



**Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations Rewrite
Port Towns Community Development Corporation – July 14, 2015**

Comments from the community are reflected in **bold text** and staff responses are in normal text.

- **Is there a need to have a manufacturing zone of some sort for IT or Research? The problem with Industrial zones is that they are too Euclidean (single use) and separate uses too much. High-tech businesses need to have additional users nearby to attract business.**
- **Can you explain what you mean by overlay zones not being effective? Overlay zones are the only zones that allow for early community involvement.**

Overlay zones are not an effective zoning tool, especially when you have multiple landowners of commercial property, in part because they are extremely complicated and often contradictory. They also lean to an over-regulatory “default” state with several hundred development standards that each development must meet; often these standards are not based on market realities and often they are un-enforceable.

The zones themselves allow for what could be viewed as “upfront community involvement” because they are the result of planning efforts such as Master Plans or Sector Plans with concurrent Sectional Map Amendments, but once an overlay zone is in place there are no additional upfront or early involvement opportunities over any other zone in the county. At this point in time, development follows the same general application and review procedures as any other location—including areas outside overlay zones—at time of site plan submittal and review. Typically, the first time people tend to hear about development in their community, whether in an overlay or not, is when the public hearing sign notice is posted on the property.

- **Will the consolidation of zones eliminate the discretionary Special Exception process?**
The consultant team, led by Clarion Associates, recommends streamlining the County’s Special Exception process by reducing the number of uses that require Special Exceptions, changing the review procedures to clarify and streamline, and re-evaluate the additional design standards and criteria for approval that exist with our current Special Exceptions.
- **Are zones that allow multiple uses under consideration, such as a zone to allow for lofts in industrial areas?**
Yes, we are looking into this kind of potential. One of the emerging trends with development in the country is we are increasingly finding that single-use areas such as commercial only or industrial only are challenged and less able to compete within the marketplace against mixed-use products and more flexible zones.



- **With the pre-application neighborhood meeting, how can you guarantee that the developer comes to meet with the community?**
 We are in the process of determining how the pre-application neighborhood works. We are open to suggestions, but in general yes—this is the major purpose of the pre-application meeting proposed by Clarion, to ensure the developer meets with the community to discuss their project before any applications are accepted by County staff.
- **Are parking requirements being revised? Current parking calculations are too high.**
 Parking for residential uses is too general, and the calculations should be more specific and flexible to connect better with density needs. We are looking at minimum and maximum parking ratios, and techniques such as transportation demand management for the new Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations.
- **Can you explain “call-up”?**
 “Call-up” refers to a unique discretionary review process in Prince George’s County. It is when the County Council, sitting as the District Council, chooses on its own volition to review a case that has been reviewed by, and is subject to a decision made by, the Planning Board. Cases which are “called-up” do not have to be subject to an appeal by a party of record, and this process is very discretionary both with regard to the reasoning behind the “call-up” and the final outcomes. Clarion Associates recommend that the County’s “call-up” procedures be eliminated in the new Zoning Ordinance; we understand this is a very controversial recommendation and have heard this from both the County Council and a number of County residents.
- **Will Planned Development Zones be reviewed by staff? These are complicated and need staff input.**
 These zones and applications will still be reviewed by staff. (Editor note: the context of the question touched on the recommendation by Clarion that the District Council will make the final decision regarding the rezoning of property to a Planned Development Zone).
- **A concern was expressed that all development applications that go to the District Council should have a deadline.**
 The State passed a bill about four years ago that places a deadline on every type of application that the District Council can review, mandating a timeframe in which action must occur. Evaluating these timeframes and incorporating them in the County Zoning Ordinance is something we will certainly look at.
- **A concern was expressed about Planned Development Zones and the possibility that the envisioned incentive structure could create a barter system and possibly reopen the door to corrupt business practices. It would be helpful to have strict rules for market development**



on the part of the developer.

This is something we will all need to look closer at as the Planned Development Zones are fleshed out in further detail.

- **A concern was expressed about the need for affordable housing and workforce housing in transit accessible locations.**