



**Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations Rewrite  
Four Cities Coalition Meeting  
College Park City Hall  
January 27, 2016 – 7:30 p.m.**

On Wednesday, January 27, 2016, members of the Zoning Rewrite and Subdivision Regulations team met with the Four Cities Coalition (City of College Park, City of Greenbelt, Town of Berwyn Heights, and City of New Carrollton) to discuss Clarion Associates' recommendations for zoning, zone regulations, and uses contained in Module 1 of the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations Rewrite. Below is a list of questions raised by the attendees.

- Are you going to specify the uses in each of the zones? There are some home-based businesses and contractor uses in communities such as Mount Rainier that do not seem compatible with the residential character. Some of their storage areas consist of large structures, such as 20' x 20' sheds.

**Response:** The uses for each zone are specified in the use tables contained in Module 1. Development must comply with the laws that are in place; it could be that some of these uses or structures are illegal. This is a function of code enforcement rather than the Zoning Ordinance per se. The team is working with the County Office of Law to work through concerns about code enforcement.

- Has there been any consideration to change the nomenclature of the rural zones (e.g. RR and RE) to reflect the maximum permitted residential density as you have done with the more single-family residential zones (e.g. SFR-4.6 and SFR-6.7)?

**Response:** Staff has received feedback that single-family residential zone names are difficult to understand and pronounce. The current nomenclature reflects in part a compromise of bringing logic to the names of the zones (density, lot size, etc.) and reflecting their purpose. We have not specifically looked at renaming the rural and agricultural zones to add their maximum density.

- What happens if a municipality hosts or is involved in a pre-application meeting with a developer and they do not see eye-to-eye?
- With regard to "by-right" development and Planned Developments, are community benefits involved in by-right development? Be sure to look at services, not just benefits and amenities. Municipalities provide an array of services to their constituents that may be negatively impacted by significant levels of by-right development that isn't analyzed for impacts through an adequacy or other determination.

- Is one of the purposes to allow for a greater diversity of housing in each zone? Would this have an impact on housing types?

**Response:** Yes. Current zones allow a mix of housing types; however we tend not to see this diversity. The reorganization of the zones proposed by Clarion clarifies that zones generally allow for a mix of housing types. Additionally, Clarion is proposing a mix of uses in the Euclidean base zones starting with the multifamily residential (MFR) zones. This is a response to the market and shifts over time. Many jurisdictions across the country are moving toward this mix and flexibility.

- Greenbelt has a specific zone (the Residential Planned Community, or R-P-C, Zone). How is this being addressed in the Zoning Rewrite?

**Response:** Staff is still in the information gathering process on Module 1 and will be packaging all comments, recommendations, and feedback to provide to Clarion in early March 2016. We have not discussed the specifics of the R-P-C Zone with Clarion, and this is something we will need to look into more closely moving forward.

- What is the R-P-C Zone?

**Response:** It is the Residential Planned Community overlay zone. The R-P-C Zone is currently applied to two locations in the County: historic Greenbelt and the Marlton community.

- With regard to the Neighborhood Commercial Zone, would this be like your corner bakery? Would it be possible to not restrict neighborhood commercial to corner lots and allow the use throughout the zone?

**Response:** Essentially, yes, the proposed NC Zone would allow for uses such as a bakery. It would be possible to allow these kinds of uses in all residential zones but it could easily lead to unintended consequences and create uncertainty. If it is not regulated, then retail could end up sporadically dispersed among single-family residential properties, and your constituents would not have any confidence that there won't be a retail store next to their house someday.

- General question, how do you determine how big a zone should be?

**Response:** Historically, zoning has evolved over time to reflect development patterns that pre-date zoning and which came into place after 1949 when zoning was first put in place in the County. Ideally the same block would usually be in the same zone, but because of the shifts in development throughout the County over the decades, this may not always be the case today. When we undertake the rezoning of the County to implement the new Zoning Ordinance, we'll focus on trying to provide for the smoothest possible transition – most zones should shift more or less automatically to the most compatible new zone. Moving forward from that point, zoning would be determined as the result of the master planning process, which will make land use recommendations.

- There is a Commission on Tax Credits for Green Development. Is this related to zoning? Are we looking at other types of incentive programs?

**Response:** Not directly, no. That would seem to focus more on implementation. However, Module 1 does include a number of recommendations such as new uses that focus on green

development and sustainable development elements such as clean energy and electric vehicle charging stations.

- Who decides what community benefits are provided in the Planned Development zones and Planned Development agreements? Municipalities should have a strong role in this determination for any development within that municipality and which may use their services (e.g. police).

**Response:** Clarion is recommending a pre-application meeting with the community; applications would be discussed with the community prior to being submitted to the Planning Department. Community needs could be identified and begun to be addressed at this point.

- There was concern with the concept that developers would have to provide more by way of quality and amenities in exchange for additional density or other benefits through the Planned Development process. This quality and the amenities should be the expectation. Additionally, amenities and services in or adjacent to municipalities need to be determined with or by that municipality.
- What is the input for citizens for situations when a pre-application meeting is not required? What is the purpose of a pre-application meeting if the community does not have any say?

**Response:** As envisioned by Clarion, the pre-application conference would apply to planned developments, or any other types of development that would be required to go through a detailed site plan review. It would not apply to “by-right” development that meets all the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance for the zone and type of development being proposed.

- How are Adequate Public Facilities handled for development that happens in municipalities?
- What development will be “by-right”?

**Response:** Some development in the base zones, but there are thresholds for other development. This is something that will be determined in Module 3.

- Make sure that developer doesn’t subdivide their property in such a way as to bypass the threshold requirements established in the Zoning Ordinance.

**Response:** Under today’s processes this is very unlikely to happen because of the time, expense, and uncertainty in the subdivision and development review processes. However, since a major goal of this project is to streamline development, we will keep this in mind as a possible loophole.

- With regard to the proposed accessory dwelling units, can these accessory uses accommodate home offices?

**Response:** No, the accessory dwelling units are designed to only allow residential living. There are some occupations that can be considered home occupations or lead to home offices, but this is separate from accessory dwelling units.

- Would like to see a list of all of the comments and what was incorporated into the final document, and if it was not incorporated, why not.

- Who is Clarion? Are any of them here tonight? It's important for them to visit and attend Prince George's County.

**Response:** Clarion Associates is a renowned national firm that specializes in zoning and subdivision code creation. Staff explained the general parameters of the County's contract with Clarion and emphasized that staff, as well as several subconsultants on the project team, are very familiar with Prince George's County and its unique issues and concerns.

- Where is the code going to reside? Will this be primarily internet based or will there be hard copies?

**Response:** We expect the new Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations will be mostly internet based, and are investigating online dedicated code hosting software. We will need to work closely with the County Council's staff on this question.

- What is the regional continuity with other jurisdictions? Are we looking at what's happening in our neighboring jurisdictions? How do the recommendations made by Clarion compare to our neighbors?

**Response:** Yes, we generally keep abreast of what our neighbors are doing and try to coordinate with them closely. Clarion's recommendation is that we date track very closely with both national and local best practices such as the new codes approved for Montgomery County and the District of Columbia.

- Looking forward to seeing how the pre-application neighborhood meeting is doing.
- Significant work is being done to proceed with new development at the College Park and Greenbelt Metro Stations. With the development of the new zones, what is the difference between the RTO-L and RTO-H (Regional Transit Oriented low and high zones), and are they appropriate for these stations?

**Response:** We are aware of a few situations where the zone structure proposed by Clarion may not fully track with development and market conditions on the ground; US 1 from the Ikea south to the District of Columbia is one example where the currently proposed zones may benefit from additional flexibility in where they can be applied. Clarion and staff are aware of the need to continue to refine location criteria, and we are actively soliciting feedback and suggestions on these points.