



July 9, 2026
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Town of Warrenton
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RE: *Special Use Permit Application (SUP-26-1) Dominion Energy
Elm Substation Modernization*

Elm Sub Modernization – Town of Warrenton
SUP Comment Responses

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General

General overall comment is the application needs to include more detailed information on specific items, including landscaping alterations in order to meet Zoning requirements and VDOT entrance requirements for a Commercial entrance, as required by the Project Coordinator. Please refer to the attached Staff comments for further detail.
Response: Acknowledged.

Planning

The current submittal of the application does address that the current existence of the substation within the R-10 District is a permissible use and this submission does not require any additional land acquisition; it will be contained on property owned by Dominion Energy. Multiple parcels along Linden Street, which are currently owned by Dominion Energy, will be combined into one parcel via a Boundary Line Adjustment (BLA).
Response: The Boundary Line Adjustment (BLA) process is currently underway with the Town.

Please see Zoning comments for additional requirements and clarifications for other items (i.e. Lighting, Parking, Setbacks, Fencing, Screening, etc.)
Response: Acknowledged.

Zoning

Article 2-19.5 – Fences and Walls

Fences and walls are generally limited to 6' in height, but fences exceeding 6' in height may be approved in conjunction with a Special Use Permit for a permissible use listed within Article 3. The statement of justification is not clear whether any new fencing is being proposed as part of this application. Staff suggests revising the statement of justification and the plan to show any new fencing proposed along with an elevation drawing to show material and total height of each fence.

Clarification: The fence detail should be incorporated as part of the plan itself on a separate “details and specifications” sheet. The plan is the primary source of information for all future enforcement and/or permitting requests. All details should be included as part of the plan.

Response: Detail sheet added to SUP plan – see Sheet 3. The fence is 7' tall with 1' of barbed wire on top (total height 8').

Article 3.4.2.4 – Lot and Yard Regulations

The setbacks noted on the plan appear to be incorrect; the setback for “other permitted uses” in the Residential R-10 Zoning District are as follows:

- Front- 25'
- Side- 15'
- Rear- 20'

***The property will have two frontages on Madison and Linden Street and once the lots have been consolidated, a setback reduction can be granted for the secondary front yard located along Linden Street. This reduced setback would be the average of the front and side yard setbacks required for the lot, 20'. However, additional reduction of setback may be necessary due to the proposed transformer equipment's proximity to the property line.*

Clarification: The secondary frontage (*reduced setback per Article 2-13.10 of the ZO*) along Linden Street will be 20'. If additional reduction of setbacks is necessary due to proposed equipment locations, it must be requested as part of the Special Use Permit process.

Staff comment **remains as advisory:** The proposed transformers do not appear to meet the primary or secondary front yard setbacks currently required for each lot. The lot consolidation that was submitted may not alleviate this issue and a waiver of setback requirements may be required.

Provide the proposed setback for all structures on site to determine if additional waivers or modifications need to be requested from the Town Council.

Clarification: The required 20' setback was added to the plan, but dimensions/setbacks to each property line must be added to the plan for all structures to indicate whether they will meet the minimum required setback. As shown, it looks like several pieces of equipment will not meet the setback requirement. Waivers of setbacks must be requested as part of the Special Use Permit.

Response: Sheet 2 of the SUP Plan (the Concept Site Plan) shows the proposed setbacks and dimensions to proposed equipment from the property line. The front setback on Madison St. will remain unchanged at 25'. The secondary front setback on Linden St. will be reduced from 25' to 20'. We are further proposing additional reduction of the setback on Linden St. from 20' to 10', due to proximity of proposed equipment to the property line. See Note 1 on Sheet 2.

Article 6 – Signs

No new signage is shown on the plan, but signage on the exterior fencing to the site is proposed within the Statement of Justification. Provide a detail for the proposed signage indicating the size of the sign and mounting method.

- If additional building or directional signage is proposed, provide façade width and signage details or provide a note on the plan indicating that signage will be addressed at the time of Site Development Plan. (6-13.3 ZO)

Clarification: Add a note to the SUP plan that states signage shall be addressed at the time of Site Development Plan.

Response: Note added to Sheet 2 of the plan stating that signage will be addressed at time of Site Development Plan.

Article 8 – Landscaping

Provide landscape details to show that the site is sufficiently screened/buffered from all adjacent residential properties and the roadway to meet minimum Zoning Ordinance requirements. As shown, staff is unable to verify the structures will be adequately screened from the adjacent residential properties. The applicant is requesting a modification from the Town Council for the buffer requirement. (8-8 ZO)

- Per Article 8-8.4, a 25' wide buffer yard is required as listed in Table 8-8.5, to consist of:
 - o A double-staggered row of evergreen trees 15' OC that form a continuous visual screen of at least 6' in height. Note – addressing the 'continuous visual screen' requirement may require plantings that are less than 15' apart.
 - OR
 - o A fence, wall, or berm of at least 6' in height, plus 6' tall evergreen trees every 25' on the side facing the residential use.
- Note – Any equipment over 6' in height may require fences, walls, berms, or trees to be more than 6' tall at the time of installation, so as to provide the required buffering/screening.
- Per 8-10.3, #2, item d. – the site must either retain existing trees or plant new trees so that there will be a minimum 20-year tree canopy coverage of 20%.

Clarification: The landscaping shown does not appear to meet minimum buffer requirements under Article 8-8 of the Zoning Ordinance. Should the Town Council approve a modification to the buffer width requirement, a condition of approval should be added to state that the site shall provide enhanced screening of the property from adjacent residential properties within the reduced buffer width. Landscaping will be reviewed in depth at the time of site development plan submission, but buffering of the use has been a concern of neighboring residents.

Response: A double staggered row of evergreens was not able to be achieved due to existing utilities and location of existing fencing. Thus, evergreens are now provided at 15' O.C. instead. Along Linden Street, evergreen shrubs have been placed in between each tree to provide enhanced screening. Minimum tree canopy coverage shown in charts on Sheet 4.

The application does not demonstrate how refuse on the site is to be handled or screened from view. (8-8.2 ZO)

Clarification: As an advisory comment, separate permits are required for any temporary dumpsters and a plan showing locations must be provided at the time of application. Alternatively, the dumpsters can be shown on the site development plan and permitted separately.

Response: Acknowledged. Dumpsters will be shown on the site development plan.

Article 9-8 – Lighting

No lighting plan was provided on the SUP plan. However, the statement of justification notes there will be two new fixtures installed. A fixture cutsheet was provided for the proposed lights and appears to meet the Zoning Ordinance's requirements for fully shielded and full-cutoff fixtures. **Lighting plan review will be required as part of the Site Development Plan.**

Response: Note added to sheet 2 of the plan stating that lighting will be addressed at time of Site Development Plan.

A photometric plan was not provided with the SUP plan. **A photometric plan will be required as part of the Site Development Plan process.**

Response: A photometric plan is not included with the SUP plan, but will be included with the site plan drawing set.

Article 9-14 – Performance Standards for all Non-Residential Uses

A "potential landscape area" has been identified on the plan, but there is no additional information regarding screening of the use from the adjacent residential properties. Every use requiring power shall be concealed by coniferous plantings if visible from abutting residential properties. (9-14.10 ZO)

Clarification: Additional plantings are needed to screen the use from adjacent residential properties. As proposed, the landscaping will not meet the buffer requirements under Article 8-8 of the Zoning Ordinance. Staff suggests a condition of approval that the site shall provide enhanced screening from adjacent residential properties in compliance with Article 8-8 of the Zoning Ordinance. Landscaping will be reviewed in depth at the time of site development plan submission, but buffering of the use has been a concern of neighboring residents.

Response: Additional evergreen screening shrubs have been added in between evergreen trees along Linden Street. In addition, trees on both Madison Street and Linden Street are now spaced at 15' O.C.

PW/PU

Project Coordinator

- The existing entrance along Madison Street needs to be upgraded to a commercial entrance per VDOT CG-13 Standard.

Response: A note is provided on plan Sheet 2 that the existing entrance will be upgraded to meet VDOT CG-13 Standards.

- Please provide turn radius from public street into proposed entrances.

Response: Turn radii are provided on Sheet 2 of the plan.

- I'd recommend a 2:1 slope along Madison Street and ditchline installed to provide adequate drainage for this section.

Response: Acknowledged.