



# 10 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT MODULE 1: ZONES AND USES

## 1 Simplification of the County's Current Zone Structure

Clarion Associates proposes reducing the County's current 73 zones to 44 zones. This is accomplished by integrating the best components of today's zones with national best practices while also removing zones that are redundant or accomplish similar development goals. The zone consolidation helps to support the County's priorities of smart growth, economic- and transit-oriented development at our Metro stations, and encourages the right growth in the right locations.

## 2 Creation of Transit-Oriented/Activity Center Zones

Where does the activity happen in Prince George's County? Clarion Associates' BIG new idea is the creation of Transit-Oriented/Activity Center base zones that serve as focal points for a neighborhood or a series of neighborhoods. These zones are intended to create places that are walkable and more urban than the immediate surrounding community. They reflect the County's General Plan, *Plan Prince George's 2035* center classifications, and implement policies associated with those classifications and the prioritization of County revitalization and public sector investment contained in Plan 2035.

## 3 Creation of Planned Development Zones

Module 1 adds ten new planned development zones that provide alternatives to the Residential, Nonresidential, and Transit-Oriented/Activity Center base zones where increased design flexibility is desired. Each planned development zone identifies the allowed uses, lists the types of intensity and dimensional standards the Planned Development Basic Plan must provide, and outlines development standards that may be modified through this plan. These zones allow for more flexibility in design and density, with the expectation that the development quality will surpass what is achievable in the base zone alternative. A planned development must be approved through a rezoning and would be subject to a public review process.

## 4 Creation of a New Neighborhood Commercial Zone

The proposed new Neighborhood Commercial (NC) Zone is envisioned to create and enhance community-centric retail and traditional main streets. Think Main Street Upper Marlboro or long-time neighborhood shops in Mount Rainier. The zone reflects a small-scale, neighborhood-serving character, though it can be more flexible in that it allows uses and accommodates residential and modest mixed-use development.

## ABOUT THE MODULE

In October 2015 project consultants Clarion Associates presented Prince George's County with the first glimpse of the proposed new Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations. These recommendations 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.

We strongly encourage everyone to review **Module 1: Zones and Uses** to determine how the proposals may impact their property and community; but just as a quick refresher here is a list of ten key proposals made in Module 1 that may be of interest.

### For more information

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## 5 Creation of a Neighborhood Conservation Zone

The new Zoning Ordinance includes a proposed Neighborhood Conservation Overlay Zone that protects and preserves the unique development features and characters of established neighborhoods in Prince George's County, while encouraging development that is compatible with existing neighborhoods. The Neighborhood Conservation Overlay Zone would incorporate specific design regulations that are intended to reinforce the character of a specific community. The Neighborhood Conservation Overlay Zone is a flexible tool that may be applied to multiple neighborhoods or situations, each of which will have its own unique architectural, natural, cultural, and historic attributes.

## 6 Chickens!

Simultaneously one of the most popular – and questioned - recommendations proposed in Module 1 is the allowance of home-housing for poultry. Residential properties with half-acre or larger lots will be allowed to keep up to 6 hens (sorry, no roosters) in their yards if certain design regulations are met. In addition to permitting chickens on residential property, Clarion Associates' proposal significantly strengthens support for the County's traditional and urban agricultural uses.

## 7 Allowance of Accessory Dwelling Units

An accessory dwelling unit is a small second dwelling on the same property as a regular single-family dwelling. Commonly referred to as granny-flats, mother-in-law suites, or guest homes accessory dwelling units can be an apartment over a detached garage, a basement apartment, or a living area connected to the main home. Accessory dwelling units are a common practice throughout the nation and provide options for affordable housing and aging in place. Design standards would require the property owner to provide at least one off-street parking space, among other regulations.

## 8 Replacement of the Transit-District Overlay Zones (TDOZ) and Development-District Overlay Zones (DDOZ)

A major criticism of the County's design overlay zones is that they are overly regulatory 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: Development Standards, they will address street connectivity, building placement, roofs, streetscapes, parking, and signage among other things.

## 9 Replacement of Mixed-Use and Comprehensive Design Zones including the M-U-TC, M-U-I, and M-X-T Zones

The current ordinance has 30 zones specifically created to encourage mixed-use development in the County. These zones are proposed to be eliminated in favor of streamlined zones and review/approval procedures. They will be replaced with a combination of nonresidential base zones, transit oriented/activity center base zones, and planned development zones.

## 10 Greater Mix of Residential and Nonresidential Development

Clarion Associates is proposing that multifamily residential base zones and commercial base zones allow more blending of uses by-right, in keeping with national best practices. 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.

# ABOUT THE ZONING REWRITE

The Prince George's County Planning Department is comprehensively rewriting the County's Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations. The Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations are the laws that determine how land or property in the County can be developed. The intended impact of this multi-year project is to modernize the County's zoning code into a more user-friendly document that is aligned with the County's vision for smart growth, economic development, and improved quality of life for Prince George's County residents.

