PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

UNIFORM STANDARDS FOR MANDATORY REFERRAL REVIEW

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The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
Prince George's County Planning Board
1616 McCormick Drive, Largo, MD 20774

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Section 1: Introduction

Counties in the State of Maryland have no inherent authority to zone. Zoning authority is granted to Prince George's County by the General Assembly and does not extend to the State's projects and the projects of the State's agencies and instrumentalities, including Prince George's County ("County"), The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission ("Commission"), and municipalities. In addition, federal government projects are immune from State and local zoning authority by virtue of the Supremacy Clause of the United States Constitution.

The General Assembly, however, prohibits the United States, the State of Maryland, and any unit of the United States or the State, from conducting certain activities in the Maryland-Washington Regional District ("Regional District") unless the activity is referred to and approved by the Commission. This authority is commonly referred to as "Mandatory Referral Review" and is authorized in Division II of the Land Use Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland (Sections 20-301 through 305). In the event the Commission disapproves of the activity, however, the entity that proposed the activity may overrule the disapproval of the Commission and proceed with the activity as proposed. Accordingly, the goal of Mandatory Referral Review is to provide applicants for public projects with recommendations within the scope of the Commission's areas of expertise to raise awareness about development issues and improve project outcomes.

The Commission has delegated its authority to review public projects in that portion of the Regional District within Prince George's County to the Prince George's County Planning Board. In turn, the Planning Board has delegated to the Planning Director (or designee of the Planning Director) the authority to determine if a project is eligible for Mandatory Referral Review ("Mandatory Referral") and, if so, the appropriate level of review, and the authority to make final decisions for projects subject to Administrative Review. Projects eligible for Mandatory Referral are subject to one of three levels of review: (1) No Further Review; (2) Administrative Review; or (3) Planning Board Review.

Projects subject to No Further Review are generally minor in nature, have been subject to prior review and approval by the Prince George's County Council or the Planning Board, or are addressing time-sensitive critical or emergency repairs. Projects subject to Administrative Review generally change, or expand, the use or intensity of the facility but are not expected to have significant off-site impacts. Projects not otherwise qualifying for No Further or Administrative Review are subject to Planning Board review.

Pursuant to State law, the Commission must act within 60 days after its acceptance of a complete application or the application is deemed approved. Applicants, however, may grant the Commission a longer period for its review. In addition, Mandatory Referral does not exempt a project from compliance with all other applicable County laws including, but not limited to, Subtitle 25, Trees and Vegetation and Subtitle 32, Water Resources Protection and Grading Code.

Section 2: Applicability

A public board, public body, or public official may not conduct any of the following activities in that portion of the Regional District in Prince George's County unless the proposed location, character, grade, and extent of the activity is referred to and approved by the Planning Board in accordance with these Standards:

A. Acquiring or selling land;

B. Locating, constructing, or authorizing:
   1. a road;
   2. a park;
   3. any other public way or ground;
   4. a public building or structure, including a federal building or structure; or
   5. a publicly owned or privately owned public utility; or

C. Changing the use of or widening, narrowing, extending, relocating, vacating, or abandoning any facility listed in item B. above.

Section 3: Levels of Review

The following criteria generally define the applicable level of review:

Section 3. A: No Further Review

A. County projects reviewed and approved through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) process.

B. Commission projects reviewed and approved through the CIP process.

C. Emergency repairs to existing public roadways, infrastructure, buildings, or structures, or publicly and privately owned utility facilities and equipment.

D. Projects that do not change or expand the use or intensity of a public facility such as interior renovations, minor modifications as part of routine maintenance, minor utility projects, minor sidewalk improvements, and minor stream restoration projects.

E. Temporary structures.

F. Nonresidential rooftop solar installations.

G. Replacement of same or similar structures in same project area for the same use.

H. Utility replacements within existing easements.

I. Projects of a similar size and scope that are expected to have little or no impact on the health, safety, and welfare of the surrounding community.

Section 3. B: Administrative Review

A. A bridge replacement in-kind.

B. Sidewalk and roadway construction.

C. Retaining walls.

D. Fencing.

E. Projects of a similar size and scope that are not expected to have significant impacts on the health, safety, and welfare of the surrounding community.

Section 3. C: Planning Board Review

Projects not otherwise qualifying for No Further or Administrative Review, including, but not limited to, all solar energy system (SES) projects requiring approval by the Maryland Public Service Commission, are subject to Planning Board Review.

Section 3. D: Planning Director Discretion

The Planning Director has discretion to determine the appropriate level of review, and change the applicable level of review, based on an evaluation of all project factors including, but not limited to, the expected impacts on the surrounding community; the project's compliance with applicable laws and regulations; the amount of detail about the project provided by the applicant in the Questionnaire and, if applicable, the Mandatory Referral application ("MR Application"); and feedback from government agencies.

Section 3. E: Multiple Reviews

Certain projects may be subject to more than one Mandatory Referral review depending upon the level of detail submitted by the applicant. For example, the acquisition of land for a public project may occur before the building's design and construction are undertaken. If an MR Application is submitted solely for the acquisition, a second MR Application will be required for the building's design and construction. Multiple MR Applications may also be required for projects involving multiple phases or for complex projects in which only preliminary designs are initially provided, necessitating a second Application when more detailed designs and construction plans become available.

Section 4: Procedures

Determining eligibility for Mandatory Referral begins with the applicant's submission of a Mandatory Referral Questionnaire ("Questionnaire"). The Questionnaire is available on the Planning Department's website and must be submitted through the Planning Department's Development Application Review Tracking System ("DARTS").

Section 4. A: Eligibility for Mandatory Referral

Questionnaires may be submitted by the property owner or any other person or entity having a legal or contractual interest in the property upon which the project is proposed. A Questionnaire may also be submitted by an agent authorized to act on behalf of the property owner or the entity. If the applicant is not the owner of the land, the applicant shall submit a letter signed by the property owner consenting to the submittal of the Questionnaire.

The following items are required with the **s**ubmission of the Questionnaire:

A. A written narrative describing the project including the predominant nature of the work to be performed. For projects on private land, or projects intended to be used by a private entity, a statement of justification explaining why the project is not subject to the County's zoning and subdivision authority.

B. A site plan provided to scale that identifies the property and its location, including property lines and ownership, and the character, grade, and extent of improvements or activity;

C. Relevant cut sheets, if applicable; and

D. Additional information necessary to make an eligibility determination.

Upon receipt of a complete Questionnaire, the Planning Director will determine if the project is eligible for Mandatory Referral and, if so, the applicable level of review. For projects on private land or intended for use by a private entity, the Planning Director shall consult with the Office of General Counsel prior to making a determination.

The Planning Director will notify the applicant of the decision by email. For projects subject to No Further Review, the notice will constitute approval of the project, the final decision of the Director, and the matter will be considered closed. For projects subject to Administrative or Planning Board Review, the notice will provide information on the next steps in the Mandatory Referral process.

Section 4. B: Pre-Application Department Meeting

Upon notification that the project is subject to Administrative or Planning Board Review, the applicant is encouraged to schedule a pre-application meeting with the Planning Department. The pre-application meeting provides an opportunity for the applicant and the Department to discuss the project and proposed submittals prior to the applicant filing its MR Application.

Section 4. C: Pre-Application Outreach and Meetings

Applicants are encouraged to conduct adequate and timely community outreach and meetings with nearby property owners, government agencies, and other stakeholders.

Section 4. D: Mandatory Referral (MR) Application

The MR Application form is available on the Planning Department's website and must be submitted through DARTS. The MR Application form must include the property owner's name and address, and the applicant's name, address, telephone number, and email address. If the property owner or applicant is different from those listed on the Questionnaire, include information in the explanatory narrative explaining why there has been a change. The following Required and Recommended Materials are also a part of the MR Application:

A. Required Materials

1. An explanatory narrative describing the project location, access, surrounding land uses and other existing conditions, proposed uses, scale and size of proposed structures, and other significant features of the proposal including, but not limited to the following:

a. The hours of operation and the types of uses proposed on the subject property;

b. Whether the proposed project is consistent with the County's General Plan, applicable functional master plans such as the Countywide Master Plan of Transportation, any area master plans or sector plans governing the subject property, and other public plans, policies, or programs for the area. Any deviation or lack of consistency should be fully explained;

c. An analysis of the effect of the project on pedestrian and bicyclist access and safety, and the identification of any capital and/or operating modifications, including road reconstruction plans;

d. A description of the potential impacts to public property, if applicable, and an explanation of what efforts have been made to minimize these impacts and what mitigation will be undertaken;

e. For all projects involving buildings or other structures, a statement on whether the proposed project will seek United States Green Building Council Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), or equivalent green building certification. If the project is not going to seek LEED or equivalent certification, provide a LEED scorecard indicating the degree to which the project would be eligible for such certification;

f. Whether proposed roadways and pathways meet applicable State and County standards. If not, identify what waivers are required, and if they have been requested, from every applicable government agency or municipality, and the reasons for requesting waivers;

g. The status of any Historic Area Work Permit applications, if the project would affect County-designated historic resources, sites, or districts. For projects affecting State or federal historic resources, sites, or districts, indicate the status of comments from, or applications pending before, any federal or state agency including the Maryland Historical Trust. If any historical resources, sites, or districts will be impacted, state the proposed measures to be undertaken to limit impacts, and any remedial measures to mitigate the identified impacts;

h. Phasing schedule or plan, if applicable;

i. A description of the manner in which any land intended for common or quasi-public use, but not proposed to be in public ownership, will be held, owned, and maintained in perpetuity for the indicated purposes;

j. Funding sources for the project: county, state, federal, and/or private;

k. List of permits needed from other agencies. (The MR process does not exempt any project from the need to meet the requirements of any other applicable laws);

l. Statement indicating what the applicant has done to inform the public and other government agencies about the proposed project. Include dates of meetings or events at which the applicant shared information, and what, if any, feedback was received, positive or negative.

2. A Site Plan provided to scale identifying the subject property and its location, including property lines and ownership, and the character, grading and extent of improvements or activity. The site plan shall describe the location of all new and existing uses and structures, size of the subject property, existing land uses of the subject and surrounding property, park property lines, proposed limits of disturbance and quantitative assessment of the disturbed area, location and areas of all existing and proposed public and private open spaces, number of existing and proposed parking spaces, calculations of building coverage, the number and type of dwelling units, square footage, height, number of stories of all buildings, and proposed signage. The site plan shall also depict the relationship of the subject property to existing and proposed surrounding development, land uses and zoning, park property, traffic network, public amenities, community facilities, and historic properties (County and National Register).
3. Architectural elevations (if applicable) of all buildings shown in color.

B. Recommended Materials

1. Utilities and Rights-of-Way map reflecting the location of tract boundaries, any utilities or pipelines traversing the site, easements, and rights-of-way. All proposed permanent easements and right-of-way takings on park property must be quantified.
2. Pedestrian and vehicular circulation plan identifying existing roadways, site ingress and egress, sidewalks, trails (including equestrian), bikeways, transit facilities, and all on- and off-site connections to those facilities. Indicate paving widths and the location of any anticipated median breaks. Show existing and proposed signage, all striped crosswalks, and provision of pedestrian push buttons and signal heads. If striped crosswalks are not provided on all legs of a signalized intersection, indicate where and explain why not. Movement barriers need to be identified and include:
    a. Long crossing distances,
    b. Short signal timing,
    c. Medians and islands without ramps or cut-throughs,
    d. Curbs without curb ramps,
    e. Curb ramps without level landings,
    f. Pedestrian-actuated signal devices that are difficult to activate or in hard-to-reach locations, and
    g. Lack of information during pedestrian signal phase.
3. Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) plan approved by the Planning Department.
4. Draft Tree Conservation Plan based upon a correct and complete forest-stand delineation.
5. Topographic map depicting the general physical characteristics of the site or sites with contours at an interval no greater than five feet, and slopes of 15 percent and greater.
6. Stormwater Management Concept plans approved by the County.

7. Landscape plan that shows all improvements as indicated on the site plan, and the exact location and description of all plants and other landscaping materials, including size (at time of planting), spacing, botanical and common names, and planting method. Show existing trees that are proposed to be removed, and protection for those trees that are to remain within the limits of disturbance.
8. Tree Canopy Coverage schedule shown on the landscape plan in accordance with Subtitle 25 of the Prince George's County Code.
9. Lighting plan that provides details and specifications of all lighting fixtures, including pole heights, designs, and locations. A photometric plan should be provided. Full cut-off optics are encouraged.
10. Overall concept development plan if the proposed project or phase is a portion of a larger development plan.
11. Statement that the project will comply with the Prince George's County Code Noise Control Ordinance, Subtitle 19, Division 2 of the Prince George's County Code; and
12. Traffic impact statement or traffic study conducted in substantial accordance with the Department's guidelines, describing the effect, if any, on the local transportation system and the proposed means of addressing any unmitigated impacts on affected facilities.
13. Other information as requested by the Planning Director.

Section 4. E: Application Review and Acceptance

Upon receipt of the MR Application, a project manager ("Project Manager") will be assigned to circulate it to Planning Department staff to determine whether it is complete. Within three business days after receiving the MR Application, the Project Manager shall notify the applicant by email that the MR Application is (i) complete and will be accepted or (ii) is rejected as incomplete. If an MR Application is rejected as incomplete, the Project Manager shall also provide the applicant with an itemized list of the information required for the MR Application to be considered complete.

When an MR Application is rejected as incomplete, an applicant may submit an amendment, and within three business days after receiving the amendment, the Project Manager shall again notify the applicant that the MR Application, as amended, is (i) complete and will be accepted or (ii) is rejected as incomplete with an itemized list of the information still required.

If the MR Application, as amended, is rejected as incomplete, the applicant may submit amendments two more times, and obtain the same review and decision of the Project Manager pursuant to the same time periods. After an applicant has submitted amendments three times without the MR Application being accepted, the applicant may request through DARTS that the Planning Director accept the application. A request to accept the application must be accompanied by a written explanation from the applicant explaining why the applicant is unable to provide the required information through reasonable means.

After determining the application is complete, the Project Manager will prepare and email an acceptance letter to the applicant that includes the acceptance date. For applications subject to Planning Board Review, the letter will also include the Planning Board hearing date, instructions for registering to speak at the hearing, and instructions for providing notice.

Section 4. F: 60-day Mandatory Action Timeframe

The 60-day mandatory action time frame provided under Subtitle 3, Title 20, of the Land Use Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland begins on the date of acceptance. In cases where there are expected to be complex matters, or the project could potentially be modified as it continues through the final design stages before construction, it is recommended that the applicant waive the 60-day time frame so that the applicant and staff have an opportunity to discuss the project in more detail before completing the review. To do so, the applicant should submit a request in DARTS stating they are waiving the 60-day mandatory action time frame.

Section 4. G: Acceptance Processing

Following acceptance of the MR Application, the Project Manager will distribute the MR Application to Planning Department staff and, if necessary, agency partners for substantive review and comment. Staff and agency partners will generally apply the same level of review in their areas of responsibility to an MR Application as they apply to the review of an application for planning, zoning, subdivision, or permit approval. Planning Department staff will review and prepare a written analysis, with or without recommendations for the project, in a memorandum to the Project Manager.

Section 4. H: MR Application Meeting

Following receipt of staff and agency comments, the Project Manager will schedule a meeting (“MR Application meeting) at a time and location (virtual or in person) mutually agreed upon by the Planning Department and the applicant. The MR Application meeting provides an opportunity for the applicant and the Department to discuss the project and review comments. At a minimum, the topics of discussion will include the project’s consistency with planning, zoning, and subdivision requirements, effective outreach methods, the project’s program and design development, the impact on, and potential avoidance of, off-site impacts, concerns in terms of proposed land use, consistency with applicable plans, related project and community issues, and any suggested materials that may aid in Administrative or Planning Board Review.

Section 5: Administrative Review

The Administrative Review process requires the preparation of a staff report, review by the Planning Director, and a final determination on the MR Application.

Section 5. A: Administrative Review Staff Report

The Project Manager will prepare a staff report summarizing staff comments, recommendations received from other government agencies, and the discussions with the applicant at the MR Application meeting. The staff report and any supporting documents are submitted to the Planning Director for the Director’s review.

Section 5. B: Planning Director Review and Final Decision

Based on the contents of the staff report and all supporting documents, the Planning Director will review the application for conformance with applicable provisions in the purpose and intent of the County's zoning and subdivision laws (attached as Appendix A) and approve (with or without conditions) or disapprove the MR application. If necessary, the Planning Director may request additional information from the applicant prior to reaching a decision. The Planning Director will memorialize the decision in a letter emailed to the applicant. If the Director disapproves the application, the letter shall include the reasons for disapproval. The letter will constitute the final decision of the Director, the date of the email will be the date of the final decision, and the matter will be considered closed.

Section 6: Planning Board Review

The Planning Board Review process requires the preparation of a staff report, review by the Planning Board at a noticed public hearing, and a final determination on the Board.

Section 6. A: Planning Board Review Staff Report

The Project Manager will prepare a staff report in consultation with the Office of General Counsel for the Planning Director's review and approval for posting. The staff report shall, at a minimum, summarize staff comments, recommendations received from other government agencies, and the discussions with the applicant at the MR Application meeting. The Planning Director will submit the staff report and any supporting documents to the Planning Board for its review one week prior to the public hearing. A copy of the staff report will also be made available online.

Section 6. B: Notice

Thirty (30) days prior to the date of the hearing, the applicant shall mail written notice of the hearing to the owners of land adjoining, across the street from, or on the same block as the land subject to the application and owners of land within 500 feet of the land subject to the application and email written notice of the hearing to the current Council Member of the District in which the project is located and any civic association that maintains a registration with the Planning Director for informational mailings within the association's defined geographical area.

The notice shall state the time and place of the public hearing, the purpose of the hearing, a summary of the general nature of the proposed project, the application number, and contact information for the Project Manager and the applicant.

Section 6. C: Planning Board Hearing

The Planning Board will conduct the hearing in accordance with its public hearing procedures. At least one person representing the applicant must register to speak and attend the public hearing to discuss the project and answer any questions from the Planning Board. If required by law, the Planning Board will conduct all or a portion of its review in closed session, but the Board may only make a final decision in open session.

Based on the contents of the staff report and all supporting documents, as well as written and oral comments received at the hearing, the Planning Board will review the application for conformance with applicable provisions in the purpose and intent of the County's zoning and subdivision laws (attached as Appendix A), and the SES Guidelines in Appendix B if applicable, and approve (with or without conditions) or disapprove the MR application. The Planning Board's decision will be memorialized in a letter from the Planning Board Chair, which will be emailed to the applicant. If the Board disapproves the application, the letter shall include the reasons for disapproval. The letter will constitute the final decision of the Board, the date of the email will be the date of the final decision, and the matter will be considered closed.

Section 6. D: Appeals

There is no judicial review of Planning Board decisions.

Section 7: Dismissal of Dormant Mandatory Referral Cases

If the Planning Director has not accepted an application within 6 months following the date a notice of Administrative or Planning Board Review has been provided to an applicant, MR Referral will be terminated for the project, and the applicant will be required to file a new MR Questionnaire. Notification will be mailed or emailed to the applicant.

Appendix A:

GENERAL PURPOSES OF ZONING AND SUBDIVISION FOR CONSIDERATION

A. Zoning

1. Protect and promote the health, safety, morals, comfort, convenience, and welfare of the present and future inhabitants of the County;
2. Implement the General Plan, Area Master Plans, Sector Plans, and Functional Master Plans;
3. Promote the conservation, creation, and expansion of communities that will be developed with adequate public facilities and services;
4. Guide the orderly growth and development of the County, while recognizing the needs of agriculture, housing, industry, and business;
5. Support pedestrian-friendly, higher-intensity, mixed-use development in the appropriate locations, including support and emphasis upon a framework for multimodal forms of mobility for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and motorists;
6. Support redevelopment and infill development within established areas of the County;
7. Provide adequate light, air, and privacy;
8. Encourage economic development activities that provide desirable employment and a broad, protected tax base;
9. Ensure a high level of quality development in general, for the benefit of all citizens and residents, throughout the County;
10. Promote the most beneficial relationship between the uses of land and buildings and protect landowners from adverse impacts of adjoining development;
11. Protect the established character of residential communities and neighborhoods;
12. Protect the County from fire, flood, panic, and other dangers;
13. Provide sound, sanitary housing in a suitable and healthy living environment within the economic reach of all County residents;
14. Prevent the overcrowding of land;
15. Protect the rural character of the County in designated, appropriate locations;
16. Ensure the provision of open space to protect scenic beauty and the natural features of the County, as well as provide adequate recreational space;
17. Protect against undue noise, and air and water pollution, and to encourage the preservation of stream valleys, steep slopes, lands of natural beauty, dense forests, scenic vistas, and other similar features; and
18. Protect and conserve the agricultural industry and natural resources.

B. Subdivision

1. Protecting and providing for the public health, safety, and general welfare;
2. Ensuring the orderly, planned, and efficient economic development of the County;

3. Establishing reasonable standards of design and development for the subdivision of land;
4. Establishing reasonable procedures for the review of the subdivision of land;
5. Ensuring that public facilities will be available and will have sufficient capacity to serve the proposed subdivision;
6. Facilitating public and private actions in order to provide adequate and efficient transportation, pedestrian and bikeway facilities, water and sewerage, police, fire and EMS, parks and recreation, school facilities, and other public facilities;
7. Providing the most beneficial relationship between the subdivision of land and the circulation of traffic, having particular regard for pedestrian movements that encourage pedestrian safety and comfort, and pedestrian movements appropriate to the various uses of land and buildings, the avoidance of congestion on the streets and highways, and to provide for the efficient and appropriate locations and widths of streets;
8. Ensuring proper legal descriptions and monuments are placed on subdivided land;
9. Helping County officials in securing adequate records of land title;
10. Providing, where appropriate, for drainage controls, stormwater management, site stabilization, and sediment control;
11. Encouraging the wise use and management of natural resources throughout the County to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the County, and the value of the land;
12. Providing for open space through the efficient design and layout of land;
13. Ensuring appropriate and attractive spatial relationships between lots, parcels, open spaces, transportation networks, environmental lands, and public and private areas;
14. Encouraging creative subdivision design that accomplishes these purposes in an efficient, attractive, and environmentally sensitive manner;
15. Protecting historic resources listed on the Inventory of Historic Resources and Sites; and
16. Protecting archeological sites that are significant to understanding the history of human settlement in the County.

Appendix B: SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEM GUIDELINES

A. Applicability

These Guidelines are designed to provide consistent parameters for the Planning Board to review Solar Energy System (SES) projects that require approval of the PSC. These Guidelines provide a framework for review of SES and analysis of the project's conformance with the County's comprehensive land use plans. The Board invites the PSC and other public agencies to give "due consideration" to these Guidelines and to the Board's specific Mandatory Referral comments for each SES, as required by the Public Utilities Article.

B. Timing of Review

Review in accordance with these guidelines will occur during the Mandatory Referral process.

C. Siting Preferences

Site selection and placement are important considerations for SES projects. The Planning Board strongly discourages locations that result in significant loss of prime agricultural land, affect cultural and natural resources, or impact significant scenic viewsheds. The remainder of these Guidelines set forth the specific standards that the Board will utilize to meet these goals.

D. Location Restrictions

The Planning Board does not support SES in the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area (CBCA) or the Mount Vernon Viewshed Area of Primary Concern. Applicants should refer to the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Act and related laws for requirements of SES projects in the CBCA.

The Planning Board's siting preference hierarchy is as follows, listed from most suitable to least suitable in descending order:

1. Locations on disturbed land such as brownfields, reclaimed surface mines, abandoned rubble fills, and closed landfills.
2. Rooftop Locations.
3. Locations in industrial and commercial zoning districts.
4. Locations in residential zoning districts other than the Reserved Open Space (ROS), Agriculture and Preservation (AG), and Agricultural-Residential (AR) zones.
5. ROS, AG, and AR zoned properties. Proposals in these zoning districts are subject to the following additional guidelines:
    a. The least productive agricultural soils, classified as class IV through VIII (as determined by USDA-NRCS Soil Survey) should be considered first if buildable.
    b. An agrivoltaics design concept as defined in the Public Utilities Article of the Maryland Code should be considered to preserve productive farmland by: continuing crop production underneath high-mounted and well-spaced panels; maintaining and grazing livestock or poultry underneath panels.
    c. If agrivoltaics concepts are determined to be impractical, the Planning Board strongly discourages installing SES on soils with classification of I, II, and III as determined by USDA-NRCS Soil Survey, as these are the most productive soils. If proposed, such projects would be expected to mitigate the loss of productive soils.

E. Woodland Conservation

The Planning Board strongly discourages the clearing of woodlands for the installation of SES. SES projects are required to obtain all approvals required by Subtitle 25 of the County Code. Whenever possible, all reforestation area(s) should be located within the impacted sub-watershed and should be designed to contribute to the maximum extent practical to improving the water quality of the impacted watershed.

F. Setback and Height Restrictions

The siting of SES should comply with all setback and height requirements as detailed in the Public Utilities Article of the Maryland Code.

G. Screening and Buffering

SES should be designed to minimize visibility from roads and neighboring properties. SES should strive to implement applicable landscaping and screening set forth in the Prince George's County Landscape Manual. For purposes of applying the Landscape Manual, SES are considered a Civic, Public, and Institutional use. At a minimum, SES projects should satisfy the screening and buffering requirements mandated in the Public Utilities Article of the Maryland Code.

H. Protection of Rural Character and Scenic and Historic Resource Areas

To the maximum extent practical, SES should be sited behind natural topography, existing vegetation, or supplemental indigenous landscaping to screen the facility from public view. SES facilities should be screened in accordance with the Prince George's County Landscape Manual from all scenic and historic-designated roads, properties within a County-designated Historic District, National Register properties, historic sites and environmental settings. The Planning Board will consider the impact of SES on properties designated as historic.

I. Fencing

Metal fencing (chain link or equivalent), consistent in the manner prescribed in the Public Utilities Article of the Maryland Code, when necessary for security and public safety purposes, may be provided. Fencing should be non-reflective and black to minimize the visibility of the fencing material in the landscape. Fencing over seven feet in height is discouraged.

J. Lighting

If lighting is required, all fixtures should be energy-efficient, motion-sensor, full-optic cutoff, and downward-cast so that light does not spill onto adjacent parcels or the night sky. Floodlights of any type are strongly discouraged.

K. Vegetation Management

To enhance habitat and site pollinator value, an herbaceous cover mix selected from the Natural Resources Conservation Service Conservation Practice Standards for Conservation Cover (Code 327) or an equivalent should be used.

L. Decommissioning and Restoration

The Planning Board supports the PSC's practice of requiring a decommissioning and restoration plan with regular updates over the life of the project.





Prince George's County Department of Planning
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