How to Apply for a Commercial Zoning Permit

Updated 8/11/26

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See the accompanying process flowchart | Ver la guía en español

Apply

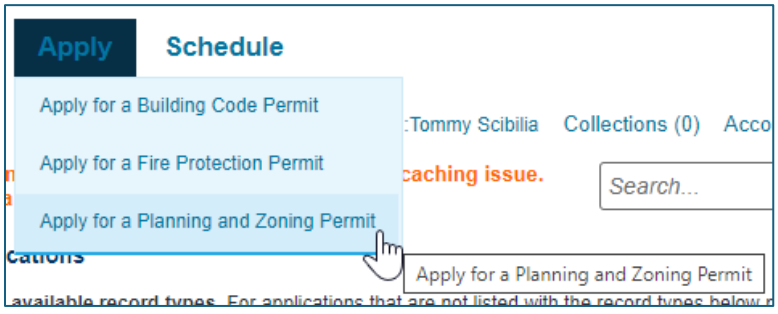
Follow the instructions below to apply for a **commercial zoning permit ("PLN…")**.

1) If the applicant does not already have a free account in our Permit Portal, create one by clicking the "Register Now" link on the portal home screen.

2) Log into the Permit Portal.

Note: Be sure to "Allow Pop-ups" on this website for it to function properly.

3) Hover over "Apply" and select "Apply for a Planning and Zoning Permit".



4) Read and accept the terms of the disclaimer.

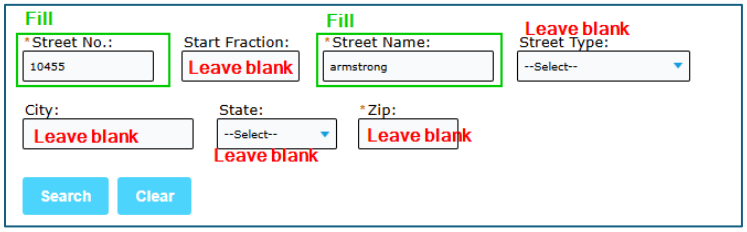
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5) Under “Zoning Permits” select either “Commercial Land Disturbing” or “Commercial Non-Land Disturbing”. If improvements are on the exterior of a building and disturb any amount of earth, “Land Disturbing” should be the type selected.

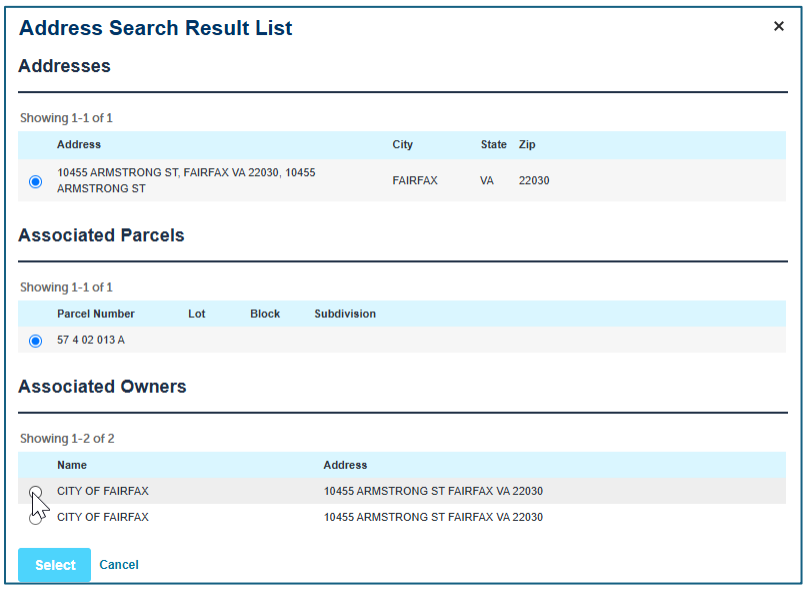
Note: If the proposed work is for a new commercial tenant, the business owner will need to apply for a Commercial Use & Occupancy Permit before being able to operate and before a Business License will be issued. See guides on previous page for **Commercial Use & Occupancy Permits**.



6) Click “Continue Application” at the bottom of the screen to start filling out the application. To enter an address, enter the street number and the street name, and click “Search”. Leave the additional fields blank.

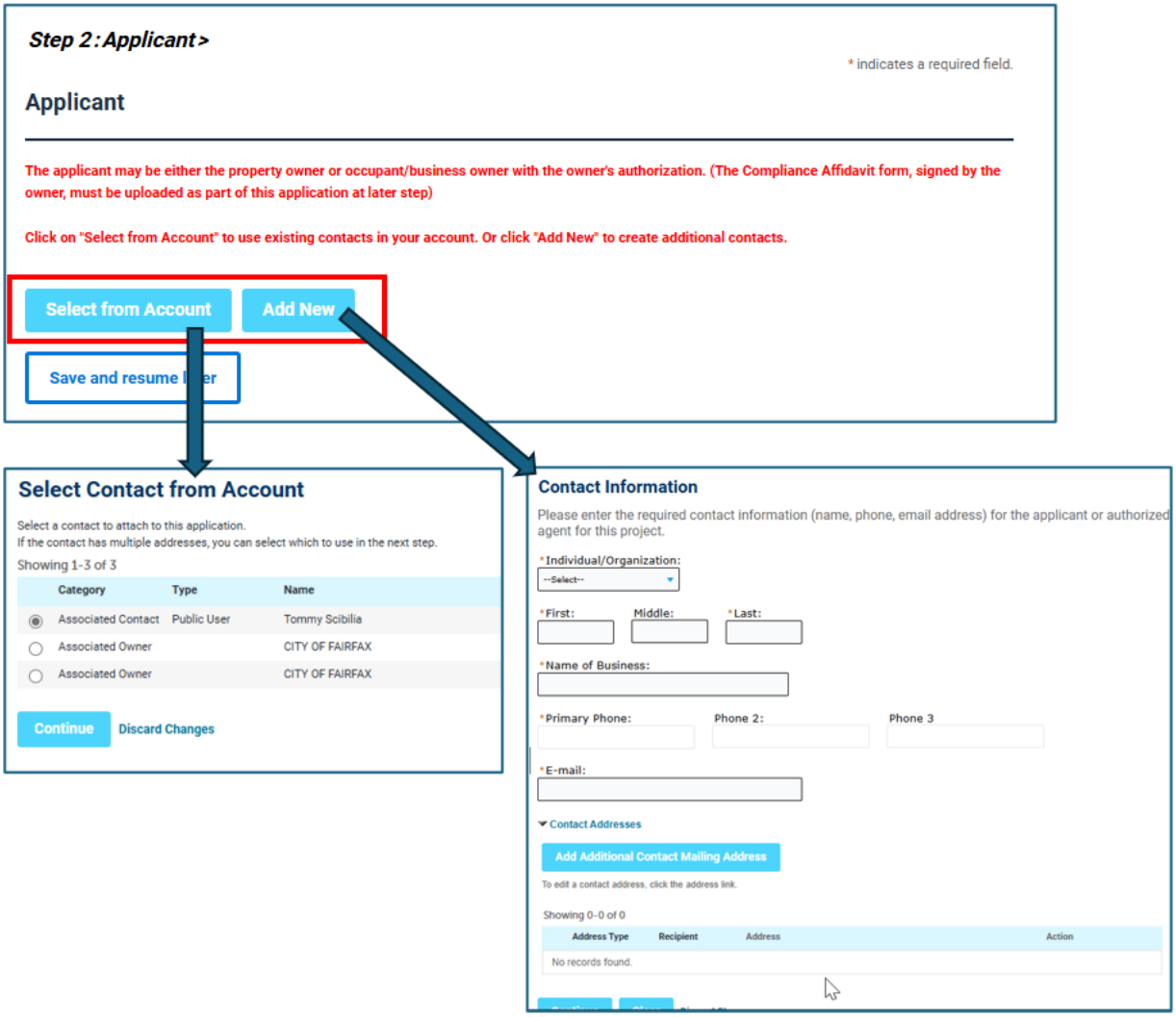


7) The pop-up window will display the street address and parcel number, which should already be selected. At the bottom of the window, select a property owner, and click “Select” to continue. Click “Continue Application” on the main screen.



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8) On the next screen you will be prompted to assign an applicant. You can either select a contact already associated with your account or assign the role of applicant to another person. To select from your account, click “Select from Account”, select the contact you want to use from the pop-up window, follow prompts to complete contact information, and click “Continue”. If you want to add a new contact as applicant, click “New”, add required contact information, and click “Continue”. Click “Continue Application” to proceed.



9) On the next screen you will need to enter project details including a project name, description, type of construction, area of land disturbance, and contractor information. Click “Continue Application” to proceed.

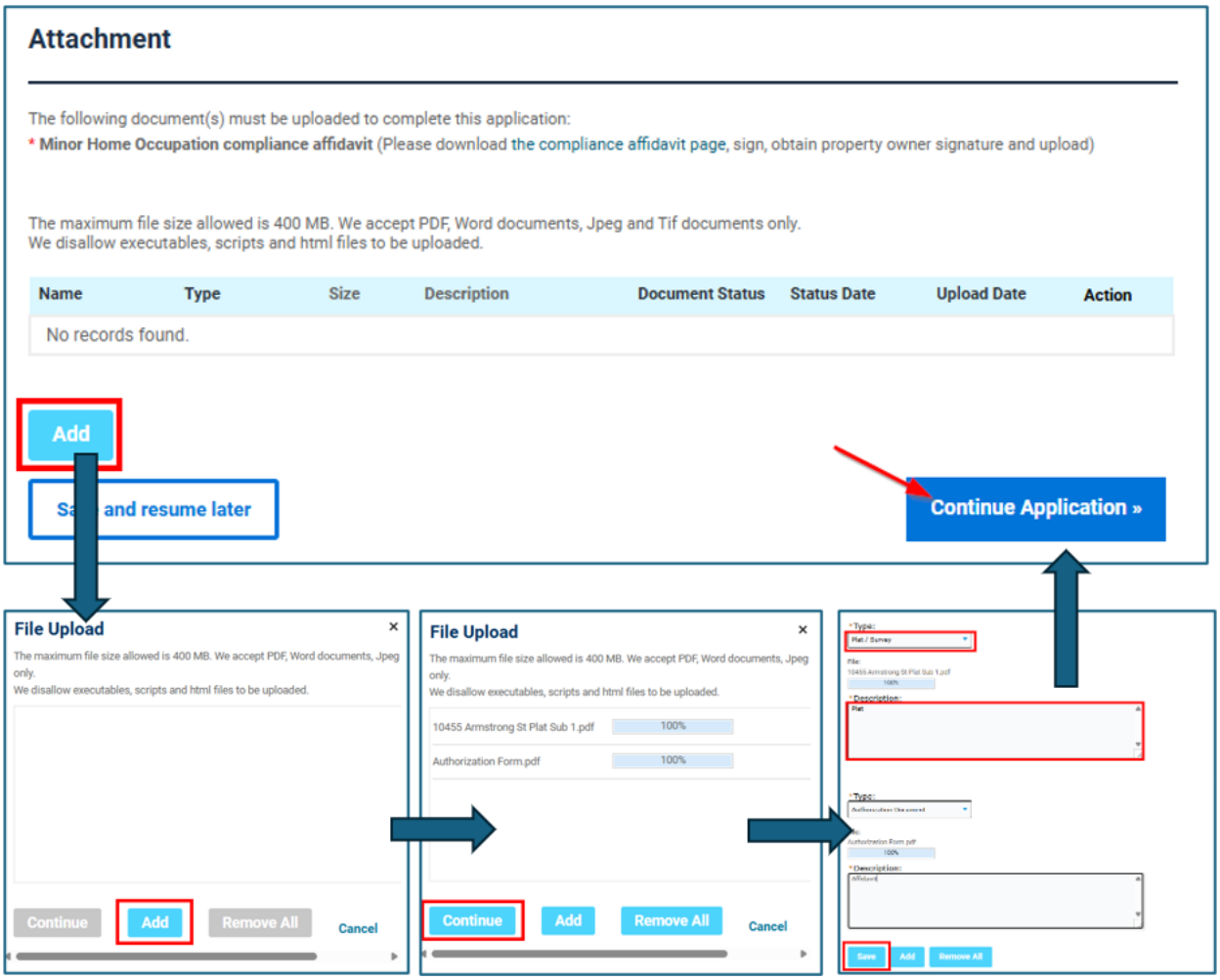
10) For the attachments step, you will need to submit the following items with this application type. Note this list is not exhaustive, and more or fewer items may be needed for staff to complete their reviews:

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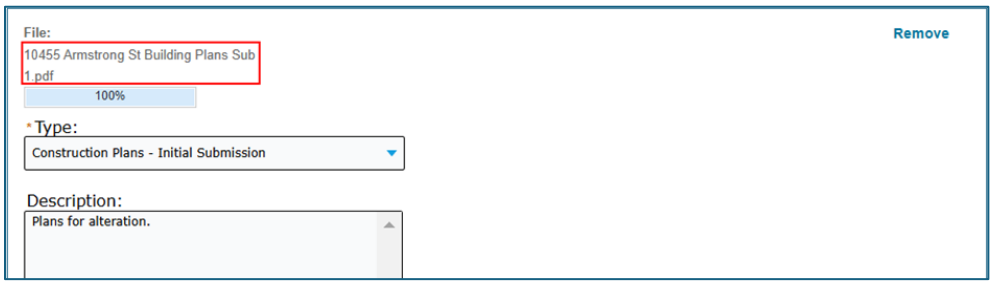
- Building plan as a **single PDF file**. Separate sheets uploaded individually will not be accepted.
    - This should be the same plan set that is uploaded for the associated Building Permit submission.
- Plat/Site Plan if the improvements affect the exterior of the building.
    - Must show the location and dimensions of the proposed improvement and **must be to scale**. See example plat at the end of this document.
    - Plats are prepared by state-licensed surveyors or title companies.
    - The City may have an old plat on file for your property. Email Zoning@fairfaxva.gov to ask.
    - Plats from the City are generally for reference only. They may not be to scale and may be outdated and not contain all pertinent information needed for staff to conduct their review.
- Owner Authorization Form to be signed by the applicant and property owner.

11) To upload Attachments, click "Add" at the bottom of the screen, click "Add" again in the pop-up window, select the documents for upload, and click "Continue". Select the document type from the dropdown menu (note that certain document types are required to be selected in order to submit the application), enter a short description, and click "Save". Click "Continue Application" to move to the next step.

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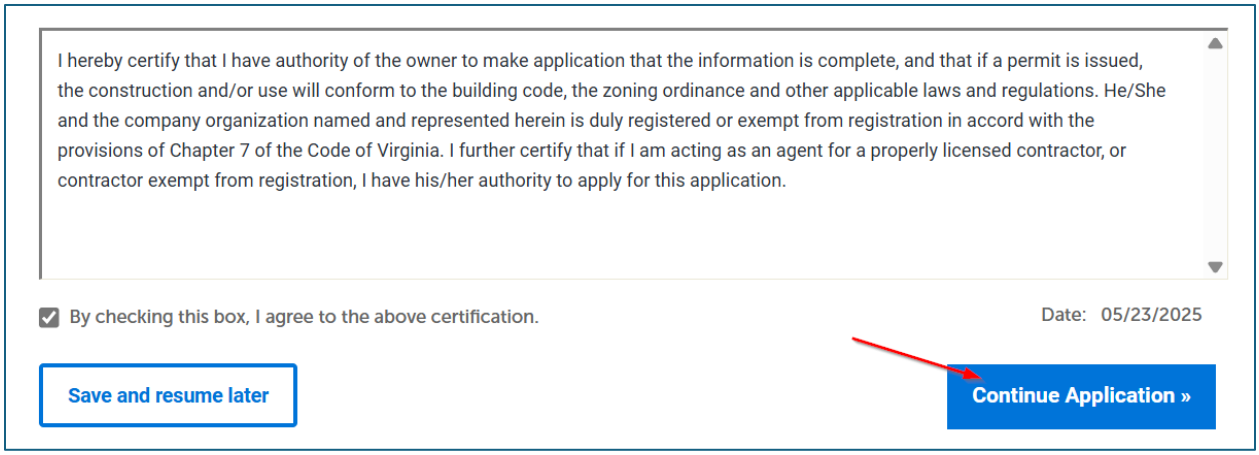


Note: Building or site plans must be uploaded with the following **naming convention**: [Address] [Document type] [Record type] [Submission Number]. Example: "10455 Armstrong Street Building Plans Sub 1".

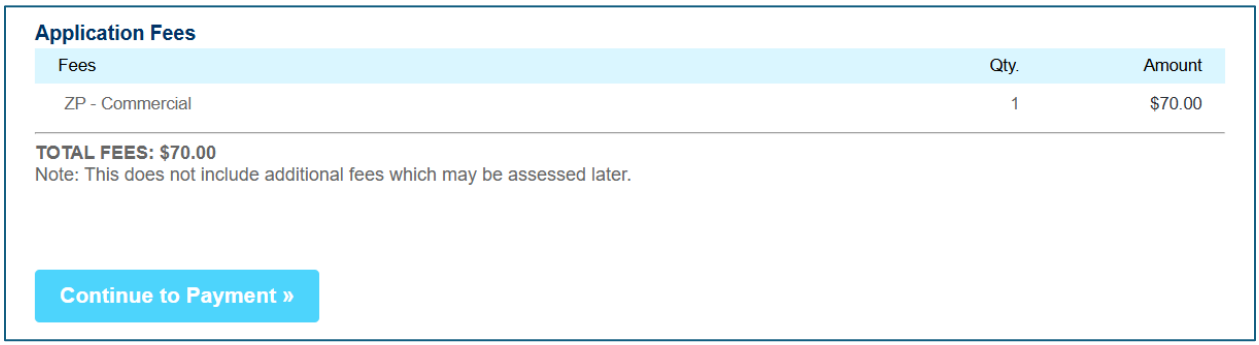


12) Review the summary page, agree to the certification, and click "Continue Application" to proceed.

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13) You will be prompted to pay the review fee. Click Proceed to Payment" to pay with either a credit card or bank info.



14) Once payment is complete, a zoning permit record number will be provided ("PLN…"). **If you do not see a record number, you have not submitted your application and it will not be reviewed**.

Note: If the initial submission did not contain enough information for staff to assess what permits are needed, you will receive an email stating that the submission is incomplete, prompting you to resubmit with additional information or attachments (see separate guide: **How to Resubmit Applications**).

15) You will get emails from the portal throughout the review process letting you know if there is any action that needs to be taken, such as addressing comments and resubmitting (see separate guide: **How to Resubmit Applications**). Emails will be from Auto_Sender@Accela.com. Make sure to check your spam folder periodically in case the portal's emails are inadvertently being sent there.

End of section

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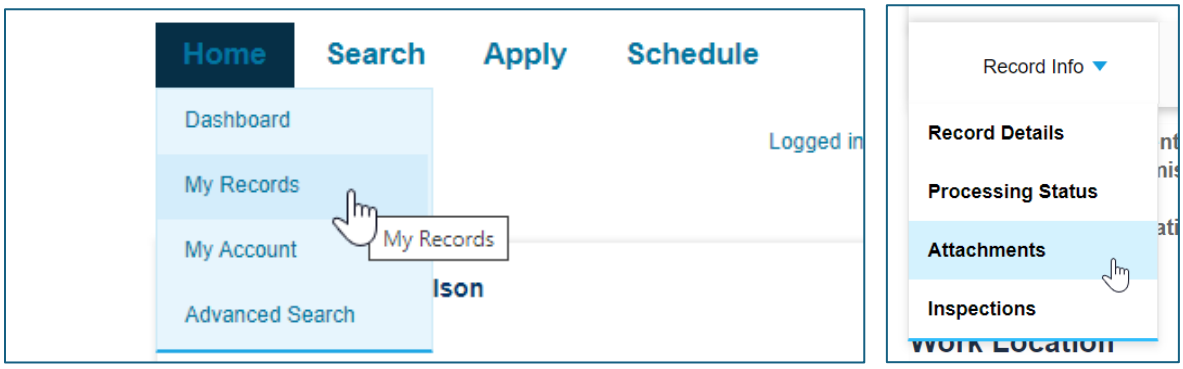
Review Timeframe

Zoning and building permits can be reviewed at the same time. The building permit will not be issued until the zoning permit has been approved. Currently, zoning permits are being reviewed within 2 weeks of application acceptance, and building permits within 4 weeks of application acceptance.

End of section

Permit Issuance

Once the permit is issued, you will receive an email with the permit attached. You can also download it from the portal by navigating to it in “My Records”, clicking on the record number (“PLN…”), and navigating to “Attachments” under “Record Info”.

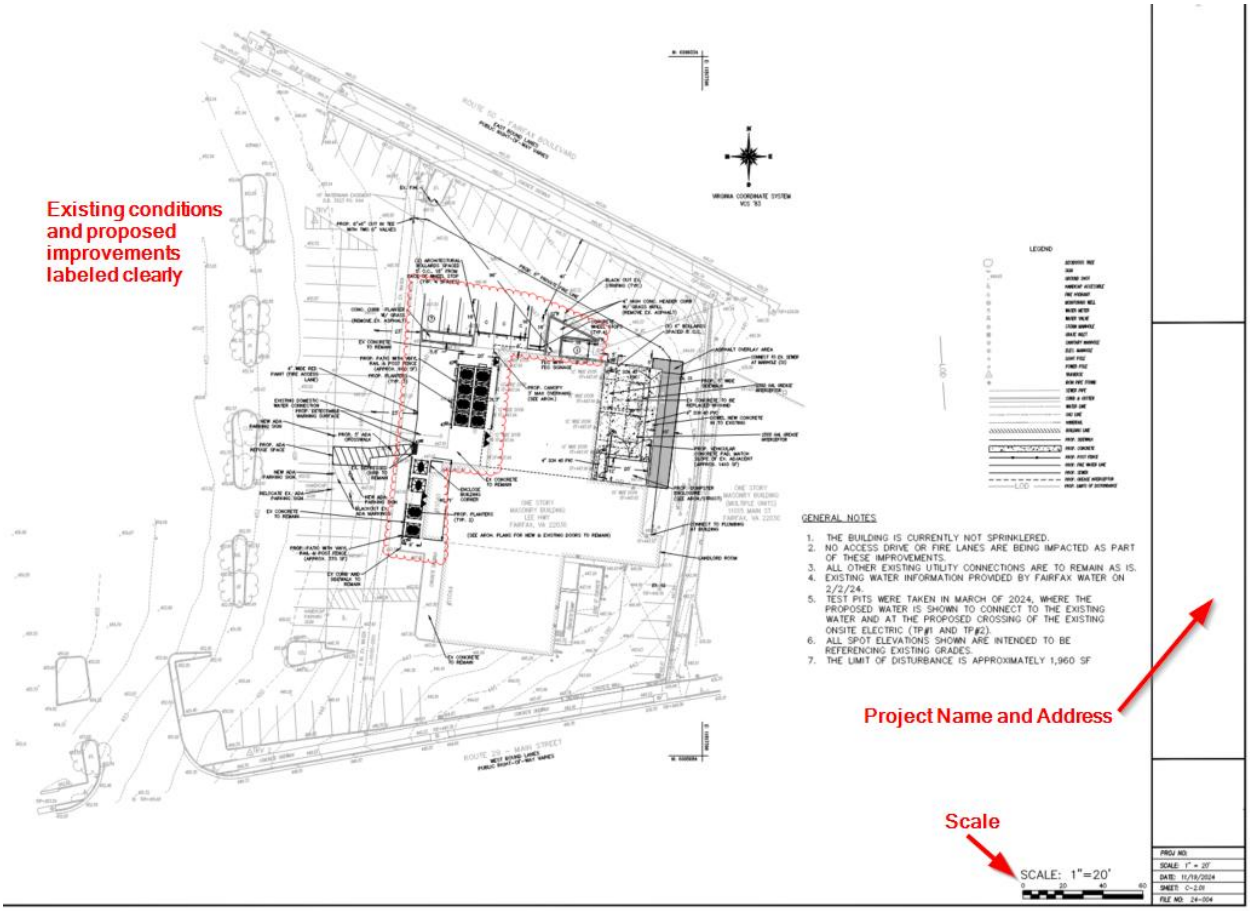


Note: Affiliated building permits (“BLDC…”) will not be issued until the zoning permit is approved.

End of section

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Example Plat/Site Plan



Note: Plat/site plan and all proposed improvements shown must be to scale.

End of document

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