

Looking at Zones (Also Known as Zoning Districts)

All land in the County is placed in a zone, and that zone determines what can be built on the land (the allowed uses), the location of buildings on the lot, building height, and the look and feel of the development permitted. The existing code has 73 different zones; the new code will have 43 zones. Some zones are changing very little, while others will see significant changes. Some zones are being eliminated and several new zones are being created.



AGRICULTURAL AND OPEN SPACE ZONES

The new Zoning Ordinance promotes the County's agricultural legacy by establishing the Rural and Agricultural Base Zones, which are zones designated specifically for agricultural purposes. The County currently has three of these zones (R-O-S, O-S, and R-A) in the residential zone category, and they will continue, but with new names. The zones will be renamed ROS (Reserved Open Space), AG (Agriculture and Preservation Zone), and AR (Agricultural Residential). These zones allow farming and homes on very large lots and public preservation areas. These zones are not changing much, although the definition of "farming" has expanded.

DETACHED SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (RSF) ZONES

Nearly 35 percent of zoning in the County is composed of zoning for single-family homes. Our single-family neighborhoods range from traditional single-family suburban communities to more rural estate neighborhoods. The County currently has four of these zones today (R-E, R-R, R-80, and R-55). The existing detached single-family residential zones allow homes on smaller lots, ranging from 1 acre in the R-E Zone to about 1/5th acre in the R-55 Zone. The single-family residential zones aren't changing very much but the zone names will be updated. The existing R-E Zone will be renamed to RE and the existing R-R Zone to RR. The R-80 Zone will be renamed to RSF-95 because the minimum lot size is 95,000 square feet. The R-55 Zone will

be renamed RSF-65 since it requires lot sizes to be a minimum of 65,000 square feet.

THE TOWNHOUSE ZONE

Replacing the County's inconsistent approach to townhouses, the new code creates a new townhouse zone: RSF-A (Residential, Single-Family Attached). Attached single-family homes, townhomes, duplexes, and triplexes would be permitted in these zones.

MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL (RMF) ZONES

There will be three multifamily zones for apartments and condominiums, with different levels of density: RMF-12, RMF-20, and RMF-48. The number refers to the maximum number of units allowed per acre. These zones

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HOW TO GET INVOLVED

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consolidate nine existing multifamily zones, some of which are hardly ever used. One big change: community-serving retail and services (for example, a grocery store) will now be allowed in multifamily zones. This change better meets residents' needs and allows for an easier transition for blighted or vacant properties.

COMMERCIAL ZONES

Here is where the big changes begin. Existing zones are being consolidated to eliminate redundancy and allow more uses in the same zones. Offices, retail, health care, and apartments will coexist. Instead of regulating uses, these zones have density and design standards to control the look and feel of commercial areas. The least dense commercial zone is the CN (Commercial, Neighborhood). The CS (Commercial, Service) is denser and the CGO (Commercial, General and Office) is the most intense.

EMPLOYMENT AND INDUSTRIAL ZONES

The Industrial/Employment (IE) Zone combines current light industrial and employment zones to allow for warehouses, research and development, and light manufacturing. The County's current I-2 Zone for heavy manufacturing and other truly industrial activities is carried forward with little change, and is renamed IH (Industrial, Heavy).

TRANSIT-ORIENTED AND ACTIVITY CENTER ZONES

This is probably the biggest change in the new code. An entirely new set of zones is created to support mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly development around transit stations (think College Park, Capitol Heights, or Downtown Largo) and in nontransit centers (think National Harbor). These zones acknowledge that the County is no longer exclusively suburban. Five new zones are created, ranging from Neighborhood Activity Center (the least dense) to Regional Transit-Oriented, High-Intensity (the most dense). They allow a very broad range of uses—but development must be designed to be attractive, pedestrian-friendly, and amenity-rich.

PLANNED DEVELOPMENT (PD) ZONES

When increased flexibility in design and density is desired, Planned Development Zones provide alternatives to the Residential, Nonresidential, and Transit-Oriented/Activity Center Base Zones. This comes with the expectation that the development quality will surpass what is achievable in the comparable base zone. A planned development application must be approved through a rezoning and would be subject to a public review process.

LEGACY ZONES

There are four Legacy Zones that provide for smooth transitions between obsolete zones and the new Zoning Ordinance. Legacy zones preserve regulations and procedures for specific properties within the County that developed under a different set of rules than exist today. No property in the County can be rezoned as one of these legacy zones after the approval of the Countywide Map Amendment (expected late 2020). The legacy zones include the current Planned Mobile Home Community Zone, a Legacy Comprehensive Design (LCD) Zone to provide a new base zone for the 11 current Comprehensive Design Zones, a Legacy Mixed-Use Community (LMXC) Zone, and a Legacy Mixed-Use Town Center (LMUTC) Zone.

OVERLAY ZONES

Overlay Zones in Prince George's County consist of two types: policy area and other. Policy area overlay zones reinforce County or state policies concerning the Chesapeake Bay and the health, safety, and welfare of residents close to general aviation airports and Joint Base Andrews. They are more restrictive in parts of the County than the underlying zones in order to preserve and restore environmental features and water quality or to minimize noise and safety hazards. Another overlay zone is intended to help achieve unique or highly specialized County policies that the underlying zones are ill-suited to implement: the Neighborhood Conservation Overlay Zone (NCOZ).

ZONES THAT ARE DISCONTINUED

The transit-oriented/activity center zones and design regulations of the new Zoning Ordinance will replace mixed-use zones and design regulations of the old Zoning Ordinance, that have become very difficult to administer: the Transit District Overlay (T-D-O) and Development District Overlay (D-D-O) Zones and two mixed-use zones (M-X-T and M-U-I). These zones, well-intentioned when first created, no longer represent best practices and have not gotten us the development we want.

ABOUT THE ZONING ORDINANCE AND SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS REWRITE

On October 23, 2018, the Prince George's County Council adopted a new Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations, completing a four-year journey to update the County's land use regulations. The Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations determine where and how land can be developed, helping shape how communities grow. The new 21st Century zoning code is aligned with Plan Prince George's 2035, the shared vision for the future of our County. Updating the County's development codes was necessary to create regulations that support the County's vision for smart growth, economic development, and improved quality of life. The next step of the process is to comprehensively update the County's Zoning Map, which geographically applies the new laws to the County.

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