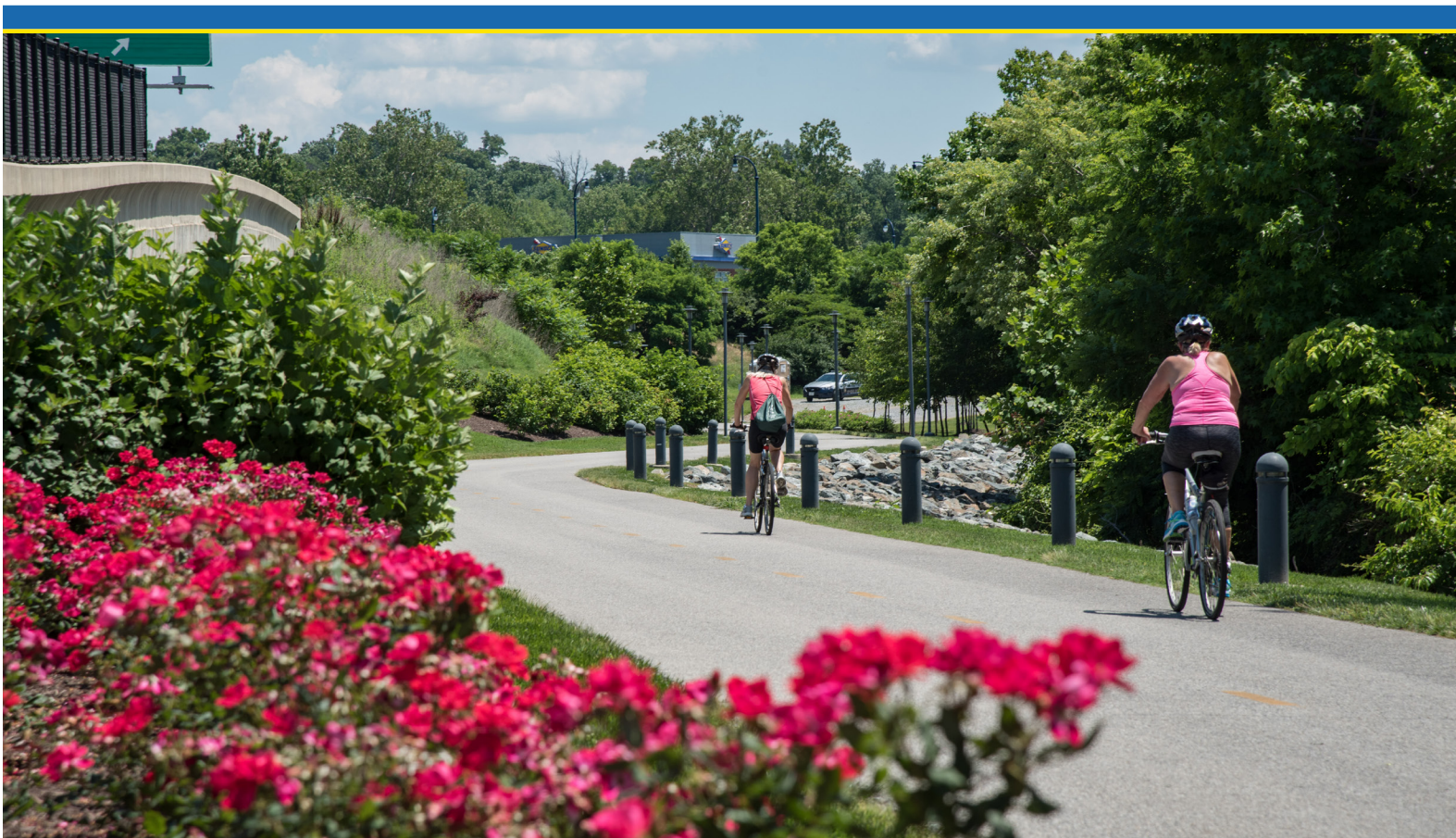




Prince George's Zoning Rewrite

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

Creating a 21st Century Zoning Ordinance



Prince George's County Planning Department
www.pgplanning.org
M-NCPPC

Comprehensive Review Draft

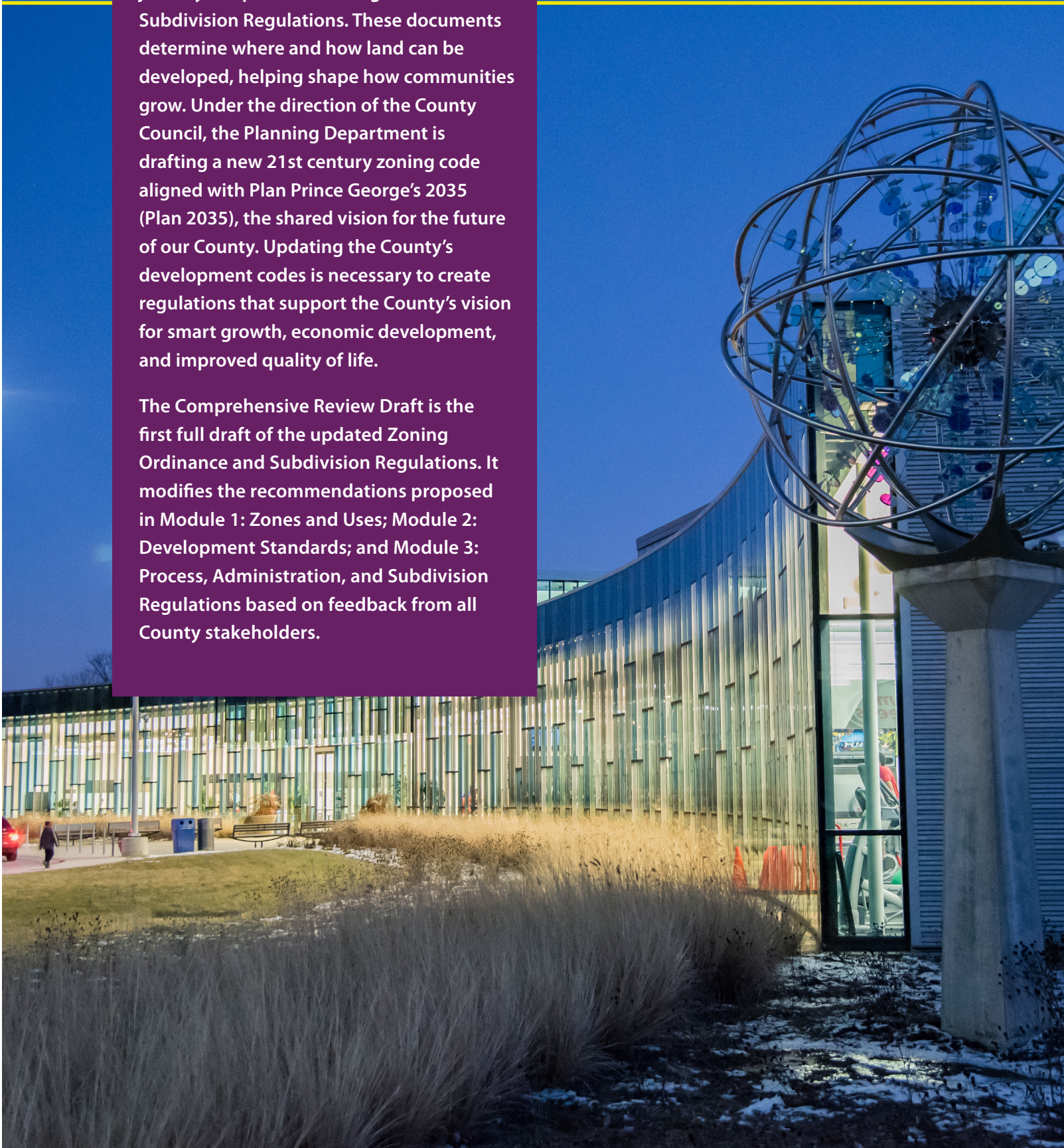
MAJOR CHANGES FROM MODULES 1, 2, AND 3

301-952-4944 • zoningpgc.pgplanning.com • zoningpgc@ppd.mncppc.org

About the Zoning Rewrite

Prince George's County is on a four-year journey to update its Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations. These documents determine where and how land can be developed, helping shape how communities grow. Under the direction of the County Council, the Planning Department is drafting a new 21st century zoning code aligned with Plan Prince George's 2035 (Plan 2035), the shared vision for the future of our County. Updating the County's development codes is necessary to create regulations that support the County's vision for smart growth, economic development, and improved quality of life.

The Comprehensive Review Draft is the first full draft of the updated Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations. It modifies the recommendations proposed in Module 1: Zones and Uses; Module 2: Development Standards; and Module 3: Process, Administration, and Subdivision Regulations based on feedback from all County stakeholders.



PLAN 2035 establishes eight goals to guide the future development of Prince George's County. These goals, listed below, are implemented through proposals in the Comprehensive Review Draft. Each proposal helps to achieve one or more Plan 2035 goal and references the section where the proposal can be found in the Comprehensive Review Draft.



Land Use (LU)

Direct future growth toward transit-oriented, mixed-use centers to expand our commercial tax base, capitalize on existing and planned infrastructure investments, and preserve agricultural and environmental resources.



Economic Prosperity (EP)

Create a diverse, innovative, and regionally competitive economy that generates a range of well-paying jobs and strategically grows the tax base.



Transportation and Mobility (TM)

Provide and maintain a safe, affordable, accessible, and energy-efficient multimodal transportation network that supports the County's desired land use pattern and Plan 2035 goals.



Natural Environment (NE)

Preserve, enhance, and restore our natural and built ecosystems to improve human health, strengthen our resilience to changing climate conditions, and facilitate sustainable economic development.



Housing and Neighborhoods (HN)

Provide a variety of housing options—ranging in price, density, ownership, and type—to attract and retain residents, strengthen neighborhoods, and promote economic prosperity.



Community Heritage, Culture, and Design (CHCD)

Create walkable places that enable social interaction and reflect community character, and preserve and promote our cultural, historic, and rural resources to celebrate our heritage and encourage new investment.



Healthy Communities (HC)

Create safe, connected communities that promote active lifestyles and provide convenient access to healthy foods.



Public Facilities (PF)

Enhance the quality of life and economic competitiveness of Prince George's County through the efficient, equitable, and strategic siting of education, public safety, water and sewer, solid waste, and parks and recreation facilities.

The following key proposals in the Comprehensive Review Draft of the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations support specific Plan 2035 goals:

Updated Public Facility Adequacy Standards (24-3.400)



Plan 2035 Goal: PF

Adequate Public Facility (APF) Standards establish requirements that public services, such as transportation, police, water and sewerage, parks and recreation, fire/EMS, and schools are available to accommodate proposed development. The recommendations carry forward many of the current practices.

The Comprehensive Review Draft refines Certificates of Adequacy to permit longer validity periods, which are necessary to accommodate phased development projects in Prince George's County. Up to 18 years of total validity can be obtained after which a developer is required to re-test for public facility adequacy. Fire/EMS services were restored as an adequacy test, while water and sewer service has been relocated since this service is not a test as much as a simple yes or no question as to whether a property is in the correct category. The Comprehensive Review Draft continues to recommend a transportation adequacy exemption for the core areas of the highest density zones, which includes the most transit-served areas of the County—the Regional Transit-Oriented (RTO) and Local Transit-Oriented (LTO) zones.

Simplification of the County's Current Zone Structure (27-4)



Plan 2035 Goals: LU, EP, TM, NE, HN, CHCD, HC

Clarion Associates, the consultant working with M-NCPPC, proposes reducing 73 zones to 44 by integrating the best components of the current zones with national best zoning practice and removing redundant and unusable zones. This zone consolidation supports the County's priorities of smart growth, economic- and transit-oriented development at Metro stations, and protection of rural areas and established communities.

The Comprehensive Review Draft eliminates the proposed Residential Planned Development—Low (R-PD-L) and Campus Activity Center Planned Development (CAC-PD) zones; converts the current Residential Mobile Home Planned Community Zone to a new base zone to accommodate the County's few existing mobile home communities; includes the Military Installation Overlay Zone passed by the Council in 2016; creates a Legacy Comprehensive Design (LCD) Zone to provide a new base zone for the 11 current Comprehensive Design Zones; and proposes new Legacy Mixed-Use Transportation Oriented (LMXT) and Legacy Mixed-Use Town Center (LMUTC) Zones for discussion purposes.

Greater Mix of Residential and Nonresidential Development (27-4.200)



Plan 2035 Goals: LU, EP, TM, HN, CHCD, HC

The proposed Zoning Ordinance recommends multifamily residential base zones and commercial base zones that will allow more blending of uses. This aligns with national best practices and encourages the best use of a property, making it easier to redevelop blighted or vacant areas and advance healthy communities.

The Comprehensive Review Draft introduces a required mix of uses in the core areas of the Transit-Oriented/Activity Center Zones to ensure at least 18 percent of new development is residential and at least 18 percent is nonresidential.

Refinements of the Commercial Neighborhood Zone (27-4.203)



Plan 2035 Goals: LU, CHCD, HN, HC

The proposed new Commercial Neighborhood (CN) Zone is envisioned to create and enhance community-centric retail and "traditional" main streets. The zone ensures small-scale, neighborhood-serving development, and accommodates modest mixed-use development such as residential uses on the upper floors of commercial buildings.

The Comprehensive Review Draft incorporates revised development standards that allow buildings to be closer to the street (a characteristic of the turn-of-the-century storefronts inspiring this zone) and new regulations for retail development in this zone that further ensure compatibility with surrounding residential communities.



Emphasis on Transit-Oriented/Activity Center Zones (27-4.204)



Plan 2035 Goals: LU, EP, TM, HN, CHCD, HC

Transit-Oriented/Activity Center base zones 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 adjacent community. They reflect Plan 2035 “center” classifications, and implement policies associated with those classifications and the prioritization of County revitalization and public-sector investment.

The Comprehensive Review Draft increases the density allowance within the Transit-Oriented/Activity Center base zones based on the findings of eight test cases conducted by the consultant team. Achieving the height and building size maximums in these zones, particularly for residential development, was extremely challenging under the initial density proposals.

Use Table Revisions (27-5)



Plan 2035 Goals: LU, EP, TM, HN, CHCD

The proposed Zoning Ordinance handles uses in a much more logical manner than the current code, organizing uses by type (principal, or primary use of land; accessory uses; and temporary uses). Principal uses are further organized by use classification (residential, commercial, industrial), use category (household living or group living under the residential uses class), and principal use types (dwelling, single-family detached or dwelling, townhouse under the household living category). Each use is defined for clarity, and a use interpretation process is established. The number of uses is greatly streamlined, from approximately 1,200 uses to approximately 230 uses.

The Comprehensive Review Draft further standardizes the principal use tables by ensuring each use type is listed in each table, inserts the letter “X” instead of a blank cell to denote a prohibited use, adds major new uses created by the District Council after the rewrite initiated (Medical Cannabis, Urban Farm, Video Lottery, Beekeeping), and incorporates several new uses resulting from community input (Private Dormitory, Pet Grooming Establishment).

Protections for Single-Family Communities (27-6.1100)



Plan 2035 Goals: LU, TM, HN, CHCD

Neighborhood Compatibility Standards smooth the transition from new multifamily and mixed-use development constructed next to existing single-family neighborhoods. These standards help establish and maintain vibrant pedestrian-oriented areas where differing uses can operate near one another, such as a shopping center across the street from a residential community. Applicable developments would have to comply with standards regulating building heights and setbacks, trash collection areas, parking and loading areas, and hours of operation among others.

The Comprehensive Review Draft ensures protections not just for single-family detached neighborhoods but also for townhouse neighborhoods. Additional nuance has been proposed along the revitalized US 1 Corridor in recognition of the narrow mixed-use and commercial lots fronting US 1 and 34th Street and the increased desire in this part of the County for 24-hour environments incorporating entertainment and outdoor eating and drinking.

Addition of Green Building Standards (27-6.1500)



Plan 2035 Goals: LU, NE, HC

Modern zoning ordinances address the increasing need for what we build to be kinder to the natural environment. Proposed Green Building Standards require development to promote healthy lifestyles, reduce greenhouse gas emission, and protect natural resources. Implemented through a scoring system, applicants would select from a list of green practices to satisfy the minimum point requirement and receive an approval or permit.

The Comprehensive Review Draft adds new green building standards and incentives to strengthen this part of the code.

The following proposals support Plan 2035's critical initiative of modernizing, streamlining, and simplifying the County's regulatory environment:

Transitions to the New Ordinance (27-1.800)

The Comprehensive Review Draft includes refined and expanded transitional provisions that clarify how to handle pending development applications, approvals, and permits when the new Zoning Ordinance is adopted. Applications submitted and accepted as complete on the day the new codes take effect will be processed under the codes that were in place at the time of application.

Who Decides What? (27-3.200)

The Comprehensive Review Draft addresses what the District Council decides, and what decisions the Council chooses to delegate to others, such as the Planning Board, Zoning Hearing Examiner, Board of Zoning Appeals, or the Planning Department. To streamline the process, it is recommended that decisions on small projects be made at the staff level and larger projects, or projects with special circumstances, be determined by the Planning Board. Master Plans, rezonings, text amendments, and other decisions would be made only by the District Council. Based on stakeholder input, the District Council's ability to elect to review, on its own motion, any decision appealable to the Council (such as a major detailed site plan or special exception) has been restored. Another key change is that the Planning Board would no longer have a role in special exception applications.

Community Input (27-3.400)

Clarion Associates proposes several new ways for citizens to raise their concerns. Community input opportunities, and related notification requirements, have been clarified and strengthened to address concerns from residents and municipalities. One such change is an increase to notification times for several review procedures.

Pre-Application Neighborhood Meetings (27-3.402)

Pre-Application Meetings help neighboring land owners and residents learn about proposed development. Meetings would be on weekday evenings at a location near, and accessible to, those potentially affected by the development. After the meeting, applicants would submit a written summary that includes a list of attendees and discussion topics. Pre-Application Neighborhood Meetings would be required for certain development applications, including special exceptions, major site plans, and major adjustments. The Comprehensive Review Draft adds Saturdays as a potential time for these meetings, and requires at least one additional Pre-Application Neighborhood Meeting if a development does not proceed in a timely manner.

Special Exceptions (27-3.507)

Sometimes a use is allowed in a zone, but may need additional review to determine if it is compatible with the neighboring area. The Comprehensive Review Draft creates clear procedures for the review of special exceptions. In each case, the proposal mandates a Pre-Application Staff Conference, a Pre-Application Neighborhood Meeting, and a public hearing with the Zoning Hearing Examiner. Appeals of these rulings would be made to the District Council. The Planning Board would no longer have a role with special exceptions. Additionally, the Comprehensive Review Draft eliminates the need for a detailed site plan review for special exception uses. Under the new proposal, only a special exception application would be required.

Major and Minor Detailed Site Plan Applications (27-3.508)

The Comprehensive Review Draft retains the proposed two tiers of site plan review (minor and major) and eliminates the redundant conceptual site plan process. The Planning Director would approve minor detailed site plans and appeals would be made to the Planning Board and then the District Council. Major detailed site plans would be decided by the Planning Board, with appeals to the District Council.

The proposed thresholds between minor and major detailed site plans have been adjusted in response to stakeholder comments, and have been reduced to require minor detailed site plans for any application for 10-75 residential dwelling units; 75,000–150,000 square feet of nonresidential development; or mixed-use development with 25-90 residential dwelling units and 25,000–250,000 square feet of nonresidential development. Major detailed site plans would be required for any projects exceeding these figures. Projects that are smaller than the minimum minor detailed site plan thresholds are exempt from the detailed site plan review process.

Elimination of Transit- and Development-District Overlay Zones (TDOZ; DDOZ)

The Comprehensive Review Draft continues the recommendations of the Evaluation and Recommendations Report and Module 1 (Zones and Uses) by eliminating the TDOZ and DDOZ. A major criticism of the County's design overlay zones is that they are overly regulatory and confusing, each with separate documents and different regulations. Clarion Associates' draft zone structure recommends the elimination of these overlay zones in favor of base zones with clear, easily understood design standards. These standards address street connectivity, building placement, roof shapes, streetscapes, parking, and signage, among other things.

These are just a few of the areas where revisions have been made from the initial proposals. There are many other revisions throughout the Comprehensive Review Draft. Let the project team know your thoughts and suggestions.

For more information about the Zoning Rewrite:

☎ 301-952-4944 | TTY: 301-952-4366

✉ zoningpgc@ppd.mncppc.org

🌐 zoningpgc.pgplanning.com

f /ZonePGC 🐦 @ZonePGC

📢 <http://pgplanning.civiccomment.org>

For press inquiries, contact:

Anika Jackson, 301-952-4584
anika.jackson@mncppc.org

Nonconformities (27-7)

The Comprehensive Review Draft makes a couple of major changes to the nonconformities provisions proposed in Module 3 (Process, Administration, and Subdivision Regulations). They include the addition of the current certification process for nonconforming uses, which the Office of the County Attorney, developer and land use attorney representatives, and Department of Permitting, Inspections, and Enforcement all felt necessary for various reasons, and the elimination of the proposal to allow the substitution of one nonconforming use for another nonconforming use.

Subdivision Regulations (Subtitle 24)

There are fewer changes recommended to the Subdivision Regulations than the Zoning Ordinance in general. As a result, fewer revisions were made by the Comprehensive Review Draft. Among them is a revision to the thresholds between minor and major subdivisions. The new proposal, dubbed the “25 Rule,” would exempt (in limited circumstances) or subject developments of 25 or fewer dwelling units, 25,000 or less square footage of nonresidential space, or mixed-use development resulting in 25 or less (dwelling units, thousands of square feet, or gross floor area) to a minor preliminary plan of subdivision. Development exceeding those thresholds would be subject to a major preliminary plan of subdivision.





**The Maryland National-Capital Park and Planning Commission
Prince George's County Planning Department**

14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive

Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

Phone: 301-952-4944

TTY: 301-952-4336