
WHITE PAPER

Streamlining the Development Review Process in Prince George's County May 2026

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Executive Summary

Prince George's County's development review process is lengthy, unpredictable, complex, and costly, discouraging investment and undermining the County's housing, economic development, and quality-of-life goals. Applicants face an average review timeline of approximately three and a half years from initial application to the start of construction. The process is often longer for projects requiring multiple approvals. This report finds that delays are driven by inefficiencies in review sequencing, inflexible application of standards, stringent prerequisites for application acceptance, unproductive reviewer comments, and delays in application processing.

The process is also difficult to navigate and unpredictable. Applicants must navigate several different agencies across different jurisdictional levels and focus areas. At the same time, development review is governed by dozens of codes, ordinances, and manuals, many of which contain overlapping, duplicative, unclear, or rigid requirements. New issues frequently arise late in review, standards may be applied inconsistently, and applications often face multiple cycles of redesign and resubmission. Altogether, these challenges contribute to costly development. Time spent during the process can increase expenses and reduce profitability for developers, who have ongoing financial obligations, including debt payments.

These conditions create barriers to the types of development the County seeks to encourage. Lengthy, unpredictable, complex, and costly development review discourages investment and presents challenges for small-scale projects, market-rate housing, and higher-end retail. Improving the efficiency, clarity, and predictability of the development review process is critical to advancing the County's broader goals for housing affordability, economic competitiveness, and equitable growth.

This report presents a set of actionable recommendations to streamline the development review process while maintaining regulatory standards and public accountability. Through background research, policy analysis, and stakeholder engagement, these recommendations address recurring challenges in the development review process.

Recommendations are organized into three tiers—“quick win,” midlevel, and structural—that provide the County with a diversity of options to move forward:

- “Quick win” recommendations focus on quick, administrative improvements that the Planning Department could implement to improve clarity and communication. Key recommendations include establishing firm timelines for the preacceptance phase, providing visual design guidelines, ensuring reviewer comments are productive and constructive, creating a navigator or ombudsman program, and improving communications within and between departments.
- Midlevel recommendations require some interagency coordination and minor legislative changes. These include reducing and relaxing early-stage development requirements, creating expedited review processes, expanding by-right uses and plans, revisiting neighborhood compatibility standards, reviewing ordinances for duplication, and expanding peer review
- Structural recommendations involve longer-term organizational and regulatory changes. Key recommendations include combining plans and applications, consolidating permit responsibilities, and codifying rulemaking.

Together, these recommendations will streamline development review and restore predictability and confidence in the process, putting the County on its path toward achieving its goals.

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Purpose and Background

Project Introduction

The development review process plays a critical role in shaping the timing, form, and quality of development across Prince George's County. As countywide priorities increasingly emphasize a thriving and diverse economy, safe and healthy communities with a wide range of housing options, and sustainable development that preserves resources, the effectiveness of the development review process has become increasingly important.¹ The findings of this review highlight opportunities to strengthen existing procedures, so they function more effectively in practice, while continuing to uphold regulatory standards and public accountability.

This report is the culmination of a five-month project conducted by Prince George's County Planning Department involving four graduate assistants from University of Maryland College Park's Master of Community Planning program. The project was supervised by Marcus Monroe, Special Program Management Coordinator, and Gwen McCall-Winston, Deputy Director of Administration. It emerged from a growing recognition among Planning Department staff and other County officials that the current development review process presents creates barriers to development and the achievement of broader County goals.

The purpose of this review is to identify practical, process-oriented improvements that can streamline the development review process. The recommendations address recurring challenges identified during review, including process complexity, limited interagency coordination, inefficient sequencing of approvals, and a lack of predictability for applicants and stakeholders. As a result, these recommendations aim to support a more transparent, efficient, and consistent review process.

Background research for this project included a comprehensive review of County and state reports, existing codes and regulations, and the current sequence of the development review process. To identify current challenges and develop recommendations, the assistants interviewed County staff and external stakeholders, reviewed memoranda and letters, and evaluated programs and policies used in other jurisdictions. Importantly, the assistants attended the Development Community Charrette on February 25, 2026. More than 40 developers, attorneys, engineers, and government officials participated in the session and provided key recommendations aimed at improving the development review process. This project is further supported by the formation of a "Streamlining Development Review Work Group," composed of County staff and external stakeholders and intended to propose recommendations to the County Council and Executive.

¹ Prince George's County Planning Department. (2014). Plan 2035: Prince George's County Approved General Plan. In *Prince George's County Planning Department*. https://www.pgplanning.org/resource_library/plan-prince-georges-2035-approved-general-plan/

Figure 1: 2026 Development Community Charrette



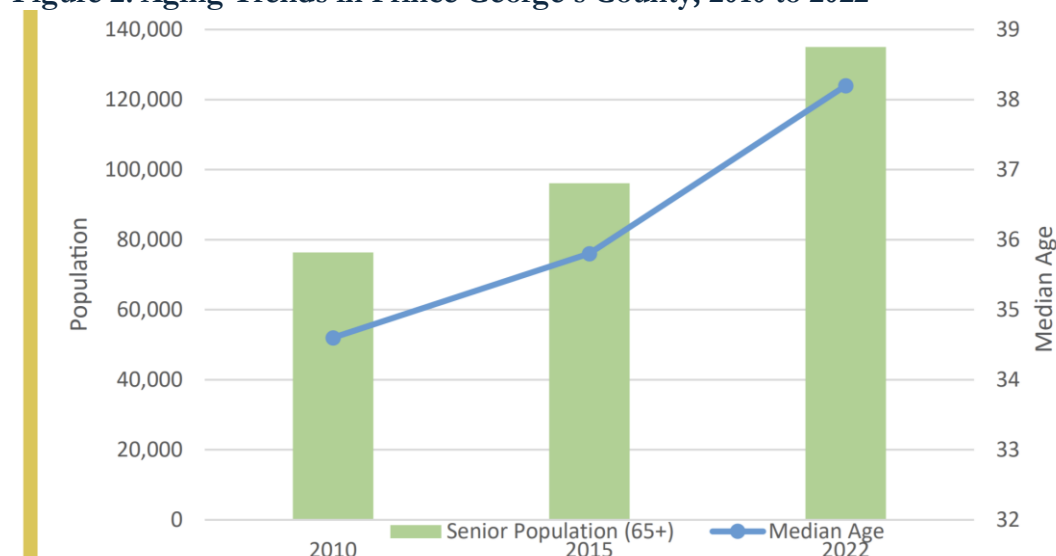
Source: Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

Current Conditions

Prince George's County is growing, but this growth is accompanied by an aging population and limited out-of-state migration. In 2022, the County's population reached over 950,000, accounting for 16 percent of Maryland's total population. However, between 2010 and 2022, there has also been a decline in movement into the County from another state. Additionally, the County's population is aging, with the proportion of children declining and the proportion of residents 55 and over increasing. In particular, the senior population in 2022 accounted for 14 percent of the County's total population.² These trends suggest a need to support development that both attracts and retains younger households while also meeting the needs of an aging population.

² Prince George's County Planning Department. (2026). Prince George's County Population, Housing, and Economic Survey. *In Prince George's County Planning Department*. https://pgplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/2024-Population-Housing-Economic-Survey_FINAL_WEB.pdf.

Figure 2: Aging Trends in Prince George’s County, 2010 to 2022



Source: Winter 2026 Prince George’s County Population, Housing, and Economic Survey

Housing production in the County has increased over the past decade, but affordability and access to entry-level housing remain acute challenges. These challenges are exacerbated by statewide housing shortages relative to demand. Between 2010 and 2022, the County added more than 30,000 housing units, and there has been a significant increase in building permits, including multifamily structures.³ Despite this, median rents and home values have increased, the share of cost-burdened⁴ renter households has increased by more than 50 percent, the number and proportion of entry-level homes⁵ have declined, and the County continues to have a shortage of affordable housing units.⁶ The County also has the highest rate of overcrowding of all Maryland counties at 5.1 percent.⁷ Statewide, there is a shortage of roughly 96,000 housing units relative to demand. In the context of severe housing needs, improving the predictability and efficiency of the review process is critical to speeding up production and expanding access to a mix of housing options.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Cost-burdened renter households are those paying 30 percent or more of their income on rent.

⁵ Entry-level homes are valued between \$100,000 and \$299,999.

⁶ Ibid; National Center for Smart Growth. (2025). Maryland Housing Needs Assessment Update. In *Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development*. <https://dhcd.maryland.gov/Documents/Research/Compiled-Report-SHNA-2025.pdf>

⁷ National Center for Smart Growth, 2025.

Figure 3: Housing Value and Costs in Prince George’s County, 2010 to 2022

	2010		2022	
		%		%
Total Occupied Housing Units	301,906		341,057	
Owner-Occupied Units	194,047	64.3	212,888	62.4
Units with a Mortgage	166,285	85.7	169,500	79.6
Units without a Mortgage	27,762	14.3	43,388	20.4
Median Value of Owned Occupied Units	\$327,600	/	\$380,500	/
Housing Cost as a Percentage of Household Income (30% or more) for Homes with a Mortgage	77,637	46.9	53,093	31.4
Total Renter-Occupied Units	107,859	35.7	128,169	37.6
Occupied Unit Paying Rent	105,425	97.7	125,409	97.8
Median Rent	\$1,140		\$1,713	
Gross Rent as 30% or more of Household Income (Rental Households)	51,290	49.1	64,508	52.4

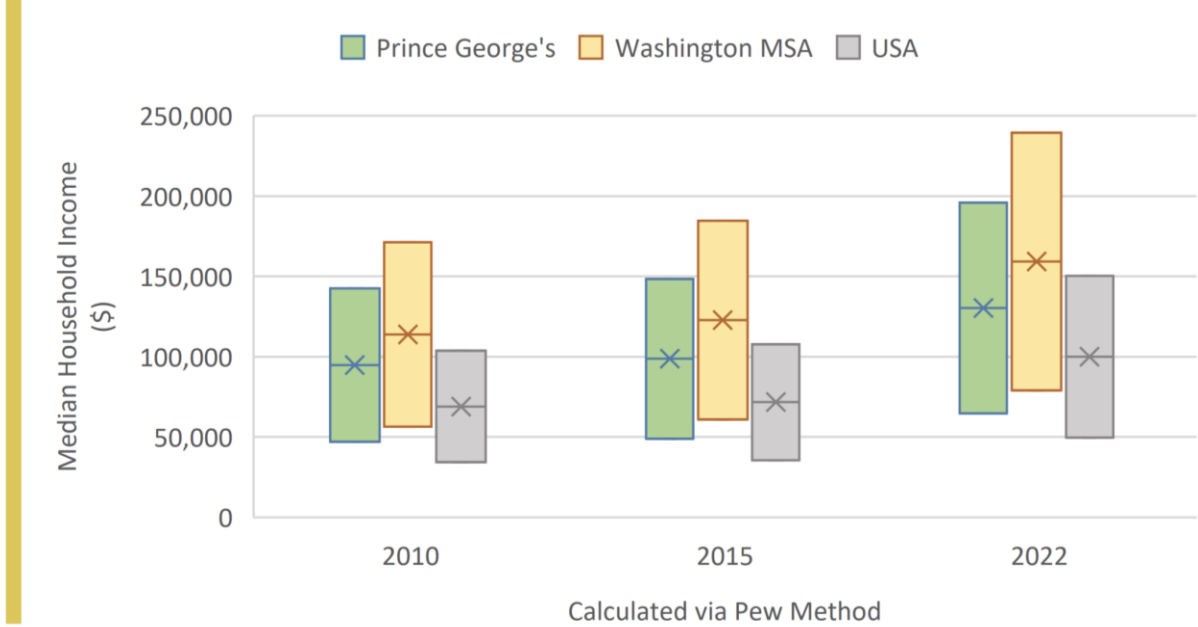
Source: The U.S. Census Bureau, 5-Year American Community Survey (ACS)

The County has a strong economic base, but pressures from rising housing costs potentially outpace income gains. Over the past decade, household incomes have risen in the County; the County has a higher median income than the rest of the country but lower than the Washington, DC metropolitan region. The County also contributes to the state and regional economy: between 2017 and 2022, the County accounted for about 11 percent of Maryland’s gross domestic product (GDP) and about 8 percent of the Washington, DC metropolitan statistical area’s GDP.⁸ However, statewide trends suggest that these gains are countered by rising housing costs. The share of Maryland householders earning enough income to afford the median-price home fell by more than 25 percentage points between 2000 and 2022.⁹ To remain economically competitive, the County must ensure a predictable and well-coordinated development review process that supports investment and the effective use of its economic assets.

⁸ Prince George's County Planning Department, 2026.

⁹ Comptroller of Maryland. (2025). State of the Economy Series: Housing & The Economy. In Comptroller of Maryland. <https://www.marylandcomptroller.gov/content/dam/mdcomp/md/reports/research/housing-economy-print.pdf>

Figure 4: Comparative Ranges Between Low and High Median Household Income, 2010 to 2022



Source: Winter 2026 Prince George's County Population, Housing, and Economic Survey

Existing Development Review Process

Major Stages

The development review process is divided into five major stages: (1) **zoning**, (2) **subdivision**, (3) **site plans**, (4) **final plats**, and (5) **permitting**.¹⁰ According to Section 27-2300 of the Zoning Ordinance, agencies must observe this order of approvals.¹¹

Zoning is the set of regulations that determine what can be built, where it can be built, and how it is built. It is composed of the **Zoning Ordinance**, which outlines the rules of development, and the **zoning map**, which shows the areas where these rules apply. Key zoning processes include **zoning map amendments** and **special exceptions**.

Subdivision is the legal process of creating, changing, or reconfiguring land parcels. This can involve dividing a property into multiple lots, combining lots, or establishing new parcels. This process is administered through the **preliminary plan of subdivision (PPS)**.

Site plans depict the proposed layout and design of a development, including building placement and design, landscaping, parking, circulation, and utilities. Site plans are reviewed and approved through the **detailed site plan (DSP) process**.

Final plats are the legally-approved drawings of subdivided land. They depict lot lines, streets, stormwater management facilities, easements, topography, and other features. This step formally establishes the subdivision and provides the information necessary to identify streets, lots, blocks, and property boundaries. Approval occurs through the **final subdivision plat process**.

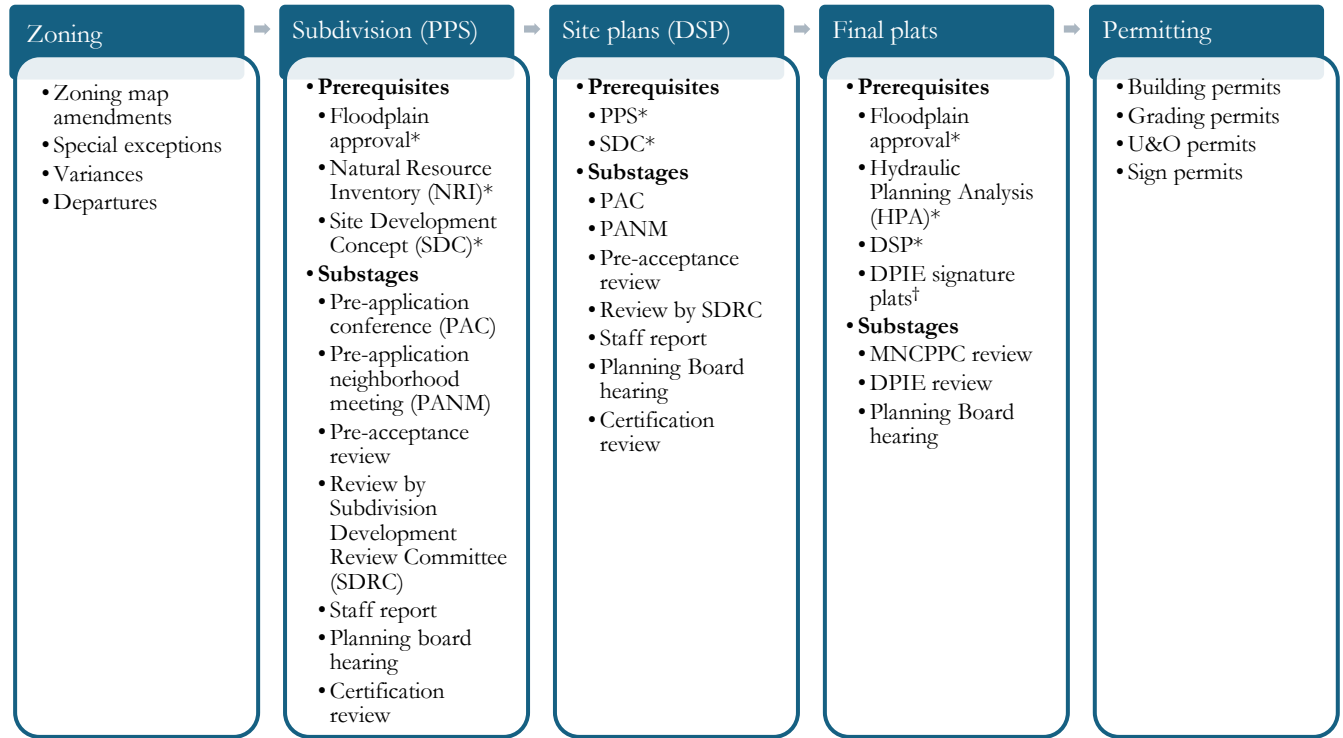
Finally, **permitting** ensures that development complies with applicable codes and regulations before, during, and after construction. Permits may be approved for grading, building, use and occupancy (U&O), and signage.

Each stage involves multiple substages and plans. Additionally, some stages have prerequisites that are required to have been submitted or approved before starting, submitting, or receiving approval for the current stage.

¹⁰ Master planning and enforcement are also involved in the process, with master planning occurring before zoning and enforcement occurring after permitting. However, these are not included as they do not fall within the scope of our review and analysis.

¹¹ This section draws on information provided in the Session 4 presentation of Prince George's County Planning Department's Spring 2025 Neighborhood Planning Academy.

Figure 5: Major Stages of the Development Review Process



* Approval required before submission/acceptance for review.

† Approval required before final processing

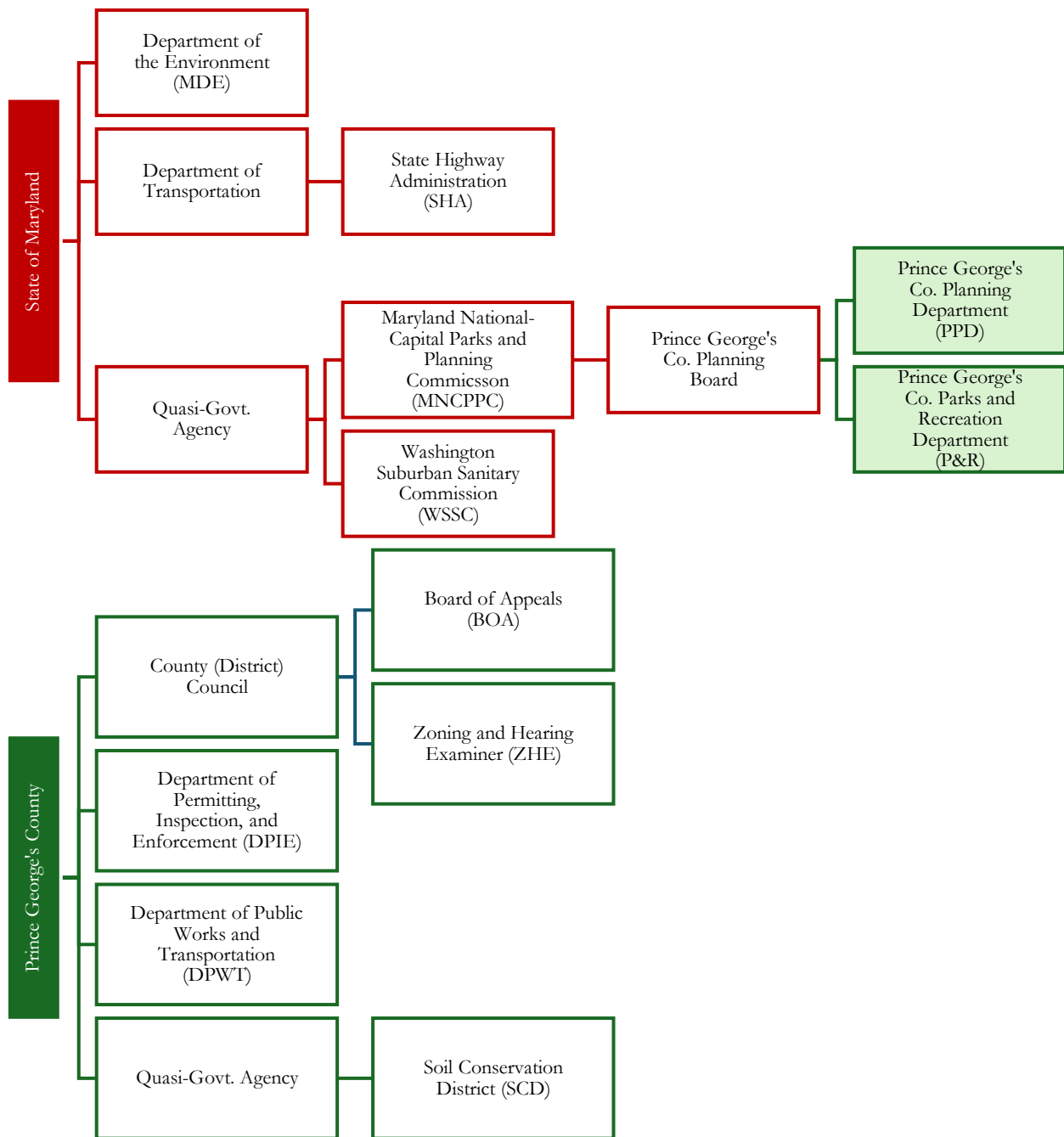
Key Players

The development review process involves a complex network of municipal, County, state, and regional organizations. These entities operate across multiple areas, including planning, permitting, environmental protection, transportation, utility, and public works. Responsibilities are distributed among multiple agencies and include technical reviews, interagency coordination, formal decision-making and adjudication of appeals (*See Appendix Table A1 for more details*).

In addition to executive and administrative agencies, the County Council plays a dual role in the development review process. As the County's legislative body, it enacts countywide laws governing land use and development. When sitting as the District Council, it exercises authority over zoning and planning matters, including rezonings, master plans, and appeals of Planning Board decisions.

Among the agencies involved, the Planning Department, MNET, DPIE, and SCD have a particularly influential role in shaping development outcomes. Together with other state and bicounty entities, these organizations contribute to a complex system in which applicants must navigate multiple layers of review and approval.

Figure 6: Key Players of the Development Review Process



When development occurs within an incorporated municipality, there is an additional layer of review and permitting. Municipal responsibilities typically focus on issuing building permits and enforcing building codes, functions conducted by code enforcement or compliance departments.

Some municipalities, such as College Park and Greenbelt, maintain their own planning departments that participate in planning and development reviews. However, Laurel stands apart as the only municipality in the County with full statutory authority over land use regulation. Laurel sets and enforces their own zoning code through its City Planning Commission and Council, giving it a level of autonomy from the County.

Figure 7: Incorporated Municipalities and Relevant Departments

Municipality	Full Authority?	Development Review Departments
Berwyn Heights	N	Code Compliance
Bladensburg	N	Code Enforcement
Bowie	N	Planning and Sustainability, Public Works
Brentwood	N	Code Enforcement Office
Capitol Heights	N	Property Standards, Public Works
Cheverly	N	Code Compliance
College Park	N	Planning & Community Development, Public Services
Colmar Manor	N	--
Cottage City	N	--
District Heights	N	Code Enforcement
Eagle Harbor	N	License and Permits Office
Edmonston	N	Code Enforcement
Fairmount Heights	N	Code Enforcement
Forest Heights	N	--
Glenarden	N	Code Enforcement
Greenbelt	N	Planning & Community Development
Hyattsville	N	Public Works
Landover Hills	N	Code Enforcement
Laurel	Y	Economic and Community Development, Fire Marshal and Permit Services
Morningside	N	Code Enforcement
Mount Rainier	N	Code Compliance
New Carrollton	N	Code Enforcement
North Brentwood	N	Permit Services
Riverdale Park	N	Development Services, Administrative Services
Seat Pleasant	N	Neighborhood & Commercial Compliance Inspector, Economic Development
University Park	N	Office of Code Compliance
Upper Marlboro	N	Code Compliance

Key Regulations

Prince George's County's Zoning Ordinance controls how land can be used and developed throughout the County. It creates different zoning categories such as residential, commercial, industrial, and mixed-use areas, each with its own rules for building size, height, parking, and land use. The County updated the ordinance in 2022 to modernize the development process, encourage more mixed-use and transit-oriented development, and better support long-term growth goals. The

update also aimed to simplify regulations and make the approval process more organized and predictable.

Another important part of the regulations is the development review process. Projects must go through several review stages to make sure they meet zoning, subdivision, environmental, and infrastructure requirements. Developers must show that roads, utilities, and other public facilities can support the project before approvals are granted. The regulations also guide rezoning requests, site plans, and subdivision applications while encouraging better design, connectivity, and coordinated planning across the County.

Recent Zoning Ordinance Update

Prince George's County recently completed a major update to its Zoning Ordinance, marking the first full rewrite of the County's zoning code in more than 50 years. The new ordinance officially took effect in April 2022 and was designed to modernize the County's land use regulations while supporting the long-term goals of Plan Prince George's 2035. The update aimed to create a zoning system that is easier to understand, more consistent, and better suited for modern development patterns across the County.

One of the biggest changes was the restructuring of zoning categories and using tables. Many older zoning districts were consolidated or replaced with updated zoning categories that better support mixed-use, walkable, and transit-oriented development, especially near Metro stations and future Purple Line corridors. The County implemented a Countywide Map Amendment, which transitioned properties from the previous zoning system into the new zoning categories. This helped create a more unified standardized zoning framework across Prince George's County.

Another major goal of the zoning update was to improve the efficiency and predictability of the development review process. Over time, the previous Zoning Ordinance had become difficult to navigate due to decades of amendments and overlapping regulations. The updated ordinance was intended to provide clearer standards, reduce confusion, and improve coordination between agencies, developers, consultants, and community stakeholders. Since implementation, the County has continued refining the ordinance through technical corrections and amendments based on user feedback and real-world application (Prince George's County Planning Department, n.d.).

Current Challenges

Process Complexity and Fragmentation

Prince George's County's development review process involves multiple state, bicounty, and County agencies with district responsibilities, timelines, and approval requirements. While each agency serves an important role, the overall structure can be difficult to navigate and often functions in a fragmented manner. Applicants frequently coordinate with several agencies for a single project, and review tracks do not always align in timing or sequencing. This can result in duplication of effort, inefficiencies in document transfer and review, and uncertainty about roles and responsibilities. The process has evolved over time in a way that stakeholders describe as ad hoc, rather than coordinated.

Lengthy and Unpredictable Timelines

Timelines are also lengthy and unpredictable. While some stages follow established schedules, many phases depend on staff capacity, interagency coordination, and multiple rounds of review and resubmission. Delays can occur during intake, preacceptance, interagency referrals, and final approvals, making it difficult for applicants to estimate overall timelines. The process can take approximately three to three and a half years from initial application to construction, significantly longer than the construction phase itself. This uncertainty increases carrying costs and financial risk and can lead to project delays or redesigns.

Lack of Interagency Coordination and Inconsistent Comments

Interagency coordination presents an additional challenge. Applications are reviewed by multiple agencies and internal divisions, which can result in overlapping or conflicting comments. Revisions required by one agency may generate new issues with another, leading to multiple rounds of resubmission. Comments are not always issued at the same time or based strictly on code requirements, and interpretations may vary between reviewers. As a result, applicants may encounter new or expanded comments in later review cycles, contributing to inefficiency and uncertainty.

Administrative Burdens and Manual Processes

Many aspects of the development review process remain administratively intensive. The process relies on separate systems, email-based communication, and repetitive data entry, requiring applicants to submit similar information multiple times. Staff spend time routing applications, verifying fees, and managing documentation rather than conducting substantive reviews. Limited automation and system inefficiencies further slow the process and reduce overall efficiency.

Regulatory Complexity and Evolving Standards

The regulatory framework adds another layer of complexity. Although the updated Zoning Ordinance was intended to modernize the system, stakeholders noted that many provisions remain difficult to interpret or apply in practice. Applicants must navigate overlapping zoning, subdivision, environmental, and permitting requirements, some of which may be duplicative or inconsistently applied. The volume and layering of requirements, rather than any regulation, contribute significantly to confusion and inefficiency.

Housing and Economic Development Outcomes

These challenges affect the County's ability to support housing production, attract investment, and remain competitive. Lengthy and uncertain review timelines can discourage development or shift investment to other jurisdictions. This is particularly important as the County faces increasing housing demand and affordability pressures. The combined effects of complexity, coordination challenges, and extended timelines can increase costs and reduce the feasibility of projects, particularly smaller or infill developments. Improving efficiency and predictability in the review process is critical to supporting the County's long-term growth and development goals.

“Quick Win” Recommendations

“Quick Win” recommendations represent near-term administrative and operational improvements that can be implemented by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, DPIE, and partner agencies through internal management actions, updated guidance, and improved coordination practices. Unlike broader structural reforms, these recommendations do not require zoning text amendments, subdivision ordinance changes, or major legislative action. Instead, they focus on improving the functionality of the existing development review system by increasing predictability, reducing avoidable delays, improving consistency across reviewers, and strengthening communication between agencies and applicants. Because these recommendations rely primarily on administrative implementation, they represent the most immediate and achievable set of reforms identified through stakeholder engagement and process evaluation (*see Appendix Table A2 for full recommendation list*).

Emerging Themes

Several clear themes emerged across the recommendations, particularly around predictability, coordination, and process efficiency. Stakeholders consistently identified inconsistent reviewer comments, shifting interpretations of standards, and unclear submission expectations as major sources of delay and frustration. Recommendations such as standardized completeness checklists, uniform easement templates, and objective review criteria are intended to reduce subjectivity and create more reliable expectations throughout the review process. Additional recommendations focus on improving the quality and coordination of reviewer comments by ensuring comments remain code-based, internally consistent, and consolidated during initial review cycles. Together, these reforms would reduce unnecessary redesigns, minimize conflicting guidance, and improve applicant confidence in the process.

Another major focus of the recommendations is reducing delays and addressing operational bottlenecks that slow project progression. Stakeholders frequently identified delays related to application acceptance, reviewer assignment, Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) review, peer review coordination, Office of Law review, and final plat recordation as recurring challenges within the development review process. Several recommendations propose targeted administrative interventions at these known delay points, including fixed timelines for reviewer assignments, expedited review of critical path items, and internal tracking systems to monitor review progress and staff responsiveness. Prioritizing NRI review timelines and streamlining application acceptance procedures would reduce front-end delays that often cascade throughout the entitlement process. These improvements are intended to create shorter review timelines, fewer resubmissions, and more efficient project coordination overall.

The recommendations also emphasize strengthening interagency coordination and improving communication between reviewing agencies. Development review in Prince George’s County often involves multiple agencies operating with separate procedures, timelines, and review priorities, creating inconsistent direction and prolonged coordination efforts for applicants.

Recommendations supporting formal coordination protocols between the Planning Department, DPIE, DPW&T, the Office of Law, Land Records, and the County Executive's Office aim to improve alignment and reduce duplicative review processes. Additional recommendations encourage more consistent participation of planning staff in development-related meetings and stronger communication between agencies during project review. These reforms would create a more integrated and transparent review environment while improving accountability across departments.

Transparency and customer communication also emerged as important themes throughout the stakeholder engagement process. Several recommendations focus on improving public-facing guidance materials, process maps, graphical standards, and communication tools that would help applicants better understand review requirements and approval pathways. Stakeholders also emphasized the importance of regular engagement between County agencies and the development community to identify recurring issues and maintain collaborative working relationships. Recommendations supporting the creation of an ombudsman or quality assurance function are intended to improve accountability, assist applicants navigating the review process, and provide a clearer mechanism for resolving procedural concerns before they escalate into larger delays or disputes.

Overall, the distribution of recommendations reflects the operational challenges most frequently identified during stakeholder discussions. A significant share of the recommendations focus on improving coordination, communication, and review practices to strengthen interagency alignment, transparency, and accountability. Other major recommendations target development review inefficiencies, particularly during the early stages of the process where delays commonly occur. Additional recommendations address permitting, development standards, environmental review, community planning, zoning, and municipal coordination, collectively aiming to improve predictability, reduce delays, and create a more efficient development review system.

Expected Overall Impact

Collectively, the "Quick Win" recommendations are expected to improve the efficiency, predictability, and transparency of the development review process by reducing unnecessary delays, improving coordination between agencies, and clarifying review expectations for applicants. These administrative reforms would help shorten review timelines, reduce conflicting comments and resubmissions, strengthen accountability across departments, and improve communication between agencies, applicants, elected officials, and the public. Because the recommendations can largely be implemented through internal operational changes rather than legislative action, many of the anticipated benefits could be realized within a relatively short timeframe following adoption.

Midlevel Recommendations

Midlevel recommendations focus on targeted procedural and regulatory changes that would improve efficiency, predictability, and coordination throughout the development review process while avoiding the complexity of broader structural reforms. Unlike “Quick Win” recommendations, these reforms require coordination across agencies and, in many cases, limited legislative amendments to County code and related regulations. Collectively, these recommendations aim to reduce unnecessary front-loading of requirements, streamline sequencing, clarify standards, and improve consistency in review and decision-making. While more involved than administrative changes, these recommendations are intended to be practical and implementable within a medium-term timeframe (*see Appendix Table A3 for full recommendation list*).

Emerging Themes

Several recommendations focus on improving the early stages of development review, where applicants often encounter significant delays and uncertainty. Reforms to the preapplication process would make Preapplication Conferences optional and allow applicants to coordinate directly with reviewing agencies after initial comments are issued, helping resolve issues earlier and reducing unnecessary review cycles. Additional recommendations would reduce and scale PPS and detailed site plan (DSP), particularly engineering-related tasks. Requirements should also be based on project size and complexity, allowing smaller or less intensive projects to move through the process more efficiently. Similarly, allowing stormwater management review and other technical approvals to occur concurrently with PPS and DSP review would reduce sequential bottlenecks and improve overall process predictability. Expanding expedited review pathways for transit-oriented development, affordable housing, and small business projects would further align the review process with broader County housing and economic development goals. Together, these changes would reduce front-loading delays, improve coordination between agencies, and create a more predictable review timeline for applicants.

Another major focus of the midlevel recommendations is reducing regulatory complexity and improving the usability of development standards and zoning requirements. Several recommendations call for revising and clarifying use definitions, use tables, and zoning standards that stakeholders identified as inconsistent, duplicative, or difficult to interpret in practice. Expanding by-right uses and reducing unnecessary site plan requirements would simplify approvals for lower-impact development while preserving oversight for more complex projects. Revisions to neighborhood compatibility standards, parking location requirements, and departure procedures would introduce greater flexibility while still maintaining design quality and compatibility objectives. Additional recommendations include reevaluating overly rigid development standards and eliminating duplicative requirements within the Zoning Ordinance that contribute to confusion and repeated redesigns. These reforms are intended to improve predictability, reduce conflicting interpretations, and allow standards to function more effectively across a wider range of development conditions.

The recommendations also emphasize improvements to permitting, environmental review, and interagency coordination. Stakeholders consistently identified environmental review sequencing as a source of delay, particularly where Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) and floodplain reviews operate through separate but interdependent review processes. Several recommendations seek to improve coordination between these reviews and reduce delays created by sequential review

requirements. The recommendations also emphasize improvements to permitting, environmental review, and interagency coordination. Stakeholders consistently identified environmental review sequencing as a source of delay, particularly where NRI and floodplain reviews operate through separate but interdependent review processes. Several recommendations seek to improve coordination between these reviews and reduce delays created by sequential review requirements. Reforms to sign posting requirements and water and sewer sequencing would eliminate unnecessary procedural steps and simplify approvals for minor amendments and utility coordination. Environmental recommendations would allow NRI and floodplain reviews to occur concurrently and permit certain stages of review to proceed while environmental reviews are still underway, reducing delays caused by sequential processing requirements. Additional recommendations would standardize easement requirements across agencies and improve coordination related to dam safety duplication, improve communication between agencies, and create clearer expectations for applicants navigating multiple review systems simultaneously. Several recommendations also support greater digitization of the review process, including digital plats, electronic recordation, and improved visibility into application status and review timelines. These improvements would reduce administrative burdens and create a more transparent review process for both applicants and reviewing agencies.

Several recommendations also focus on improving consistency and transparency in how regulations are written, interpreted, and applied. Legislative drafting training for staff and Council members, including coordination with the Maryland Department of Legislative Services, would help improve the clarity and consistency of future legislation and reduce interpretation issues during implementation. Improvements to master plan updates and planned development zone requirements would provide clearer guidance to applicants and better align long-range planning objectives with current market and development conditions. Collectively, these recommendations seek to create a more coordinated and predictable development review environment while preserving the County's ability to evaluate projects comprehensively and maintain public accountability.

Expected Overall Impact

Overall, the midlevel recommendations are intended to improve the functionality of the existing development review framework rather than fundamentally restructure it. By reducing unnecessary procedural burdens, improving review sequencing, clarifying standards, strengthening interagency coordination, and modernizing administrative processes, these reforms would shorten review timelines, improve predictability, reduce duplication, and create a more transparent development review process for applicants and agencies alike. At the same time, because these recommendations involve targeted legislative and procedural changes rather than major institutional restructuring, they represent a realistic and achievable intermediate step between short-term administrative improvements and longer-term structural reform.

Structural Recommendations

Structural recommendations focus on long-term, structural changes to the development review process that require major coordination, policy updates, and, in many cases, legislative amendments. These recommendations aim to address deeper issues in the system, including duplication of reviews, unclear agency roles, rigid standards, and a lack of predictability. Together, they intend to create a more efficient, coordinated, and transparent process that better supports development while maintaining oversight (see Appendix Table A4 for the full list of recommendations).

Emerging Themes

A major group of recommendations focuses on combining or streamlining existing processes. For example, combining the PPS and DSP into a single or concurrent review would reduce duplication and significantly shorten timelines. Similarly, collapsing multiple environmental reviews, such as NRI, stormwater management, and erosion control, into one application would simplify the process and reduce redundancy. Separating stormwater management review from traffic review is another related recommendation, ensuring that applications focused on environmental issues are not delayed by unrelated transportation analysis. In addition, revisiting the three-step approval process used by the Prince George's Soil Conservation District could eliminate unnecessary duplication in engineering review and align more closely with the County's permitting process.

Another key set of recommendations focuses on improving coordination between agencies and clarifying roles. Currently, multiple agencies often review the same elements of a project, which can lead to delays and conflicting comments. Consolidating right-of-way and configuration approvals under a single lead agency would provide clearer guidance to applicants and reduce confusion. Similarly, shifting permit review responsibilities so that one agency, such as DPIE or M-NCPPC, takes on a more centralized role could reduce delays caused by interagency referrals. Allowing third-party reviewers to work directly with design teams instead of routing everything through the DPIE system would also improve efficiency and reduce administrative burden.

Several recommendations focus on updating and improving development standards and regulations. For example, revising cross-access easement requirements would prevent property owners from being required to grant easements to adjacent properties without consent, while still allowing for future connections through physical stubs. Reconsidering signage regulations would allow for more flexibility in how developments, especially mixed-use projects, can provide adequate visibility and wayfinding. In planned development zones, updating bicycle and pedestrian impact statement requirements would introduce more flexibility and better account for uncertainty in early cost estimates. Forest conservation requirements could also be adjusted by reducing replanting ratios and allowing more flexible open space, which would improve project feasibility and reduce costs.

Other recommendations aim to improve broader policies and systems that guide development. Codifying the rulemaking process would create a more formal and transparent system for developing and communicating regulations, making it easier for applicants to understand requirements and reducing inconsistencies. Establishing clearer and automatic incentives for transit-oriented development would increase predictability and encourage development in targeted areas by linking benefits directly to defined criteria. Additionally, shifting public input to earlier stages of the

planning process and reducing required meetings for certain applications could help reduce delays while still maintaining opportunities for engagement.

Expected Overall Impact

Overall, these recommendations are expected to significantly improve the development review process by reducing timelines, increasing predictability, and lowering costs for applicants. By addressing duplication, improving coordination, and introducing more flexibility, the County can create a more competitive development environment that supports housing production and economic growth. However, because these are structural changes, many of these recommendations will require further study, coordination across agencies, and legislative action to implement effectively.

Conclusion

As the County prepares for its upcoming comprehensive plan, reevaluating the development review process will play a critical role in implementing visions and goals set forth in the plan. With these recommendations, the County can restore predictability and confidence in the process, bringing new and greater investment to the County. These investments can advance broader County goals, such as housing production, economic development, and access to quality goods and services. Finally, by revising the development review process, the County can help ensure that all projects have a chance at success, not just large development projects or those with abundant resources to see a project through for multiple years.

“Quick win” recommendations focus on improving clarity and communication with all stakeholders. Key recommendations include establishing firm review timelines; providing more resources and clear guidance on websites and other communication channels; ensuring productive and consistent reviewer comments; automating remaining manual steps; enhancing applicant supports through navigator and ombudsman programs; and strengthening inter- and intradepartmental communications.

Midlevel reforms are those targeted toward adjusting standards and processes in minimal ways. These reforms will require coordination across agencies and small legislative changes. Key recommendations include loosening and reducing early-stage development standards; expanding expedited and by-right site plans; eliminating duplicative or conflicting standards; adjusting neighborhood compatibility standards; broadening peer review across more agencies; and reevaluating impact fees.

Structural reforms aim to change organizational roles and larger regulatory frameworks. These recommendations will require sustained coordination and major updates to legislation. Key recommendations include combining PPS and DSP applications; consolidating environmental reviews; transferring permit responsibilities; codifying rulemaking; and creating a unified application portal.

To move forward with these recommendations, the County should pass on the materials of this project to the “Development Review Work Group,” the County Council, and all agencies involved in the development review process. From there, the work group should decide upon priority recommendations, looking particularly to the “Quick Win” recommendations. Once the work group selects its priority recommendations, it should designate people or groups to oversee the implementation of each recommendation. Furthermore, the work group should connect with other jurisdictions that have implemented similar recommendations to better prepare for implementation, including potential challenges. For midlevel and structural recommendations, the work group should connect early with councilmembers and legislative staff to understand the legislative changes necessary to achieve the recommendation. For these more intensive recommendations, the work group may also consider testing or piloting recommendations on a smaller scale before implementing them countywide and for all development applications. Finally, once the County implements recommendations, the Planning Department and other relevant agencies should track progress and continue to engage with stakeholders to monitor outcomes.

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Appendix

Table A1: Key Players in the Development Review Process and Responsibilities

State Organizations			
Organization	Acronym	Organizational Position	Development Review Responsibilities
Maryland Department of the Environment	MDE	A cabinet agency of Maryland's executive branch	- Issue wetland/waterway construction permits in conjunction with the US Army Corps of Engineers - Issue notice of intent to discharge permits
Maryland Department of Transportation	MDOT	A cabinet agency of Maryland's executive branch	Work with M-NCPPC to align development with County and statewide transportation goals
Maryland State Highway Administration	SHA	A division of MDOT	- Coordinate with DPWT and M-NCPPC to align site plans with transportation goals and to evaluate transportation adequacy - Referral agency for traffic impact analysis - Issues access permits
Bicounty Organizations			
Organization	Acronym	Organizational Position	Development Review Responsibilities
Maryland-National-Capital Park and Planning Commission	M-NCPPC	Political subdivision of the State, operated at the County level (Montgomery and Prince George's counties)	Oversees land use, zoning, and development review for both Montgomery and Prince George's County
Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission	WSSC	Political subdivision of the State, operated at the County level (Montgomery and Prince George's counties)	- Reviews and approves systems planning forecast, and hydraulic analyses - Issues system extension and site utility permits
County Organizations			
Organization	Acronym	Organizational Position	Development Review Responsibilities
Prince George's County (District) County Council	-	County Council is the legislative body of the County; regarding development review, the County Council, sits as the District Council	- District Council - Reviews and approves comprehensive plans, plans and map amendments, variances, alternative compliance, and validation of permits issued in error - Acts on call-up appeals of decisions made by the Planning Board - County Council - Enacts and approves local laws
Prince George's County Planning Board	-	Within M-NCPPC	Reviews and approves variances, major departures, alternative compliance, PPS, tree conservation plans, traffic impact analysis, DSP, final plat applications

			• Provide recommendations for comprehensive plans, plan and map amendments, and permits • Hears appeals for PPS for minor subdivisions and certificates of adequacy
Board of Appeals	BOA	Within the County Council	• Hears appeals for permits, administrative matters, and zoning enforcement • Reviews and approves variances
Zoning and Hearing Examiner	ZHE	Within the County Council	• Reviews and approves variances, major departures, alternative compliance, and revocation/modification of special exceptions
Prince George's County Planning Department	PD	Under Prince George's County Planning Board	• Review NRI, PPS and DSP, and final plats • Referral agency for permits
Prince George's County Parks and Recreation Department	P&R	Under Prince George's County Planning Board	• Involvement in adequacy of parks and recreation requirements, mandatory parkland dedication requirement, and the public benefits requirement in the Zoning Ordinance • Involvement in the easement process and right of entry permits
Prince George's County Department of Permitting, Inspection, and Enforcement	DPIE	An agency of Prince George's County's executive branch	• Review and approve floodplain, SDC, and water and sewer changes • Issues permits, including site development fine grading and building permits • Referral agency for traffic impact analysis and DSP • Enforces regulations in zoning and subdivision ordinances
Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation	DPWT	An agency of Prince George's County's executive branch	• Review and approve site plans • Referral agency for traffic impact analysis • Issue permits for development requiring roadway construction and improvement within the County right-of-way
Prince George's Soil Conservation District	SCD	Political subdivision of Prince George's County	• Review and approve the concept, environmental, and final erosion sediment control plans

Table A2: “Quick Win” Recommendations

Development Review						
Area	Description	Type	Leg. Changes	Relevant Agencies	Expected Impact	Conflict or Clarification?
Preapplication timeline	Define and enforce a formal completeness checklist and require application acceptance within a fixed timeline.	Administrative	N/A	Planning Department	• Time saving: reduces presubmission delays, • Predictability: clear expectation for applicants	Legal notes that “the Code already contains statutory time limits.” Standards also contain “discretionary standards ‘in sufficient detail’ that allow for uncertainty but also ensure the Department has the flexibility to require submissions have enough detail for staff to conduct meaningful review.”
Easements standardization	Create standard templates for common easements (HOA, cross-access, stormwater, etc.) and require their use unless deviations are justified.	Administrative	N/A	Planning Department, DPIE, DPWT	• Time savings: reduce negotiation cycles • Predictability: consistent legal language • Efficiency: faster document approval.	N/A
Final plat recordation	Establish a coordinated workflow with Land Records including tracking and target timelines for recording final plats.	Administrative	N/A	Planning Department, Land Records Office	• Time savings: faster postapproval processing • Transparency: clear status tracking • Efficiency: reduce project holding costs.	Legal notes “M-NCPPC does not control when records show up on the MD Land Rec.”

Reviewer assignment	Require assignment of reviewers within five business days and implement internal tracking dashboards to monitor progress.	Administrative	N/A	Planning Department	• Time Savings: eliminates early-stage delays • Accountability: improve internal performance tracking • Predictability: applicants know who is reviewing	N/A
Development Standards						
Area	Description	Type	Leg. Changes	Relevant Agencies	Expected Impact	Conflict or Clarification?
Design standards clarity	Develop and prioritize graphical design guidelines and ensure consistent application across reviewers.	Administrative	N/A	Planning Department	• Predictability: reduce subjective interpretation • Transparency: clear visual expectations • Efficiency: fewer design revisions	N/A
Permitting						
Area	Description	Type	Leg. Changes	Relevant Agencies	Expected Impact	Conflict or Clarification?
Fast-Track (BDSP) Permits	Coordinate with DPIE for fast-track applications with proactive communication of outstanding issues.	Administrative	N/A	Planning Department	• Time Savings: accelerated approvals • Predictability: clear process for fast-track cases • Efficiency: supports priority projects	N/A
Peer review process	Establish fixed timelines and accountability standards for peer review.	Administrative	N/A	DPIE	• Time Savings: reduces review cycle delays	N/A

					• Accountability: improve consultant performance • Predictability: defined turnaround expectations	
Environmental						
Area	Description	Type	Leg. Changes	Relevant Agencies	Expected Impact	Conflict or Clarification?
NRI review timeline	Prioritize NRI review as a critical path item and reduce timelines by 2-3 weeks. Coordinate and improve communication b/w the Planning Department and DPIE during this process. Study NRI in greater detail to determine challenges.	Administrative	N/A	Planning Department, DPIE	• Time Savings: accelerates entire project timeline • Efficiency: removes early bottlenecks • Predictability: faster project initiation	N/A
Community Planning						
Area	Description	Type	Leg. Changes	Relevant Agencies	Expected Impact	Conflict or Clarification?
Master plan guidance	Issue clear internal and external guidance for interpreting outdated master plans.	Administrative	N/A	Planning Department	• Predictability: consistent application • Transparency: reduces interpretation and disputes • Efficiency: faster review decisions.	N/A
Zoning						
Area	Description	Type	Leg. Changes	Relevant Agencies	Expected Impact	Conflict or Clarification?
PD rezoning criteria	Define objective, measurable criteria for evaluating public benefits.	Administrative	Clarification does not require changes.	Planning Department, County Council	• Predictability: clear expectation for developers	Legal suggests "reviewing Montgomery County's Public

			Formal changes could be made to Sec. 27-4300		• Transparency: reduces negotiation subjectivity • Equity: consistent evaluation across projects	Benefits Point System and comparable methods in other counties.”
Coordination, Communications, and Review						
Area	Description	Type	Leg. Changes	Relevant Agencies	Expected Impact	Conflict or Clarification?
CEX / Council Coordination	Ensure planning staff participation in all meetings involving development discussions.	Administrative	N/A	Planning Department, County Executive, County Council	• Coordination: better alignment across agencies • Efficiency: faster issue resolution • Transparency: consistent messaging	N/A
Development community engagement	Establish regular standing meetings with the development community.	Administrative	N/A	Planning Department, DPIE	• Transparency: open communication • Predictability: early identification of issues • Continuous Improvement: feedback loop	Legal recommends including a representative from the Legal Department in these meetings.
Interdepartmental coordination	Create formal coordination protocols and shared communication channels across agencies.	Administrative	N/A	All, particularly Planning Department, DPIE, and SCD	• Time Savings: reduce duplication • Consistency: unified responses to applicants • Efficiency: streamlined workflow	N/A

Public-facing Communication	Upgrade website tools and provide clear guidance documents and process maps.	Administrative	N/A	Planning Department, DPIE	• Transparency: Easier navigation for applicants • Efficiency: reduces staff inquiries • Predictability: clear process expectations	N/A
Ombudsman/QA/Navigator Role	Establish a dedicated ombudsman or QA/QC function to resolve disputes and escalate issues and/or establish a navigator to guide individuals through the development review process.	Administrative	N/A	Planning Department	• Transparency: neutral escalation channel • Efficiency: faster conflict resolution • Predictability: reduces project uncertainty	N/A
Municipal identification	Develop an address-based tool to flag municipal jurisdiction automatically.	Administrative	N/A	Planning Department, GIS/IT sections of IMD	• Transparency: immediate awareness of the requirements • Time savings: avoids rework • Efficiency: better upfront planning	N/A
Reviewer Comments	Require complete, code-based, and nonconflicting comments in the first review cycle.	Administrative	N/A	Planning Department	• Time savings: fewer review cycles • Predictability: clear expectations • Accountability: improves review quality	Legal reemphasizes “the Department has discretion to provide comments and feedback on applications within their area of expertise and also to reach their own interpretation of what the written law requires.”

Office of Law Review	Hold Office of Law to documented review timelines.	Administrative	N/A	Planning Department, Office of Law	• Time savings: savings delays on reviewing agreements and timelines • Predictability: reduces uncertainty	Legal notes that these delays are often “caused by the unwillingness of applicants to make the required changes to match the Department's templates.”
DARTs	Improving training for staff and user testing. Implementing consolidated applications/submittals. Payment for multiple plats at once	Administrative	N/A	Planning Department, DPIE	• Time savings • Efficiency	N/A
Automation	Verifying fee amounts, verifying surcharge amounts, approving TPIP forms should be automated	Administrative	N/A	Planning Department, DPIE	• Efficiency • Time Savings	N/A

Table A3: Midlevel Recommendations

Development Review						
Area	Description	Type	Leg. Changes	Relevant Agencies	Expected Impact	Conflict or Clarification?
Preapplication conference	Make preapplication conference optional and allow postcomment coordination meetings.	Administrative	None Required	Planning Department, County Council	Time Savings reduces review cycles, Efficiency improves coordination, Predictability clarifies process timing.	N/A
PPS and DSP	Reduce and loosen requirements for PPS and DSP, particularly engineering-related tasks. Adjust requirements based on project scale. Ensure PPS focuses on subdivision rather than building placement or zoning.	Legislative	Amend subtitle 24 Sec. 24-1401 and Subtitle 27 DSP applicability standards	Planning Department, County Council	Time Savings reduces front-loading, Efficiency minimizes redesign, Predictability aligns process with project scale.	Requires clear thresholds
Preliminary plan sequencing	Allow PPS to proceed prior to full concept approvals and defer certain requirements	Legislative	Amend Subtitle 24 and Subtitle 27 sequencing provisions	Planning Department, DPIE	Time Savings reduces delays, Efficiency minimizes redesign, Predictability improves workflow alignment.	Coordination with subdivision requirements
Stormwater management sequencing	Allow SWM Concept approval to occur concurrently with PPS and DSP rather than as a prerequisite.	Legislative	Amend Subtitle 32 SWM sequencing requirements	DPIE, Planning Department	Time Savings reduces early-stage delays, Efficiency aligns engineering review, Predictability improves sequencing.	Requires DPIE coordination
Statements of justification	Reduce length and limit to code-based analysis.	Administrative	N/A	Planning Department	Efficiency reduces documentation burdens, Transportation improves resource allocation, Economic Impact supports development goals	None
Expedited review programs	Establish priority review pathways for TOD, small businesses, and affordable housing.	Administrative	N/A	Planning Department, DPIE	Time Savings accelerates priority, Efficiency improves resource allocation, Economic Impact	Requires eligibility criteria

					supports development goals	
Digital Plats	Enable digital submission and recordation of plats across agencies.	Administrative	Update State recordation procedures and County administrative processes	Planning Department, SDAT, DPIE	Time Savings eliminates manual delays; Efficiency streamlines approvals. Transparency improves tracking	Legal notes that subdivision regulations “need to be amended to clarify electronic signatures are acceptable.” They continue: “State law was amended to allow for digital signatures on Plats. Maryland Administrative Office of the Courts is adopting regulations to implement.”
Development Standards						
Area	Description	Type	Leg. Changes	Relevant Agencies	Expected Impact	Conflict or Clarification?
Departure flexibility	Expand ability to request departures from strict development standards.	Legislative	Amend 27 departure provisions	Planning Department, County Council	Design Flexibility improves outcomes, Predictability clarifies relief process, Efficiency reduces redesign	Requires consistent criteria
Design standards	Reevaluate overly rigid or impractical standards and update accordingly.	Legislative	Amend Subtitle 27 development standards section	Planning Department, County Council	Efficiency improves usability, Predictability ensures consistency, Design Flexibility improves outcomes.	May require phased updates
Parking location standards	Revised requirements related to placement and configuration of parking spaces.	Legislative	Amend Subtitle 27 Part 11 Parking and Loading	Planning Department, County Council	Efficiency improves site layout, Predictability clarifies standards, Design Quality improves flexibility	Requires compatibility alignment
Permitting						
Area	Description	Type	Leg. Changes	Relevant Agencies	Expected Impact	Conflict or Clarification?

Sign posting flexibility	Allow administrative waivers for minor amendments.	Legislative	Amend Subtitle 27 public notice requirements	Planning Department, County Council	Time Savings reduces unnecessary steps, Efficiency simplifies approvals, Predictability clarifies criteria	Must define thresholds
Peer review expansion	Expand third-party review practices across agencies.	Administrative	N/A	Planning Department, DPIE, SCD	Time Savings, reduces staff burden, Efficiency improves review quality, Predictability establishes timelines	Requires oversight standards
Environmental						
Area	Description	Type	Leg. Changes	Relevant Agencies	Expected Impact	Conflict or Clarification?
Concurrent NRI and floodplain review	Allow NRI and floodplain reviews to occur simultaneously.	Legislative	Amend Subtitle 24 environmental sequencing provisions	Planning Department, DPIE	Time Savings reduces delays, Efficiency removes bottlenecks, Predictability improves process clarity	Requires interagency coordination
NRI timing flexibility	Allow PPS and DSP review to proceed while NRI is under review.	Legislative	Amends Subtitle 24 NRI sequencing requirements	Planning Department, County Council	Time Savings reduce early delays, Efficiency aligns review timing, Predictability clarifies expectations	Must maintain environmental protections
Consolidated easements.	Standardize and consolidate easement requirements across agencies	Administrative	N/A	Planning Department, DPIE, DPW&T	Efficiency reduces duplication. Time Savings improves approvals, Predictability ensure consistency	Requires interagency agreement
Community Planning						
Area	Description	Type	Leg. Changes	Relevant Agencies	Expected Impact	Conflict or Clarification?
Master plan updates	Improve frequency and clarify of master plan updates.	Administrative	N/A	Planning Department	Predictability improves guidance, Efficiency reduces ambiguity, Transparency clarifies direction	Resource dependent
Zoning						
Area	Description	Type	Leg. Changes	Relevant Agencies	Expected Impact	Conflict or Clarification?

Use definitions and tables	Revise and clarify use definitions and update priority uses identified in code.	Legislative	Amend Subtitle 27 use tables and definitions sections	Planning Department, County Council	Predictability improves interpretation, Efficiency reduces comments, Transparency improves usability	Requires comprehensive review
By-right uses and site plans	Expand by-right uses and reduce unnecessary site plan requirements.	Legislative	Amend Subtitle 27 use tables and DSP thresholds	Planning Department, County Council	Time Savings reduces approvals, Efficiency simplifies process, Predictability clarifies entitlements	Requires calibrated thresholds
Special exception criteria	Revise findings to be measurable and applicable.	Legislative	Amend Subtitle 27 Special Exception provisions	Planning Department, County Council	Predictability improves clarity. Efficiency reduces unnecessary analysis, Transparency improves objectivity	Balance flexibility and enforceability
Neighborhood compatibility standards	Clarify applicability and revise standards for consistency.	Legislative	Amend Subtitle 27 compatibility provisions	Planning Department, County Council	Predictability improves application, Efficiency reduces duplication, Design Quality improves outcomes	Needs alignment with design standards
Planned development zones	Clarify requirements and streamline PD zone processes.	Legislative	Amend Subtitle 27 Planned Development Sections	Planning Department, County Council	Predictability improves expectations, Efficiency reduces complexity, Transparency improves guidance	Requires coordination with zoning framework
Coordination, Communications, and Review						
Area	Description	Type	Leg. Changes	Relevant Agencies	Expected Impact	Conflict or Clarification?
Legislative drafting training	Provide training for staff and Council with participation from MD Department of Legislative Services.	Administrative	N/A	Planning Department, County Council, Md. Dept. of legislative Services	Predictability improves clarity, Efficiency reduces interpretation issues, Consistency strengthens code	N/A
Other						
Area	Description	Type	Leg. Changes	Relevant Agencies	Expected Impact	Conflict or Clarification?
Dam safety approval	Clarify and streamline dam safety approval process and coordination.	Administrative	Update MDE guidance and County	DPIE, MDE	Efficiency reduces delays; Predictability clarifies requirements.	N/A

			coordination procedures		Time savings improves coordination.	
Address and tax account assignment	Improve timing and coordination of address and tax account assignment processes	Administrative	N/A	Planning Department, DPIE, OIT	Efficiency reduces permitting delays, Predictability clarifies timelines, Transparency improves coordination	N/A

Table A4: Structural Recommendations

Development Review						
Area	Description	Type	Leg. Changes	Relevant Agencies	Expected Impact	Conflict or Clarification?
Combining Preliminary Plan of Subdivision + detailed site plan	Combine the PPS and DSP application processes	Process Improvement	Amend Sections 27-2300 and 27-6105(b) to allow concurrent review with Council and Executive approval.	• M-NCPPC • County Council • County Executive • DPIE • Planning Department	Speeds up approvals and reduces duplicate reviews.	Unclear how concurrent review would handle conflicts and coordination between agencies.
Public Input	Shift public engagement to early planning stages and reduce meeting requirements for by-right and special exception applications.	Process Improvement	Amend Sections 24-3200 and 24-3303 to reduce or eliminate required public meetings.	• M-NCPPC • County Council	Reduces delays from hearings and lowers risk of legal challenges.	Politically sensitive due to reduced public input in development decisions.

PGSCD Three-Step Plan Approval Process	Evaluate removing the three-step process and align it with DPIE's concept-to-final permitting.	Process Improvement	Amend Sections 32-126 and 32-130 and update Stormwater Management Design Manual requirements.	- Prince George's Soil Conservation District (PGSCD) - DPIE	Reduces redundant engineering reviews and speeds up permit approvals.	Unclear how eliminating steps would impact review quality and compliance.
Development Standards						
Area	Description	Type	Leg. Changes	Relevant Agencies	Expected Impact	Conflict or Clarification?
Cross-Access Easements	Clarify that cross-access easements are not required without adjacent owner consent, while still allowing future physical connections.	Development Standard Change	Amend Sections 27-6206(e), 27-6207, and 27-6208 to remove required easements without consent.	- M-NCPPC - County Council	Reduces property owner burden and avoids forced easements on private land.	May limit future connectivity if adjacent owners do not cooperate.

					Reduces burden on property owners and avoids forced easements.	Could reduce long-term site connectivity between properties.
Signage	Clarify and relax signage rules for residential gateways, directional signs, and freestanding signs.	Development Standard Change	Amend Sections 27-615006(a)(2) and 27-61500 to update signage allowances.	M_NCPPC	Improves visibility and functionality for businesses and residential developments.	Unclear why current restrictions differ across zones and residential types.
Permitting						
Area	Description	Type	Leg. Changes	Relevant Agencies	Expected Impact	Conflict or Clarification?
Third-Party Review	Allow third-party reviewers to work directly with design teams instead of through the DPIE system.	Process Improvement	No major legislative changes required; primarily an administrative/process update.	DPIE	Speeds up reviews and reduces staff workload.	May raise concerns about oversight, consistency, and record-keeping.
M-NCPPC Permit Section	Have M-NCPPC handle all reviews internally or integrate their reviewers into DPIE to reduce delays.	Process Improvement	Unclear; may require administrative or interagency coordination changes.	- DPIE - M-NCPPC	Reduces delays caused by waiting on interagency comments.	Unclear whether this applies to all permits or only certain review types.
Environmental						

Separated SWM / Traffic Review	Separate SWM concept plan review from traffic review to avoid unnecessary delays.	Process Improvement	Leg. Changes Amend Subtitle 32 to limit traffic review at the SWM concept stage.	DPIE	Speeds up SWM approvals by reducing unnecessary traffic review.	Unclear if changes apply to all SWM reviews or only specific permit types.
Forest Conservation	Reduce replanting ratios and credit limits while allowing more flexible open space.	Environmental / Development Standard Change	Amend Subtitle 25 Division 2 and update related environmental and landscape manuals.	DPR	Improves project feasibility and reduces costs tied to planting requirements.	May reduce environmental protections and tree canopy coverage.
Combined Environmental Application	Combine multiple environmental reviews into a single application to streamline approvals.	Process Improvement	Would require updates across all applicable environmental review sections.	DPIE, M-NCPPC, DPR	Reduces duplication and speeds up environmental approvals.	Unclear how coordination and review sequencing would be handled within one application.
Community Planning						
ROW / Configuration Approvals	Assign one lead agency to handle ROW and configuration approvals to avoid confusion.	Process Improvement	May require administrative or interagency coordination changes.	- DPIE - DPWT - M-NCPPC	Improves clarity and reduces delays in approvals.	Unclear which agency should take the lead role.

Zoning						
Area	Description	Type	Leg. Changes	Relevant Agencies	Expected Impact	Conflict or Clarification?
All Planned Development Zones	Provide more flexibility in how BPIS bicycle and pedestrian improvements are implemented.	Zoning / Development Standard Change	Amend Section 24-4506 to allow more administrative flexibility.	Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission	Improves feasibility by accounting for uncertainty in early cost estimates.	Unclear how much flexibility should be allowed without reducing infrastructure quality.
Coordination, Communications, and Review						
Area	Description	Type	Leg. Changes	Relevant Agencies	Expected Impact	Conflict or Clarification?
Codify Rulemaking	Create a formal, transparent rulemaking process with centralized and publicly accessible rules.	Process Improvement / Governance	May require legislation to formalize rulemaking procedures and Council oversight.	• DPIE • County Council • County Executive • M-NCPPC	Improves transparency, consistency, and accessibility of County rules.	Unclear which rules require Council approval and how broadly this would apply.