



Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations Rewrite Module 1 Discussion Questions

The Prince George's County Zoning Rewrite team is pleased to present the first part of the Clarion Associates' recommendations for a **brand new** Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations for Prince George's County. Known as Module 1, this proposal:

- Contains new zones
- Proposes new zone standards
- Provides a comprehensive use structure
- Incorporates recommended use regulations
- Establishes some initial rules for interpretations and definitions

Clarion Associates' recommendations are the result of years of discussions with Prince Georgians and are based on national best practices that draw on the most effective approaches to zoning, subdivision, community involvement, and development used by jurisdictions similar to Prince George's County.

The Zoning Rewrite team has prepared several discussion questions that will help guide your reading of Module 1 and assist you in understanding the proposed changes to the current zone structure and use tables. We encourage you to review these questions with your colleagues, neighbors, and constituents, as your input is crucial to creating a 21st century Zoning Ordinance for Prince George's County.

Module 1 is available on our OpenComment website at <https://pgplanning.opencomment.us>, and the project's website at <http://zoningpgc.pgplanning.com>. It is also available at the reference counter of your nearest Prince George's County Memorial Library branch.

General Impressions on Module 1: Zones and Use Regulations

1. What have your experiences been with the Prince George's County Zoning Ordinance?
2. What do you think could improve the development review process in Prince George's County as it relates to the current zone districts and use regulations?
3. Are there any recommendations in Module 1 that you like or think may improve the development standards? Explain?

4. Are there any recommendations in Module 1 that you did not like or think may complicate the development standards? Explain?
5. Knowing that Modules 2 (development regulations) and 3 (administration and process) are still to come, were there any recommendations or additional changes you were hoping to see included in Module 1 that were not included?

Zone Districts and Zone Regulations

6. Clarion Associates, project consultant, is proposing that the **Residential-Agriculture (R-A)** zone be renamed to the **Agriculture Residential (AR)** zone, with an increased emphasis on agricultural uses and agriculture-related activities. This zone is envisioned as a transitional zone between rural and suburban communities. Lots in the **Agriculture Residential** zone will be required to have a minimum lot size of two acres. Many of the new single-family homes that would be built in this zone consist of estate housing. Given that conflicts may arise between homeowners and farmers in close proximity to each other, what types of buffers, if any, do you think should exist to protect both landowners' rights? Is there a limit to what types of agriculture-related uses that you think should be allowed in the zone? Note: today, the Landscape Manual requires a minor landscaped buffer between single-family development and agricultural uses; should this continue?

Read the description of the Agricultural Residential zone on page 27-3-14.

Read the Allowable Uses for the Agricultural Residential zone on pages 27-4-4, 27-4-64, and 27-4-91.

7. Clarion Associates has proposed that the Residential Townhouse (R-T) Zone, Multifamily Low Density Residential (R-30) Zone, and Multifamily Low Density Residential – Condominium (R-30C) Zone be combined to create the new Multifamily Residential-12 (MFR-12) Zone. The new zone would still allow for a maximum density of 12 dwelling-units per acre (increasing from the current 6 townhouses allowed per acre in the R-T Zone), but would allow for apartments and townhouses to be built next to each other.

Given that the densities are proposed to be the same, do you believe that townhouses and apartments can co-exist in the same zone? Are there any buffers that should be put into place to protect residents of both housing types? Note: today, the Landscape Manual requires a moderate landscaped buffer between single-family attached and multifamily uses; should this continue?

Read the description of the Multifamily Residential-12 zone on page 27-3-40.

Read the Allowable Uses for the Multifamily Residential-12 zone on pages 27-4-4, 27-4-64, and 27-4-91.

8. The proposed new Neighborhood Commercial (NC) Zone is envisioned to create and enhance community-centric retail and traditional main streets. What is your desire for small-scale walkable commercial properties near residential properties? Do you feel this zone may be useful for small town, "main street" character of development?

Read the description of the Neighborhood Commercial zone on page 27-3-78.
Read the Allowable Uses for the Neighborhood Commercial zone on pages 27-4-8, 27-4-56, and 27-4-79.

9. The new zoning ordinance includes a proposed Neighborhood Conservation Overlay zone that would incorporate specific design regulations that are intended to reinforce the character of that specific community. Would this be an effective alternative to the current Architectural Conservation Overlay (A-C-O) Zone, Enterprise Road and Accokeek development review districts, and/or the Mixed-Use Town Center (M-U-TC) Zone? Why or why not?

Read the description of the Neighborhood Conservation Overlay zone on page 27-3-146.

10. A major criticism of the County's design overlay zones—the Development District Overlay Zone (DDOZ) and Transit District Overlay Zone (TDOZ)—is that they are overly regulatory, unrealistic with regard to the true market support for development in the County, and very confusing as separate documents and sets of regulations. Clarion Associates' draft zone structure recommends the elimination of these overlay zones in favor of more traditional zones and clear, easily understood, and market-tested design standards contained in the Zoning Ordinance. While the specifics of the design and place-making standards will come in Module 2, these regulations would address street connectivity, building placement, roofs, streetscapes, parking, and signage among other things.

What design standards would you like to see incorporated as the baseline standard for new development within traditional zones in the Zoning Ordinance (such as the proposed GCO and MFR-48 zones)? If these standards are met, would you feel that design overlay zones are still necessary? Why or why not?

Use Tables and Use Regulations

11. In which zone do you currently reside or own property? What would the current zone transition to under the proposed conversion chart? Are there any uses that you are excited to see incorporated in the proposal? Are there any uses that cause you some concern?

Use PGAtlas.com to look up your current zoning.

12. Our current Zoning Ordinance takes the approach where every use is treated separately, resulting in more than 900 listed uses and approximately 300 pages of tables and text. Clarion Associates' proposed use tables take the opposite approach to uses, and treats most uses as part of broader categories while only focusing on the most problematic uses—such as adult businesses or landfills—for special treatment. This results in a much smaller number of listed uses, and a streamlined use structure.

In general terms, what are your thoughts on this approach? Do you believe that this would make the Zoning Ordinance easier to understand? Why or why not?

13. As technology changes at a rapid pace, the types of things that individuals want to do on property changes. Rooftop farms, co-shared commercial kitchens, and 3-D printed car showrooms, are all things not currently allowed in today's Zoning Ordinance. The County's current Zoning Ordinance prohibits new uses until a text amendment is approved that would allow them. Clarion Associates' proposed zoning code would allow new uses to be interpreted as similar to existing uses. This interpretation process would be formalized in the Zoning Ordinance and approvals would be made by the Planning Director.

In general terms, what are your thoughts on this kind of approach? What would you like to see incorporated in the interpretations process that would make you feel more comfortable about allowing the Planning Director to make the decision on new uses?

14. In keeping with national best practice, Clarion Associates is proposing a limited number of commercial uses in the multifamily zones and some multifamily development in the commercial and office zones. The guiding principle is that including a limited mix of uses encourages healthy communities and allows for an easier transition for blighted or vacant properties.

Do you think this approach would be a benefit or a hindrance to Prince George's County? Why?

15. Clarion Associates is recommending that private non-commercial agriculture and community gardens be permitted in every zone, by-right. Are there any concerns that you may have with your neighbor(s) participating in elements of urban agriculture like vegetable gardening or small scale-composting?
16. Many people in our community have expressed a willingness to keep backyard chickens, as urban gardening and farming has become popular across the country. Many others are firmly against the idea of backyard chickens. A number of jurisdictions are working to determine the best methods for balancing residents' desires for sustainable living and possible nuisances related to this increasingly common issue. Clarion Associates has proposed that home-housing for poultry (backyard hens – not roosters) be allowed in residential zones as an accessory use.

What, if any, restrictions would make you more comfortable with elements of urban agriculture like chicken-keeping?

17. What do you believe should be the balance between developer certainty and community certainties? What can be incorporated in the Zoning Ordinance to achieve this balance?