requests- Board of Supervisors</b>	0	3	0	2	1
<b>Chesapeake Bay Act Variances</b>	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Conditional Use Permits</b>	14	16	10	20	11
<b>Rezoning Requests</b>	1	0	2	0	0
<b>Subdivision Variances</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Wetlands Board Applications</b>	4	40	35	33	54
<b>Zoning Variances</b>	6	14	6	7	5

*Table 1 displays the number and types of requests that have gone before the various Boards.*

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#### OFFICE OF BUILDING & ZONING

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The Office of Building and Zoning administers various ordinances involving building, zoning, wetlands, etcetera, as well as the planning functions of the County. The following is a compiled list of various requests from the 2024 calendar year, which were processed through this office.

#### *Comparison of Construction Cost:*

In 2024, the total estimated cost of construction was \$65,691,585.24 compared to \$59,793,853.45 for 2023. The total estimated cost of construction showed an increase of approximately 9.5% from 2023 to 2024.

### Total Construction Cost (1982-2024)

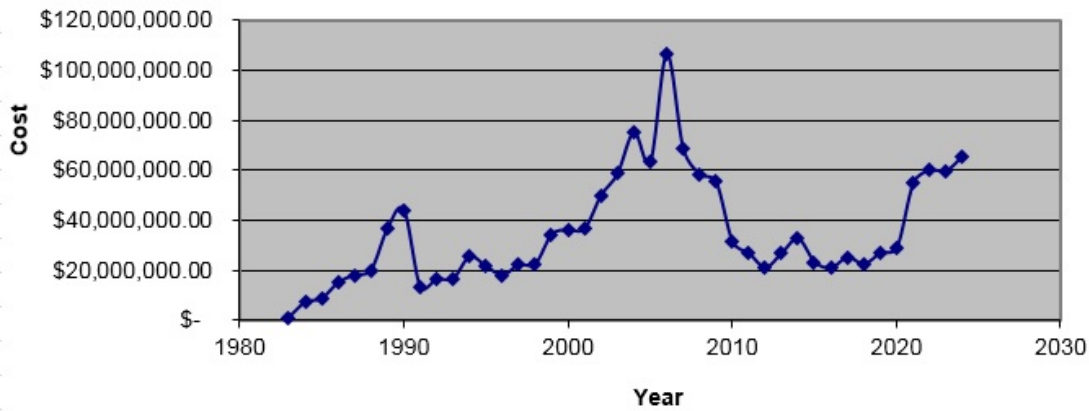


Figure 1 displays the Total Construction Cost from 1982 through 2024 for Northumberland County. These numbers are obtained from the December Building Permits Report Comparison Sheet of each year.

#### Comparison of Structures:

Type of Structure	2023 Number of Structures	2024 Number of Structures	% Difference	2023 Avg. Square Ft	2024 Avg. Square Ft	2023 Avg. Cost	2024 Avg. Cost
Single Family Dwelling	54	72	28.6%	3,302	2,858	\$406,415	\$390,614
Modular	17	15	-12.5%	2,464	2,601	\$320,096	\$334,495
Double Wide	8	7	-13.3%	1,820	1,708	\$172,783	\$210,234
Mobile Home	7	9	25%	-	-	\$73,569	\$37,108
Commercial	10*	2*	0%	3,645	-	\$189,791	\$40,929

Table 2 compares structures for 2023 and 2024. The (\*) denotes that in addition to new commercial buildings being constructed, this figure does not include any remodel repair commercial work performed. Commercial Remodel/Repair estimated costs totaled \$565,500 in 2024, down from \$1,083,307 in 2023 (-62.8%), and total commercial investment in 2024 was \$573,000 compared to the total commercial investment in 2023 of \$2,981,221, a decrease of 135.5%. Some of these decreases can be attributed to the ARPA monies that had a deadline to be spent last year. This year, there is no ARPA money coming into the county coffers.

## Number of Dwellings (1982-2024)

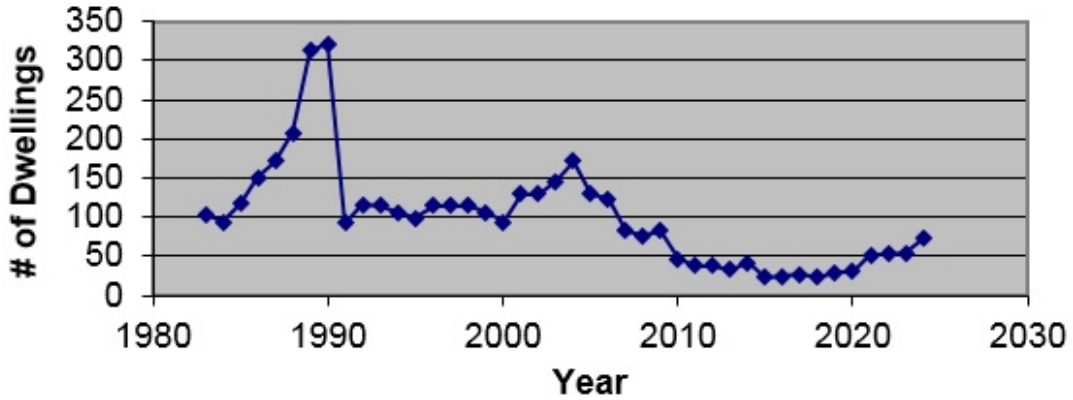


Figure 2 shows the total number of Single Family Dwellings permitted from 1982 through 2024.

### Comparison of Structures- By Magisterial District:

The following table represents the location of dwellings, modular homes, double wides, mobile homes, and commercial buildings by magisterial district.

	<i>Fairfield</i>	<i>Heathsville</i>	<i>Lottsburg</i>	<i>Wicomico</i>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Dwelling</b>	26	11	9	26	<b>72</b>
<b>Modular Home</b>	5	3	2	5	<b>15</b>
<b>Double Wide</b>	1	4	1	1	<b>7</b>
<b>Mobile Homes</b>	3	1	4	1	<b>9</b>
<b>Commercial</b>			2		<b>2</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>105</b>

Table 3: Numbers of each type of structure are given to show the magisterial district in which construction took place for the year 2024.

### Comparison of Structures- By Zoning District:

	<i>Dwelling</i>	<i>Modular Home</i>	<i>Double Wide</i>	<i>Mobile Home</i>	<i>Commercial</i>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Agricultural; A-1</b>	13	2	6	6	1	<b>28</b>
<b>Residential General; R-1</b>			1	1		<b>2</b>
<b>Residential Waterfront; R-2</b>	56	13		2	1	<b>72</b>
<b>Residential Restricted; R-3</b>	1					<b>1</b>
<b>Residential Recreational; R-4</b>	2					<b>2</b>

<b>Conservation; C-1</b>						0
<b>Business General; B-1</b>						0
<b>Industrial Light; M-1</b>						0
<b>TOTAL</b>	72	15	7	9	2	<b>105</b>

Table 4: The following table shows the number of new structures from 2024 within each zoning district classification.

*Permits and Inspections:*

The Building & Zoning Office handles an assortment of permits. A total of 461 building permits, 315 mechanical permits, 461 electrical permits, and 188 plumbing permits were issued in 2024. There were approximately 3,411 building inspections conducted during the 2024 calendar year.

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<b>Boathouse Applications</b>	9	9	8	9	6
<b>Double Wide</b>	7	4	5	8	7
<b>Electrical Permits</b>	386	448	425	414	461
<b>Land Disturbing Inspections</b>	170	230	208	256	262
<b>Land Disturbing Permits</b>	103	148	134	161	165
<b>Mechanical Permits</b>	181	268	311	271	315
<b>Mobile Home Permits</b>	5	1	0	7	9
<b>Modular Homes</b>	7	17	12	17	15
<b>Private Pier Applications</b>	32	96	56	63	88
<b>Plumbing Permits</b>	120	140	140	149	188
<b>Single Family Dwellings</b>	30	51	53	54	72
<b>Zoning Permits</b>	317	429	385	438	596

Table 5 displays various applications and permits issued by the Office of Building and Zoning for the past five years.

*Piers, Wetland Projects, and Boathouses:*

BOAT HOUSES = (6)

- Glebe Creek 1
- Lodge Creek 1
- Spences Creek 1
- Rogers Creek 1
- Bridgemans Back Creek 1
- Cod Creek 1

PRIVATE PIERS - POTOMAC RIVER = (35)

- Bridge Creek 3
- Coan River 1



Cod Creek	2
Hull Creek	1
Hack Creek	2
Kingscote Creek	1
Lodge Creek	1
Potomac River	6
Yeocomico River	1
Flag Pond	1
Chesapeake Cove	1
Lil Wicomico River	4
Corbin Pond	1
Glebe Creek	6
Rock Hole Creek	4

PRIVATE PIERS - CHESAPEAKE BAY= (33)

Barnes Creek	2
Bridge Creek	1
Chesapeake Bay	1
Cockrell Creek	9
Dingle Pond	1
Dividing Creek	6
Gougher Creek	1
Gr. Wicomico River	6
Ice House Cove	1
Indian Creek	1
Lawrence Cove	1
Owens Pond	2
Reason Creek	1

WETLANDS APPLICATIONS PERMITTED= (48)

POTOMAC RIVER = (22)

Butler Cove	1
Cod Creek	3
Cornish Creek	1
Cubbitt Creek	1
Ellyson Creek	1
Hull Cr	1
Hacks Creek	1
Kingscote Creek	1
Lodge Creek	2
Lowes Pond	1
Mill Creek	1
Potomac River	5
Presley Creek	1
Wilkins Creek	2

CHESAPEAKE BAY = (26)

Balls Creek	1
Barrett Creek	1
Barnes Creek	1
Bridge Creek	1
Chesapeake Bay	4
Cockrell Creek	3
Cranes Creek	1
Dividing Creek	1
Gr. Wicomico River	4
Henrys Creek	1
Indian Creek	3
Lil Taskmaker Creek	1
Mill Creek	1
Owens Pond	1
Taskmaker Creek	1
Whays Creek	1