



**Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations Rewrite  
Port Towns CDC  
February 24, 2016**

The purpose of this discussion was to present Clarion Associates' recommendations contained in Module 1 for zones, zone regulations, and uses; and to discuss the concerns and questions of the organization. Public questions and comments are identified by **bold text**. Responses to questions and additional presenter comments are identified by normal text.

**What is a zone? Can you provide an example?**

A zone is an area of land that allows certain uses (for example, residential, commercial, industrial, or agricultural). A zone helps to determine what can be where. A good example of a zone is R-55, which is applied to many of the residential areas in Cottage City and Colmar Manor.

**Will the conditions in a by-right development be negotiated by the community?**

Clarion proposes two general tracks for development in the Zoning Rewrite. There would be a by-right method and a planned development method. What we are working on now, and what we will see later with Module 2, is the creation of development standards. The goal is for us as a community to decide what these standards will be up front. Once we have agreed to these standards, when development is proposed and meet these standards, they can move forward with development (by-right).

The planned development method would allow for an applicant to make adjustments to these conditions. Maybe they want additional density, or there is a desire for more flexibility in the design. Pursuing this option would trigger a review and negotiated process with the community, and would involve the Planning Board and the District Council (who would make the final determination of approval).

**Why isn't the County focusing and encouraging development efforts in certain locations? I have a friend who was looking to build a four-story building in Riverdale Park and the community was opposed. I told him to move to Hyattsville because it would be easier.**

The new General Plan, Plan Prince George's 2035, sets growth policy areas. These are the priority areas where growth in Prince George's County should take place. It also provides suggestions on how large each of these growth areas should be. Part of this effort to update the Zoning Ordinance is to make sure that we have the right tools on the ground to actually allow and encourage the growth we want to see, where we want to see it. Right now it is easier for people to develop in many places of the County where we want to protect the environment and preserve agricultural lands. One of the goals of this project is to correct this imbalance.



**Who determines what the development standards are in the Zoning Ordinance?**

The project consultant team, Clarion Associates, will propose development standards in Module 2. Then these standards will be available for public review and discussion. The input of all Prince Georgians is essential to ensuring we have the right development standards for our County. The final determination and decision is made by the County Council sitting as the District Council.

**What was the basis for consolidating some of the zones?**

Zones were consolidated based on their intent. If there were multiple zones that had the same intent, had similar uses, and also had similar dimensional standards, Clarion Associates combined the zones. In cases where there were zones that have proven unable to achieve their intended outcome, Clarion Associates developed new zones to replace them. Clarion Associates also proposed several completely new zones to provide tools to allow us to better implement our plans.

**We are trying to expand our real estate development in the Port Towns area, we've met with some developers. They are interested in the community, but they've told us that the process is too difficult and are turning away from making money.**

**The City of Bowie has some zoning authority. How can the Port Towns be able to make zoning decisions?**

The State of Maryland is responsible for the delegation of planning and zoning authority. The state has delegated Prince George's County's land use authority to the Prince George's County Planning Board and zoning authority to the District Council. The state has also authorized the Council to further delegate additional limited authority to municipalities, such as the ability to approve departures from sign or parking standards, it is not within the project's scope to seek changes to this delegation of authority at the state legislature.