



**Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations Rewrite  
Progressive Maryland Meeting  
September 8, 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.

**The zoning process has been ongoing for some time. People can be leery of M-NCPPC's efforts. What has been the negative reaction from the public so far?**

- One of the biggest concerns is that public participation may be reduced. However, public participation is being front loaded for the most impactful developments. This will allow for more meaningful public comment. Not all applications will have a public meeting.
- The District Council's authority over site plan approval is recommended to change. It is recommended that site plans are still appealable to the District Council, but that the election to review procedure, also known as "call-up," be removed.
- There has been both support and opposition to backyard hens regarding the minimum lot size to allow backyard hens.
- It is necessary to maintain the municipality's role and authority in the development process.
- There has been some opposition and support to accessory dwelling units. It is recommended that accessory dwelling units are allowed in single-family residential zones because they benefit affordable housing and multigenerational housing

**Would the Duval Walmart be appealable?**

Under the proposed code, major site plans are approved by the Planning Board and appealed to the District Council. Minor site plans are approved by the Planning Director and appealed to the Planning Board, they can be further appealed to the District Council.

**Many buildings in New Carrollton, the Gateway in Bladensburg, and Prince George's Plaza are eyesores. They were supposed to be new attractive buildings to encourage more development in the County, but so far [they] have not. What is the County doing to improve these existing buildings?**

A zoning code is used to help direct and guide new private development or redevelopment. It is very difficult for the local government to force an existing property owner to make changes to their property. This code will help ensure that new development/redevelopment is of high quality. This code aims to set the bar high for quality development, but not so high that developers are discouraged from building in the County. High-quality neighborhoods take time to develop.



**Does the proposed zoning code include sustainability standards?**

Yes. Module 2 (development standards) includes two sections on green building standards. Development meeting a certain size threshold are required to choose from a menu of green building elements (rain gardens, solar power, non-motorized accessibility, etc.). Buildings that apply for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) certification or certification under other nationally recognized green building standards will meet the requirements set out in Module 2.

**The public also has responsibility for creating great neighborhoods. Why [are] jurisdictions and the County [not able to] implement more public development or public/private development?**

Local government is able to help build neighborhoods. However, most development is accomplished by the private sector using private funds. The County's Redevelopment Authority is working to identify locations for public investment. Suitland Town Center is one example.

**Why do we concede that development has to be built through private development? Why is there not more public presence to improve existing buildings?**

The public sector does not have the money to rebuild/improve everything in the County. Generally, public funds are most effective when leveraged to incentivize private development.

**Who is responsible when a strip mall is an eyesore? Who is in charge?**

There is a property standards code that is administered by the Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement (DPIE). All buildings in the County have to meet certain standards. If a building does not meet the standards, a request can be sent to DPIE through 311 and code enforcement can inspect. There is limited code enforcement ability in the County due in part to staffing and budgeting challenges.

**Plan 2035 recommends vertical density over horizontal building. This does not lower demand on infrastructure. Was there a referendum on the Plan?**

Plan 2035 did not have a referendum, but it did have significant public engagement and was voted on by the County Council. Density in its own right is not beneficial. The proposed zoning ordinance does not recommend that everywhere in the County simply become denser. The proposed code recommends focused nodes of density at transit and activity centers as discussed in Plan 2035.

**We want to make sure that the public involvement process has some teeth. We do not want to give up the current appeal process to have more public engagement at the beginning of the process if it is not going to get any additional changes from development.**