

4 Development Standards— Increasing Design Quality of New Development



Fifteen Elements Intended to Increase the Design Quality of New Development in the County

These development standards include how new development should be compatible with existing neighborhoods, building form and design standards, parking and connectivity requirements, green building standards, and open space requirements.



NEIGHBORHOOD COMPATIBILITY STANDARDS

Neighborhood Compatibility Standards are new development standards that are designed to protect the character of existing single-family detached and attached neighborhoods and provide for a smoother transition between single-family properties and higher intensity development. Under the new Zoning Ordinance, applications for new development would have to comply with standards such as regulating building heights and setbacks, the location of trash collection and parking and loading areas, and hours of operation. These standards would apply to new townhouse, multifamily, nonresidential, or mixed-use development when in proximity to existing townhouse, single-family detached dwellings, two-family dwellings, or vacant lands in the Residential Estate (RE); Residential,

Rural (RR); Residential, Single-Family-95 (RSF-95); or Residential, Single-Family-65 (RSF-65) Zones.

REQUIRED FORM AND DESIGN STANDARDS

Form and design standards help shape the public realm. Mandatory form and design standards for new nonresidential, mixed-use, industrial, and multifamily development will help to improve the County's overall level of design quality, as well as provide a predictable expectation of how new development would impact the surrounding community. Proposed design elements to be regulated include the placement of buildings on a lot, location of off-street parking areas, the shape and massing of buildings, and the percentage of a building that should contain windows and doors. Additional requirements are applied to large retail buildings that are greater than 75,000 square feet.

MODERNIZED PARKING REQUIREMENTS

Excess parking is costly to build and maintain. In terms of impacts on the environment, it creates unnecessary impervious surfaces that could be reconfigured and used for improved stormwater management or creative public spaces. The new off-street parking and loading development standard modernizes the parking requirements for new development and eliminates minimum parking requirements for most uses in the core areas of the Regional Transit-Oriented (RTO) and Local Transit-Oriented (LTO) Zones, so that more urban areas with greater access to transit would require less parking. Furthermore, smaller parking space sizes are required, and shared parking and off-site parking provisions allow further reductions to total parking lot surface area.

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HOW TO GET INVOLVED

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GREATER CONNECTIVITY AND MOBILITY

The new Zoning Ordinance encourages a multimodal approach to moving both vehicles and people throughout our communities—pedestrians, bicycles, transit, and cars are treated equally. To help accomplish this goal, a street connectivity index has been created to determine how connected a single-family residential development is by calculating the number of blocks and intersections. The street connectivity index helps to determine how many paths a person can take to get to any destination in a development. The result will help improve circulation throughout a community by improving cross-access, creating a more defined street grid, and reducing congestion at access points to main roadways.

UPDATED LANDSCAPE MANUAL

The County's Landscape Manual includes several new and updated landscaping requirements that better address the different development characters within Prince George's County: urban, suburban, and rural. The Landscape Manual includes two new sections of regulations intended to ensure higher-quality landscaping between the streetscape and the area in front of buildings.

IMPROVED CYCLIST AND PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE

There are several recommendations meant to help improve the safety and mobility of pedestrians and cyclists throughout the County. These include required bike parking facilities at schools, multifamily housing, and nonresidential properties; mandated construction of sidewalks, bike lanes, and bike paths in new developments; new safe pedestrian accessways through large parking areas; and design standards that will help create more attractive and easier to navigate streetscapes.



GREEN BUILDING STANDARDS

The new green building standards will result in development that promotes healthy lifestyles, reduces greenhouse gas emissions, and protects our natural resources. Implemented through a scoring system, applicants would have to select from a list of green practices to satisfy the minimum point requirement to get an approval or permit for their development. All new development that consists of 10 or more dwelling units or nonresidential space of at least 25,000 square feet would need to comply with these regulations.

OPEN SPACE SET-ASIDES

Open space set-aside standards establish minimum private open space requirements for new residential, nonresidential, and mixed-use development. These requirements can be met by providing natural areas, paths, trails, gardens, squares, plazas, stormwater management facilities designed as amenities, or vegetated walls. Up to 20 percent of the site, depending on the use, would need to be set aside for open space.

HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Prince George's County was one of the first jurisdictions to require large-scale development projects and master plans undergo review by the Prince George's County Health Department to understand the impacts on population and environmental health. The new Zoning Ordinance carries forward this procedure and requires that detailed site plans, the General Plan, functional master plans, area

master plans, and sector plans be referred to the Prince George's County Health Department for review and to provide health-related recommendations.

OTHER DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

New standards have also been proposed to strengthen noise regulation and ensure compatibility between new development and existing farms. There are also updated standards for signage, fences and walls, and exterior lighting to accommodate new and emerging technologies.

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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