



**Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations Rewrite
Bowie City Council
October 3, 2016**

The purpose of this discussion was to present Clarion Associates' recommendations contained in Module 3 for process and administration, and to discuss the concerns and questions of the group. Questions and comments are identified by **bold text**. Responses to questions and additional presenter comments are identified by normal text.

Can you describe the difference between minor and major site plans?

The major site plan is reviewed and approved by the Planning Board. The minor site plan is reviewed and approved by the Planning Director - an administrative review. Other development, below the threshold for a minor site plan, would proceed directly to permit review in Largo. This means that neither the Planning Board, the Planning Director, nor the District Council review these plans.

A builder submits plans that meet the regulations and goes directly to Department of Permitting, Inspections, and Enforcement (DPIE) to obtain the necessary permits. In accordance with the national best practice, Clarion Associates recommend that the County review and decide 60 percent of plans administratively, 30 percent by the Planning Board, and 10 percent by the District Council.

Why is there a distinction between inside and outside the beltway?

The 2002 General Plan indicated development tiers and designated areas inside the beltway as the Developed Tier, and generally speaking the County's policy guidance and development patterns since 2002 reflect more urban development inside the Beltway. 14 of the 15 metro stations are located inside the Beltway. It should be noted there are four municipalities that span both sides of the beltway – College Park, Greenbelt, Forest Heights, and Glenarden. They are considered inside the beltway for the purposes of this initial draft so as not to break these communities up.

Will the new organization of site plans and development standards make it easier/faster to review plans?

That is the hope.

Do the best practices include studies of the Montgomery County and Anne Arundel County zoning codes? We hear a lot of developers choosing to work in Anne Arundel County because of the easy process.

The consultant team is using best practices from all over the country, in jurisdictions that are similar to ours. We do not know offhand if they included Anne Arundel in the best practice research, but we have heard from the public and others regarding the Anne Arundel process. The team is also reviewing Montgomery County in particular. Prince George's County is most similar to Montgomery County because of the Regional District Act.



Will this rewrite process make it quicker to work with DPIE? Will it remove DPIE altogether? Will it improve the efficiency of DPIE's "One-Stop-Shop?"

This process will not get rid of DPIE. This process will not directly improve DPIE's organization and processes but very much informs their work. The ordinance may encourage more development and increase the non-residential tax base, which in turn may increase funding for DPIE so that additional enforcement officers and plan reviewers can be hired. The rewrite will improve the clarity of the development standards, which should help permit reviewers. We can speculate that this will help the "one-stop-shop" aspects of DPIE.

Departures and Adjustments – The City of Bowie currently has authority to approve some of these departures. Will this continue?

Yes. Everything municipalities do now, they will be able to do under the new code. Four of the 26 municipalities (27 including Laurel) that have some delegated zoning authority will maintain their municipal authority. The table of review and decision responsibilities will be updated to include municipal authority.

Can the required postings be larger? It is difficult to read everything on the side when driving by. We will take this into consideration.

The permitting process seems to take too long. Will this streamline the process? Developers tell us it takes about two years for a project to get through the process and by that time conditions have changed. This stops builders from working in this County.

Part of this issue is DPIE staffing and resources. The permit process will not be directly changed, but clearer standards may improve it. Often the permit process takes more time because additional information is needed. The new code will help clarify everything that is needed from the start.

What is the average time it takes for a permit to be approved? Is this the responsibility of DPIE? Is it possible to get a comparison timeline of how long it takes to develop in this County versus other counties?

Yes, it is the responsibility of DPIE. DPIE may have information on how long it takes for the average permit to be approved.