

The Howard County Citizens Association (HCCA) & The People's Voice (TPV)
2017 – Action Items

Zoning – GOAL for DPZ to be a regulator of development not just a facilitator

1. Evaluation of the 42 zoning types with Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) – streamline/update. Emphasis on defining certain terms such as “substantive”, “compatible”, “surrounding”, and other subjective words to provide clear criteria.
2. Support legislation that affects Agricultural Preservation property to remain as intended and disallow industrial or large commercial uses. Request the amendment of legislation regarding the preservation process to include recovering County funds on farms which convert to commercial revenue uses.
3. Work to hold developers to the same standards, regulations, and laws as everyone else, by disallowing resubmissions at the same process level where errors, misinformation, or unmet criteria are found.
4. Work on improving Zoning Board, Hearing Examiner and Board of Appeals schedules by implementing a finish date for proceedings to diminish continuances and delays. No case should take over two years for a decision.
5. Protect the environment with stronger stormwater management regulations with emphasis on retaining forested areas.
6. Promote County enforcement of Dept. of Natural Resources State recommendations for development with emphasis on tree cover requirements in addition to specimen tree issues.
7. Create a goal for DPZ to prioritize criteria being met in zoning over and above the maximum allowable density, in that a property is not entitled to the maximum density allowed on parcels if other criteria are not met. Eliminate waivers, redlines, variances, acceleration of process, without rare and dire causes that don't harm others. Disallow these when the only goal is to get to maximum density for the parcel. To update the DPZ (PDox), Project Development database to show waivers and redlines – not currently functioning.
8. Revisit Route 1 and Route 40 revitalization plans, updating items required for completion with community input.
9. * Conduct a Comprehensive Review of NT Zoning. Revise the NT Zoning Regulations to provide clear criteria for redevelopment of older residential, commercial, or industrial areas outside of Downtown Columbia and the Village Centers. It is part of the Policies and Implementing Actions (Policy 10.2) in Plan 2030 as adopted on February 4, 2013.

10. * Request a discussion on the implementation of changes to the Rules regarding “Standing” to appeal zoning decisions. Clearly define both the rights of citizens to formally object and the appropriate limitations.
11. * Update the Planning Board (PB) Rules of Procedure last updated in 2007 in particular the “Key PB Functions” table found on page 6. A complete review as to what constitutes a quasi-judicial hearing for the various zoning types needs to be established. Why haven’t the Planning Board, Zoning Board and all Hearing Examiners taken the required training classes in zoning per MD law?
12. * Have a representative from DPZ attend all Pre-submission meetings to answer any questions from the audience pertaining to the process.
13. a) Where the Traffic Report, accompanying a submission for Final Development Plan approval, considers a development's ingress and egress impact on the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance then the site plan showing the building footprint that was used should be added to the list of exhibits required in the Technical Staff Report.
 b) The Technical Staff Report should not simply approve a Traffic Study because a development meets the APFO standards. It should comment on the site ingress and egress location impacts on the adjoining streets and identify the limitations that must be solved in preparing the Site Development Plan submission.
 c) Downtown densities exceed as-built densities. To mitigate the adverse impact of typical inner city densities and attain Columbia objectives of building a better living environment, minimum Setbacks must be adopted for each street type such as Parkways, Boulevards, Avenues and Streets.
14. The development project would be taxed and paid for first by the developer for the expense of increased needs of future infrastructure after development. This is so that the increased demands for appropriate infrastructures after development has been paid for first by developers instead of having to be paid for by the existing taxpayers after the needs for increased infrastructure occurs. This includes such items as Schools, Fire Protection Facilities, Police Facilities and Jails and Larger Court Houses, Utility Distribution Systems, Roads, additional Transportation Facilities (buses, rail, and tractor trailers), Sanitary Sewer Systems, Water Treatment Facilities, Libraries and Internet Communication Facilities, Recreation Facilities, and Solid Waste Disposal Systems.

Government Boards – better responsiveness of officials to their constituents

1. All 42 Boards and Commissions listed on County website needs to have their Minutes current and posted on County website.
2. List on the County website of the Boards to include any public/private partnerships that exist.
3. Make the recommendations of the Historic Preservation Commission and the Design Advisory Panel Regulatory bodies have to be given “great weight” by the deciding bodies that are given them.

4. Update Planning Board Rules of Procedure, require a certain level of attendance, provide education in zoning matters for Members, and provide legal training in conducting quasi-judicial hearings.

Community/Traffic/Schools/Environment/County Website

1. Work with elected officials and new owners of Merriweather Post Pavilion to put sound level requirements back to the levels prior to the 2013 increase, including the main stage and all auxiliary stages to include Symphony Woods regarding the Chrysalis.
2. * Work with our Legislators to effect positive change to BWI Noise levels connected with the FAA NextGen plan to manage air traffic.
3. Support stronger Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance measurements with emphasis on EMS/Fire/Police/Health, less crowded schools, eliminated trailers, and stronger traffic tests to update the Level of Service of roads declared “E” means Failure and that no development shall be allowed until such time roads are improved or funding for improvements is designated. Where is APFO legislation derived from the task force recommendations?
4. ** Work with the Board of Education and Administration to secure land in the Northeast Region of the County as designated by the HCPSS Feasibility study for a new High School. Support new feeder elementary and middle schools there also. Emphasis on using trailers only as a temporary solution.
5. Support blended full spectrum housing in Downtown Columbia. Ensure Affordable Housing in Downtown Columbia finally gets started and is carefully monitored for compliance. Request Howard Hughes to plan for and reserve sites for the civic buildings required in the 2010 Downtown Columbia Plan. In addition, adopt a minimum setback of 40-feet for buildings along Broken Land and Little Patuxent Parkways to retain their broad tree-lined characteristics.
6. ** Work with the County, Howard Hughes and Columbia Association to enforce Industrial area Covenants. Emphasis on Symphony Woods plans and Gatekeeper needs to include Columbia land covenants and overseer of the Village enforcement of the design covenants, its interests should be aligned with sound planning decisions.
7. Work with transportation advocates to ensure the vision for the future of Downtown Columbia transit center becomes reality.
8. * Ensure the protection to existing wetlands in an attempt to protect the Chesapeake Bay.
9. * Increase the number of sidewalks along county roads and streets.
10. * Need better Rt. 1 Policing to keep pace with the development and increased traffic along the corridor.
11. Revisit and update the 2002 requirements for Universal Design to be incorporated by builders in 55+ communities.

12. Have a few citizens evaluate the County Website by working with Staff to make suggestions for improvements regarding navigation and contents. This should include a novice, medium experience and someone very knowledgeable in zoning, policy and both the Administration and County Council process.
13. Have the County Council Website be consistent in establishing a policy regarding posting “Related Documents” to proposed Legislation.
14. If a Bill is presented in its entirety and it is specifically written in "legal language" only, please list a link where someone who can get a more familiar "interpretation of the facts" of the bill in simpler terminology. This is for the majority of citizens that are not lawyers. Example: Sanctuary County Bill CB9 2017. The "summary" of this bill was non-specific, that a citizen could not get all the details from that summary. It was too generic.

Department of Public Works

1. Legislation should be advanced to provide that the Department of Public Works be more transparent by publishing progress studies and other information as it becomes available. Procurement rules should require that the contractor deliver preliminary reports as their work progresses' and publishes them on the website.
2. Look into the feasibility and funding of eliminating overhead wires in downtown Ellicott City.
3. Ensure Bicycle Safety especially in the West to provide separate (bicycle lanes and lay-byes).
4. Consider an educational program for ALL joggers and walkers on rural roads to require the wearing of bright colored clothes or reflective material especially at dusk and during early morning hours. In addition, require running or walking pedestrians to face on-coming traffic. This will become even more meaningful with the advent of electric (silent) vehicles.

* Revision from HCCA Member

** Expanded per HCCA Member