

Community Meeting 1

Module 2: Commercial and Industrial Districts

Meeting Notes: 4/14/10

Zoning Rewrite

1. Blog
 - a. A blog would be a good addition for the website. The website currently has the capability to receive feedback.
2. Overlays Woes
 - a. The number of overlays in the county is down-zoning.
 - i. Zoning districts may allow you certain freedoms, but the overlays make it impossible to fully find compliance.
 - b. Creating unusable, and undevelopable land across the county.
 - c. One can't do anything anymore without a site plan.
 - d. SMAs are being zoned for uses 20 years down the road, and not for what can be developed today.
3. Process
 - a. After December will staff be briefing a new council?
 - i. Response: Yes.
4. Hierarchy in Zones
 - a. Are the commercial and industrial zones exclusionary or hierarchical?
 - i. Response: A hybrid.
 - b. One shouldn't have to go through the special exception process to get a light industrial use in a heavy industrial area.
5. Commercial General Zone
 - a. The old C-1 and C-2 were supposed to go into C-S-C. Now they are included in C-G. This looks like a down-zone of C-1 and C-2.
 - i. Option: Move C-1 and C-2 to C-S-C.
 - b. Are any uses being pulled out of C-S-C and being moved into C-G.
 - c. C-G appears to be a worthless zone. It is populated with antiquated zones that are not used frequently (C-1, C-2, C-W, C-G).
 - i. Suggestion: Manage these smaller existing zones separately. The creation of the C-G may end up hurting other zones.
6. Commercial Miscellaneous C-M
 - a. In reality this is largely for automotive uses.
 - b. There is a large gap in the zoning between C-S-C and C-M.
 - c. The C-M zone has too much baggage—people are afraid of the other options in the C-M zone, and fight neighborhood auto uses.
 - i. Suggestion: Take automotive uses out of the C-M zone.
7. Commercial Shopping Center Zones

- a. Adjacency: The C-S-C zone shouldn't necessarily be separated from single family detached zones with the mixed use development becoming popular.
 - i. Zoning is moving in this direction.
 - ii. It would promote walkability.
 - iii. Treat the proximity challenge with design solutions.

- 8. Commercial Office
 - a. C-O has morphed a bit to allow more uses in an office building.
 - b. C-O is lower intensity than the existing C-A zone. C-A also has some smaller scale office functionality.

- 9. Mixed Use
 - a. More recent developments are more often M-U-Is than pure conventional division of commercial or office uses.
 - b. Mixed use developments have arisen in traditional Euclidian areas.
 - c. Don't discourage uses. Encourage them and figure the details out through design.

- 10. Challenges in Developed/ Developing/ Rural Tiers
 - a. Developing: Give the developing tier a chance to have mixed use. Do not assume it can't happen. It can happen through infill.
 - b. Developed: Regulations aren't catered to the restraints of doing projects in the developed tier. Often generates a string of variances, and SEs required.

- 11. Euclidian Zoning
 - a. Must pull together zones in existing communities through design.
 - b. Create adjacencies and walkability over wide special separation that is not sustainable.

- 12. Franchises
 - a. Is staff writing a code that is conflicting with franchise standards?
 - i. Possibly, there are always signage conflicts.
 - ii. Conflicts over the number of pumps permitted in gas stations.

- 13. Provide more general categories in the use table.
 - a. Create an ordinance that isn't prone to frequent text amendments. Creating more open categories will leave space for the innovative businesses in the future.
 - b. Think of categories in terms of low generation vs. high generation.

- 14. Special Exception vs. DSP
 - a. Special exceptions shouldn't be needed for uses in zones with similar uses, for example residential uses in residential zones, or commercial uses in a commercial zone. In these cases, a DSP should be required instead.
 - b. Look into the use table comprehensively and see which SEs can become DSPs.
 - c. DSP process is...
 - i. shorter .
 - ii. less expensive.

- iii. often predictable in its outcome.
- iv. valuable, as it shows the design outcomes of a project.
- d. Lengthy SE process is the reason for many text amendments.

15. I-L Zone

- a. 80% of the uses in the I-1 zone are general contractors' offices, warehouses, industrial services.
- b. The ordinance may lose some of the urban standards by placing U-L-I in the I-L zone.
- c. Maybe the I-4 zone should go into I-L, not I-H.
 - i. The properties in this zone concentrate near Andrews Air force Base in a small area.

16. I-H Zone

- a. Older communities are overly taxed with more than their share of the I-2 zone. I-2 properties are around the:
 - i. inner beltway
 - ii. railroad corridors
- b. Common uses are recycling, concrete, and concrete recycling.
- c. The uses should be generalized and minimized in the use table.
 - i. There are many antiquated uses shown that scare people, and make them not want the I-H zone in their communities.
 - ii. Focus on the uses we currently have in the county—eliminate those uses never been used from the use table.
 - iii. Categorize by intensity from low to high.

17. Gas Stations

- a. Gas stations today want to provide a convenience store and car wash. This currently requires a SE.
- b. One idea is to establish gas station guidelines for Prince George's County—so much staff time doesn't have to go into reviewing these applications.
 - i. The group to prepare the design guidelines should include planners, professionals, and industry experts.
 - ii. Gas stations could become a by-right use with a permit review process only.
 - iii. There are a few well designed gas stations out there to use as examples.
 - 1. Fairwood Shopping Center gas station.
 - 2. Dunkirk BP.
 - a. Pumps are in the back, which looks good, but women may not feel comfortable.

18. Elderly Housing

- a. Needs a comprehensive review.
 - i. Current code limits elderly housing by requiring SE. Elderly Housing in many situations can be reviewed through a DSP process.