



Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations Rewrite Module 2 Discussion Questions

The Prince George's County Zoning Rewrite team is pleased to present the second part of Clarion Associates' recommendations for **brand new** Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations for Prince George's County. Known as Module 2, this proposal:

- Contains Neighborhood Compatibility Standards
- Updates Public Facilities Adequacy
- Requires and incentivizes Green Building Standards
- Mandates form and design standards
- Establishes definitions and rules for interpretation.

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 2 and assist you in understanding the proposed changes to the development standards and public facility adequacy. 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 2 is available on our OpenComment website at pgplanning.opencomment.us, and the project's website at zoningpgc.pgplanning.com. Module 2 is also available at the reference counter of each Prince George's County Memorial Library branch.

General Impressions on Module 2: Development Standards and Public Facility Adequacy

1. What have your experiences been with the Prince George's County Zoning Ordinance?
2. How can we improve the development review process in Prince George's County as it relates to the current development standards and tests of adequate public facilities?
3. Are there any recommendations in Module 2 that you like? Do you think any of the recommendations support the consolidation of zones as proposed in Module 1? Why or why not?

4. Are there any recommendations in Module 2 that you did not like? Do you think any of the recommendations complicate the zones or the review process? Why or why not?
5. Knowing that Module 3 (administration and process) is still to come, were there any recommendations or additional changes you were hoping to see included in Module 2 that were not included?

Neighborhood Compatibility Standards

6. Module 2 introduces Neighborhood Compatibility Standards that are designed to protect the character of existing single-family dwellings, two-family dwellings, or vacant lots in the RE, RR, SFR-4.6, and SFR-6.7 zones when new nonresidential and multifamily properties are developed adjacent to the neighborhood or across a street or alley.

The neighborhood compatibility standards would require commercial, industrial, mixed-use and multifamily development to meet certain conditions regulating setbacks, buffer areas, building height, building orientation, and building design when located in proximity to existing single-family neighborhoods.

Do you think that these elements may help ease the transition between existing single-family homes and new multifamily or nonresidential development? If not, how can the Neighborhood Compatibility Standards be modified to more accurately address potential conflicts between single-family homes and more intense development?

7. Are there any elements that could be included or removed to enhance the Neighborhood Compatibility Standards?

[Read the description of the Neighborhood Compatibility Standards on page 27-5—107 of module 2.](#)

Form and Design Standards

8. Module 2 proposes mandatory form and design standards for industrial, commercial, mixed-use, and multifamily development. These are recommended to improve the baseline standard for development throughout the County. These regulations address such things as street connectivity, building placement, roofs, streetscapes, parking, and signage.

Incorporated in each of these mandatory standards are elements of the standards that currently exist in the County's design overlay zones—the Development District Overlay Zone (DDOZ) and Transit District Overlay Zone (TDOZ). These standards help to create a predictability of the shape, form, and overall impact a new development would have on a community.

Do you believe the mandatory standards outlined in Module 2 meet or exceed the expectation of the standards regulated in the County's current 14 design districts? Why or why not?

9. A major criticism of the County's design overlay zones is that they are very confusing as separate documents and sets of regulations. Do you believe the development review process could benefit from having standards located in one document?
10. Are you aware of conflicts within the current ordinance that could have been avoided with the new standards?
11. Are there any development standards that could be added or removed to improve the quality of development in the County while providing additional certainty to neighbors and applicants?

[Read the form and design standards on pages 27-5—90 through 27-5—107.](#)

Parking Requirements

12. In many cases, today's Zoning Ordinance requires development projects to have more parking than needed in the worst case scenario—Black Friday shopping. This excess parking creates additional impervious surfaces that could be reconfigured and used for improved stormwater management or creative public spaces.

Clarion Associates has proposed changes to Parking Requirements that include overall reduced parking minimums and establishes different parking requirements based on geographic location in the County. This recommendation is intended to replace the “one size fits all” parking standards, which we currently have, creating new standards for transit-served communities, and communities inside the beltway.

Do you believe that it is beneficial for different areas in the County to have different parking requirements? Why or Why not?

Generally, what are your thoughts on eliminating minimum parking requirements in certain urban areas and what issues do you believe this may or may not present?

What impact can reduced parking minimums have on redevelopment, environmental resources, and new development in Prince George's County?

Parking for businesses is often determined by market demand for parking. What tradeoffs would you be willing to accept for reduced parking?

[Read Parking Requirements on page 27-5-21 of Module 2.](#)

Green Building Standards and Incentives

13. Green Building Standards require sustainable features to be included in new developments in the County. The standards are implemented through a point system, where points are earned by including different sustainable building features as part of the development.

Categories focus on location, energy conservation, alternative energy, passive solar, water conservation and quality, vegetation, urban agriculture, building materials, and

transportation. New residential and nonresidential developments (and even certain types of redevelopment) must earn at least 3 points to satisfy this requirement. (Note: small projects are exempt: < 10 dwelling units; < 10,000 square feet for nonresidential.)

The proposed regulations provide a menu of green building features that an applicant may use to satisfy requirements. Additionally, applicants who add green features beyond the minimum point requirements may earn development incentives such as increased building heights or lot coverage.

Are there any particular menu items that you believe should be allotted greater or fewer points based on the proposal?

Are there any additional features that you think should be included in the menu?

Do you believe that the increased predictability of development both in design and sustainability benefit your community or organization? In what ways do you think this will work to your benefit?

How can the green building and development standards be modified to increase the predictability of new development?

[Read the Green Building Standards and Incentives on page 27-5—141 of Module 2.](#)

Roadway Access, Mobility, and Circulation

14. The Street Connectivity Index is a new addition to the Zoning Ordinance. The index is a metric that determines how connected a single-family residential development should be by calculating the number of blocks and intersections. The intended outcome is to encourage greater connections between streets within a subdivision and greater connectivity with the surrounding street network.

Are there any aspects of the Street Connectivity Index that need additional clarity to successfully implement?

What, if any, are the benefits and challenges in encouraging greater connection within a neighborhood and the surrounding area?

Should the connectivity index apply to detached, townhouse, and multifamily developments as well?

[Read the Roadway Access, Mobility and Circulation standards on page 27-5—1 of Module 2.](#)

Exterior Lighting

15. The exterior lighting standards proposed in Module 2 require full cut off fixtures on all exterior lighting. The effect of these types of light fixtures is that the focus of the light is directed on a specific area instead of light that is broadly dispersed. This change is aimed at reducing light pollution and improving lighting displays.

Are there any concerns or recommendations that you have about the lighting standards?

[Read the Exterior Lighting standards on page 27-5—83 of Module 2.](#)

Agricultural Compatibility Standards

16. Module 2 proposes Agricultural Compatibility Standards that require a minimum 100-foot vegetated buffer, larger lot sizes bordering the buffer, and fencing whenever new residential and nonresidential uses (including public, civic, institutional, commercial, or industrial uses) are proposed to be located adjacent to existing agricultural land.

Do you believe these buffer requirements will help to mitigate any potential conflict between the uses? If not, how can the Agricultural Compatibility Standards be enhanced to preserve ongoing agricultural activities?

Public Facilities Adequacy

17. Adequate Public Facilities (APF) regulations are designed to ensure that publicly supported infrastructure can accommodate additional users generated by new development. Substantial changes are proposed to the current APF testing.

The Public Facilities Section of the Subdivision Regulations includes changes to transportation and fire APF. Testing for Fire/EMS adequacy at the time of subdivision will be eliminated and development in denser areas will have different road APF requirements. Fire services will not be impacted by this change. Clarion recommends this change to bring the best practices in zoning to Prince George's County and to eliminate confusing procedures.

[Do you have any concerns about the Public Facilities Adequacy section \(Module 2, page 24-3—1\)?](#)

18. The Certificate of Adequacy is a new component of the ordinance. As proposed, the certificate will expire, so developers who do not build their approved plans will be required to re-test for adequacy after a certain period of time.

The certificate will be applied to all new preliminary plan developments submitted after the District Council passes the new ordinance. Existing preliminary plans that have not been built will have ten years after the new ordinance is passed before having to test for adequacy. Is this too much or too little time?

The APF section provides developers the opportunity to offset expected vehicle trips by building pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure. Should the ordinance require these active transportation improvements regardless of motor vehicle trip mitigation?

[Read Public Facilities Adequacy on page 24-3—1 of Module 2.](#)