

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a Comprehensive Zoning review?

The Harford County Code requires that a Comprehensive Zoning review occur every 8 years. This review can be initiated by either the County Executive, or legislatively by the County Council. After all applications have been received and reviewed, the Department of Planning and Zoning will prepare comprehensive revisions to the zoning maps in accordance with the adopted Master Plan, for consideration and adoption by the County Council. The County Executive must submit the zoning map revisions to the County Council within 1-year of the date that the Department began accepting applications.

How can I apply for rezoning?

Property owners may request a zoning change for their property during the designated application period. The application period for the 2017 Comprehensive Zoning Review will be from December 12, 2016 through February 10, 2017. Applications and property owner authorization forms will be available at the Department of Planning and Zoning on November 18, 2016.

An application for rezoning must be made in person by the property owner or an authorized agent. A separate application must be submitted for each parcel/lot of record. Groups of up to 25 adjacent parcels/lots that are under common ownership may be submitted on one application; provided that the existing and requested zonings for all parcels/lots listed in the application are the same. A non-refundable fee of \$800 is due at the time of application. If an applicant is requesting more than one zoning on a parcel/lot, a separate application and fee is required for each requested zoning. Prior to applying for rezoning, an applicant may request a meeting with the Department of Planning and Zoning to discuss his/her request.

Applicants who wish to apply for rezoning from AG/Agricultural to a residential classification should first check with the Department of Planning and Zoning to determine if their property is located within the Priority Preservation Area (PPA). Section 267-13H of the Harford County Code precludes any property located within the PPA from being rezoned to a residential classification.

Additionally, Rural Residential is no longer a land use designation on the Land Use Plan. Although the RR/Rural Residential zoning classification still exists in the Zoning Code, the Department of Planning and Zoning cannot recommend a rezoning to RR/Rural Residential since it would be inconsistent with the most recently adopted Land Use Plan. For more information concerning RR/Rural Residential zoning, please contact the Department of Planning and Zoning at 410-638-3103.

What happens after I make application?

Department of Planning and Zoning staff will thoroughly review each application and prepare a technical assessment for each request. The technical assessment will evaluate the requested rezonings impact on sensitive environmental features, historic resources, transportation, schools and agricultural preservation. In addition, the Division of Water and Sewer, the Health Department, and the Department of Public Works will review each request and provide comments that will be included in the technical assessment.

The Department and the Planning Advisory Board (PAB) will conduct public meetings to solicit comments on the rezoning issues submitted during the application period. Prior to those meetings, the Department of Planning and Zoning will post each property that is the subject of a rezoning request with a sign specifying the requested rezoning along with the date, time and location of the public meeting.

After the technical assessments and public meetings have been completed, a Director's Report containing the recommendations of the Department of Planning and Zoning and the PAB will be prepared for consideration by the County Executive. This report, along with the comprehensive revisions and amendments to the Zoning Maps, will then be submitted to the County Council. The County Council will conduct a public hearing or hearings to solicit testimony on the rezoning issues contained within the Director's Report. Each applicant will be notified of the County's recommendation prior to the County Council's public hearing. In addition, each property that is the subject of a rezoning request will be posted a second time with a sign specifying the requested rezoning along with the date, time, and location of the Council's public hearing(s).

Can I change my request after my application has been submitted?

Applicants may request to modify their applications until March 31, 2017. The request must be made in writing to the Department of Planning and Zoning. Only revisions to correct typographical errors, contact information and changes to the requested zoning may be made. No additional acreage or parcels may be added to the request.

Who is the Planning Advisory Board?

The Planning Advisory Board (PAB) is a five member citizen group appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council. The PAB is responsible for reviewing each zoning application and providing a recommendation to the County Council, in addition to the Department's recommendation. The PAB's recommendations will be included in the Comprehensive Zoning log and Director's Report.

Can the Department of Planning and Zoning change my zoning if I did not request it, and how will I be notified?

The Department of Planning and Zoning can recommend a change in zoning for any property. If the Department recommends a change in the zoning for a property when the

property owner has not requested a change, written notice of the recommendation will be given to the owner and to owners of abutting property for which the change has been requested.

Will there be any opportunities for public input prior to the Council's hearing?

The Department of Planning and Zoning and the PAB will conduct public informational meetings throughout the County for individuals to provide input during this process. Applicants will be notified of these meetings. All comments, questions and concerns will be considered during the review of each application. Public input and responses to inquiries will be incorporated into the Director's Report.

At what point will the Department of Planning and Zoning make its recommendations?

The Department will make its recommendations after public meetings have been held and all technical assessments are complete.

What if I disagree with the Department's recommendation?

The County Council has final authority over any zoning changes. The Council will conduct public hearings on the Comprehensive Zoning Review where citizens can provide their input and comments directly to the Council members.

How will I know what properties are being considered for rezoning?

An "Issue Number" will be assigned to each application submitted for consideration. Issues will be organized by Council District and a "Comprehensive Zoning Log" will be created. The log will provide information for each issue; including, property address, tax map and parcel, acreage, current zoning and requested zoning. These documents will be available online and in the Department of Planning and Zoning. Comprehensive Zoning Issue Maps will also be prepared by the Department of Planning and Zoning. These maps will show the location of each issue number on the tax map. Additionally, each property requesting a zoning change will be posted with a sign twice during this process.

What size is the sign, and where on the property will it be posted?

The sign will measure at least 22 inches by 28 inches, with green lettering, and will be placed conspicuously on the property, near the right-of-way line of each public road on which the property fronts.

What is my responsibility as a property owner for maintaining the posted signs?

The property owner shall make reasonable efforts to maintain the sign in a condition visible to the public until the hearing date. After the public meeting/hearing the property owner will be responsible to remove and dispose of any signs on his/her property. Problems with signs should be reported to the Department of Planning and Zoning at 410-638-3103.