



MEMORANDUM of MEETING

Date: February 13, 2020

Date of Meeting: February 5, 2020

Meeting Location: George Howard Building

Work Order Number: 32022-015

Project: Howard County Complete Streets

Meeting Description: Complete Streets Implementation Team Meeting #2

Participants:

Name	Company	Phone	Email
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Jennifer White	Horizon Foundation	248.345.3030	jwhite@thehorizonfoundation.org

The purpose of the meeting was to provide members of the Howard County Complete Streets Implementation Team (CSIT) an overview of current design process and resources, provide an overview of current public outreach procedures, and solicit feedback on public outreach procedures.

Chris Eatough welcomed all attendees.

Members of the CSIT were provided a copy of the minutes from the January 8 meeting. Because members did not have a chance to review the minutes in advance of the meeting, the approval of the January minutes was deferred to the March 4 CSIT meeting.

Jeff Riegner led the group through the presentation attached to these minutes. The first part of the presentation dealt with an overview of design process and resources. He noted that MDOT State Highway Administration recently adopted the 2018 (7th edition) of the AASHTO "Green Book," and that the existing Howard County Design Manual (Design Manual) is based largely on the 6th edition of the Green Book. External design manuals and resources were also reviewed.

Jennifer White asked how often Howard County intends to utilize specific external design resources, and whether there are other national best practices and standards that should be referenced. Kris Jagarapu noted that currently, typical design guidance is provided by the Design Manual, while work along State highways is dictated by State standards even if located within Howard County. In some instances, portions of the State standard have been copied into the Design Manual. Carl Gutschick noted that if there is an atypical situation, i.e. if a private developer must apply for a waiver, engineers will look to other sources to support their waiver request. Jeff noted that if something is covered by the current Design Manual, the Design Manual is used by staff. If an infrastructure type is not covered by the Design Manual, i.e. certain types of bike infrastructure, then outside resources are used. For example, there is no specific guidance for pathways in the current Design Manual. The goal for the Design Manual Core Team is to incorporate up-to-date external guidance into the Design Manual so that engineers do not need to rely on external guidance.

Jeff then provided an overview of the guiding principles being followed for the update of the Design Manual. After hearing about selecting street typologies based on land use, Christiana commented that since the County does not have a grid system, providing bicycle and pedestrian routes on major streets is often critical.

Jeff then provided an overview of the Federal functional classification system. He noted that arterials provide through movement without access to surrounding properties and function primarily for vehicles, freight, and transit, while local streets primarily function to provide land access. Collectors fall between those two. The County has a Highway Classification System based on the Federal system. Principal arterials are all State roads which do not fall under the purview of the County's Complete Streets policy. Intermediate and minor arterials can be State or County jurisdiction, while the major and minor collectors are primarily County jurisdiction.

Jeff noted that despite this classification system, roads in the same class often function very differently, and as the Design Manual is updated, the goal is to make sure that streets are designed in consideration of their surrounding land use as well as their transportation function. Currently the Design Manual Core Team is looking at six different land use contexts: mixed use, higher-density residential, lower-density residential, commercial, industrial, and rural, plus overlays for special uses. Christiana asked for an example of a high density residential area that is not mixed-use. Kris mentioned Oxford Square and Carl mentioned Howard Square.

Carl noted the Design Manual Core Team might want to consider using the term character instead of density, since density implies number of units per acre. He noted the senior facility along Rogers Avenue which is high density but has a large setback and is relatively suburban in character. He also asked whether office and retail are included under commercial and noted they may need to be split into separate categories.

Jeff noted that draft street typology would be tested against some streets around the County, and that this would be an interactive process informed by feedback from the CSIT and Design Manual Core Team. He noted additional inputs including land use, zoning, and future land use. He emphasized that transportation improvements should be designed to accommodate future land use.



Christiana had a question about intermediate arterials such as Broken Land Parkway or Snowden River Parkway, which are very car focused but also connect neighborhoods together. She noted that based on their classification they may not be roads that would qualify for multi-modal improvements. Jeff replied that providing bicycle and pedestrian crossings of those roadways is critical and noted that any facility along that type of roadway would require a physical separation between people and vehicular traffic. He noted that wider, higher speed streets often require separate facilities, while local streets may have on-road facilities.

Jeff then referred to Prince George's County as a sample street typology. Jeff noted that Prince George's County's Urban Street Types have a maximum design speed of 25 mph but noted that may not be appropriate for Howard County. Christiana asked why that would not be appropriate for Howard County. Jeff noted that one way to avoid conflicts between cars and pedestrians is to make a road either a highway, or a street that handles more uses. Kris noted that the urban street types in Prince George's County likely correspond with more dense areas of Howard County, and that in less dense areas of Prince George's County the design speed may be higher. Jeff noted it is important to balance all needs.

Sam Sidh asked if the street typology work in Prince George's County a complete reclassification of their previous system. Jeff responded that it was an entire overhaul, and although they completed typologies for urban streets, they have been working on the remaining road types for more than two years since then. Sam asked how Prince George's County defined urban areas. Jeff responded that those areas are identified in their General Plan and generally correspond to areas close to the DC border and around Metro stations.

Jeff noted that Downtown Columbia Street Classifications could be considered and built upon.

Jeff showed the street typology/land use matrix and noted that each classification would have different types of trade-offs based on County goals, and that those conflicts would be worked through during the Design Manual update process.

Jeff asked the group if they had any Initial thoughts or questions about the direction the Design Manual is taking. Carl noted that in an urban environment that powered scooters are emerging as a new mode of transportation. Christiana noted that scooters are treated the same as bikes, which are allowed on roads, sidewalks, and pathways except sidewalks Downtown. Jeff noted that he personally uses bike facilities when using a scooter, except when bike facilities are unavailable. Chris responded that most municipalities are encouraging scooter riders to use bicycle facilities. Kris noted it is State law that scooters must follow the same rules as a bicycle. Chris noted that the County does not have scooter companies in operation yet, but they are working on a permit process that is currently moving through County Council. Chris noted that commercial scooter companies, if permitted, would be allowed to operate in Downtown Columbia primarily. Christiana noted that private scooters are allowed currently and that there are no restrictions on their use.

David Ramsay asked whether the Design Manual Core Team was considering dedicated transit lanes, i.e. on Route 1. Jeff responded that Route 1 is a State road so it would be out of the County's purview, but also noted that dedicated transit lanes are predicated upon a high frequency of service; that frequency of service might not exist in Howard County. David asked whether the Design Manual Core Team was considering autonomous vehicles and dedicated trucking lanes. Bruce noted that it may be outside of the scope of the meeting today. Jeff noted that planners do not consider self-driving cars imminent, and that autonomous vehicles are being designed to fit into our current street networks. Kris noted that companies are not relying on local jurisdictions to make a change to their street network to accommodate autonomous vehicles. Jeff observed that the only exception is where cars need to communicate with signal systems. Jeff noted that Columbus is launching self-driving buses in mixed traffic this month.

Jennifer asked for additional clarification on the trade-offs that may need to be made when balancing land use and transportation classifications and inquired how the CSIT makes sure that active transportation priorities are considered during the decision making process as it relates to land use contexts. She asked how active transportation goals are currently included. Jeff responded that the best way to integrate the land use and active transportation is to ensure that future land use is part of any conversation about transportation, i.e. if an area is proposed for mixed-use development, the streets should be designed around mixed-use constraints.

Jennifer asked whether transportation infrastructure is intended to precede private development or be installed after development. Jeff noted that depends on the County's capital funding. The County cannot anticipate whether there will be enough funding to invest in every existing street, but as new developments occur, a more balanced infrastructure will be provided. In some cases, infrastructure may be more affordable, i.e. local streets may be narrower under the updated Design Manual. The CSIT will be exploring trade-offs more extensively during the March CSIT meeting.

Jeff then turned over the presentation to Howard County staff to present on current public outreach procedures. The Office of Transportation (OOT), Department of Public Works (DPW), and Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) each presented.

Chris spoke on behalf of OOT. He noted OOT is an anomaly because they do not have codified procedures dictating their outreach procedures. OOT is a newer entity who does not lead construction (handled by DPW) or oversee development (handled by DPZ). OOT fills gaps including transportation planning, with a focus on bicycle and pedestrian planning. Chris noted the types of projects that include public outreach, the type deployed depending on the magnitude and scope of the project:

- The Annual Bike Howard and Complete Streets open house is required by the Bike Howard Master Plan. The purpose of the open house is to provide the public with updates and collect feedback
- Conducting community meetings for planning projects allows the County to talk to the community at the concept level before any design is complete and ask for feedback.
- Conducting community meetings for smaller bike lane projects, i.e. through restriping during resurfacing, allows for the collection of local feedback. Usually these meetings are held through a HOA or Village Board meeting.
- Conducting an annual meeting/outreach to solicit feedback on priority projects for the annual priority letter to the State.
- Tabling at existing events including health fairs and other community events allows for more people to learn about Bike and Walk Howard.

Chris then provided an overview of outreach formats and noted that OOT often tailors their outreach to the specific group they are approaching. OOT's outreach is generally informal, since little is codified except outreach for Boards and Commissions and annual Bike Howard events. Outreach formats include:

- Posting on the project webpage
- Social media (OOT Facebook and Twitter)
- Email list (Constant Contact)
- Posting on County events calendar and OOT calendar
- County press release
- Boards and Commissions
 - Multimodal Transportation Board
 - Central Maryland Transportation and Mobility Commission
 - Bicycle Advisory Group
 - Transit and Pedestrian Advisory Group
- Outreach to Village Boards of HOAs
- Outreach through Council Members
- Outreach through advocacy groups

Bruce noted that they also conduct online surveys and do wikimapping, which are included on the website.



Tom Butler provided the overview for DPW and noted that DPW outreach is mandated by County Code sec. 18.211. He explained that for something to become a capital project the public petitions the County, so they are involved from the beginning. Any new projects then go through the Planning Board, and all new capital projects also go to the Public Works Board. Both the Planning Board and Public Works Board meetings have a dictated public process that allows for community feedback. DPW conducts public hearings at the preliminary and final design phases, and meeting notice is posted at the site, via mail, and on the County website. Kris noted that DPW puts out press release two weeks before construction begins, and they also distribute the construction schedule to special interest groups, i.e. cyclists.

Jeff asked for a description of what a typical meeting looks like. Tom Auyeung responded that meetings are generally an open-house public workshop format with boards, so that people can interact with staff and ask questions. During the preliminary phase DPW solicits comments for consideration during design.

Tom noted that those who sign in receive written responses from DPW. For example, DPW held a break out meeting with three different work stations for the Snowden River Parkway project so that people could ask questions. During the Transportation Forum with County Executive Ball they included projects so those interested could get information. Attendance at the Transportation Forum was around 70 people.

Chris noted the open house format has been successful because workshops are held over a longer time period giving attendees flexibility. Materials are also posted on the website.

Tom noted that DPW included Chris in outreach plans for the Sanner Road project, since the project included bicycle facilities.

Chad Edmondson shared DPZ's development processes for three categories: site development plans, minor subdivisions, and major subdivisions. [Enlarged copies of these processes are provided at the end of these minutes.] The flow charts for each process show stops in the green boxes, with opportunities for public input highlighted in yellow. The pre-submission community meeting is driven by the developer, who must adhere to County guidelines. The purpose of the meeting is to let adjacent property owners know what is coming. Notification is sent to all adjacent property owners and a sign is posted at the site. Meetings are held at public locations prior to submission of first plan to County. During the meeting the developer shows the community the concept. Developers must take meeting minutes and forward the minutes to all attendees. A copy of the minutes and questions answered by the developer are submitted to the County with the initial submission of any plan. Developers must notify attendees by mail within 7 days of submission to the County. The public is told how to get on a mailing list for the project.

Chad noted that many projects submit both site development plans and subdivision plans and go through the public outreach process multiple times. Major subdivisions consist of five lots or more and require much more extensive documentation than minor subdivisions as illustrated by the flow charts.

Jeff asked the CSIT what aspects of the County's public outreach process is working well now.

David commented from perspective of a public workshop attendee, and noted the County does a nice job explaining projects with charts, maps, and professionals available to answer questions. Generally, the workshops are well organized and orchestrated.

Jennifer shared she has also attended open houses and community meetings and observed that there is a difference between sharing information/informing and soliciting feedback. She acknowledged that there are always opportunities to provide written comment but noted that there are more ways that the County could draw out comments from the public. It is important to consider how information is shared and disseminated to meeting attendees. She asked if there a way to alter the type of content in order to have more activities at the workshop that employ innovative and creative ways to engage people with the design process. Although the professionals attending workshops are experts in their professions, the community members are experts in their community, and there should be space made for those voices. Staff should receive training so that they are prepared to engage the public and receive feedback. She noted she is beginning to pull strategies and engagement techniques being used in other places to inform the work of the CSIT.

Jeff noted the importance of collecting information and gaining feedback especially in the early stages of a project, but once the design is complete workshops tend to function more as tools to present information. Kris responded that the way the public outreach process is codified addresses some of the issues Jennifer identified. He noted most capital projects are generated by requests from the community and the public must support the project to get it funded. He explained the difference between the first and second public meeting and clarified that at the preliminary phase (30% design) the County design is not finalized and there is room to change course in response to public feedback. He noted the preliminary plans are the County's effort to respond to the public with a proposed solution their problem. Sometimes DPW has a third meeting before final design to make sure there is public support for changes made after the preliminary meeting. He noted that once the final design is complete the County may have already acquired right of way or addressed other issues and it is much more difficult to make changes, which is why the second public meeting is more about information sharing instead of collecting input.

Tom noted that a lot of people come out to public meetings and want to discuss things other than the project at hand. The workshop approach works well because it allows people to express their opinions and ask questions. He also noted the County works to make sure that the meeting is held in the community where the project is located, and that they work to make sure people from outside zip codes are not influencing decision making. Chris noted an outside user could still be using the facility daily.

Christiana asked how to measure the effectiveness of public outreach efforts and how to get more people to attend. She noted that she tried to bring her 3 year old and 3 month old to a workshop once and it was a disaster. Chris noted that OOT has been having a coloring table at workshops to accommodate families who attend workshops. Christiana noted that it is important to increase ways to engage even if you cannot attend the meeting. She also observed that even in the workshop format a few people can dominate the process by monopolizing staff members' time.

Tom noted that the County does post workshop boards online so that those who have a conflict can see the information and ask questions via the website to the project manager.

Jeff asked that before the next meeting, members of the CSIT to think about the following questions:

- Who are the usual meeting attendees (groups not individuals)?
- Who does not hear about meetings?
- Who is not comfortable attending meetings whose opinions need to be heard?
- Who physically cannot attend meetings and how else can they provide input?

Larry Schoen asked if it would be worth developing an application like Tell HoCo, or modifying the existing Tell HoCo, to allow users of multi-modal transportation to share gaps or suggestions for improvements in the multimodal network that would aggregate data. It would be also helpful to collect data on how multimodal users currently use the network. He noted that the County has data on transit ridership, but the University of Maryland Center for Advanced Transportation Technology collects probe data about where are people walking and biking currently that the County may be able to use if they partner. A heat map noting usage of the network may identify gaps and guide projects.

David Nitkin provided comments on ways to measure the effectiveness of public outreach. He noted that documenting the availability of points of entry for members of the public would be a good start, i.e. meetings plus other options. He noted that meetings that do not have good attendance may reflect a successful project, or that the County is doing things well, and inversely a well-attended meeting might reflect a particularly contentious project, or the fact that the County was not doing adequate public outreach leading up to the project. Social media is a way to get people exposed to a project, and that even if people do not want to engage with the County they still want to be informed. He noted using tools like Instagram, Twitter, or a pop-up increases project visibility, and often the more visible a project is the less contentious it will be.

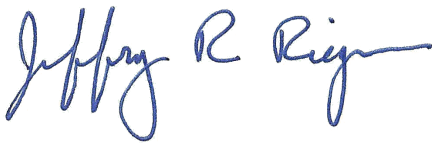
Jennifer shared additional thoughts around the Vulnerable Population Index (VPI). She noted that in addition to being a prioritization tool, the VPI offers a way to identify traditionally underserved populations and target outreach. She asked whether there would be an extra level of care or effort in engaging communities that have higher VPI scores. She noted that engaging with faith-based institutions may be a way to solicit feedback from members of the public who are not otherwise engaged. She asked that the CSIT think about how to work with key institutions, businesses, and HOAs to include them in this process and consider a higher standard of engagement for VPI communities.

Jeff noted that even if an area is not in a priority VPI census tract, the VPI map may highlight demographic trends that may inform an outreach approach.

Chris shared that some communities are setting up viewing hubs to share information about transportation projects. Viewing hubs are being deployed right now to provide more viewing opportunities in large states, but it could also work as a technique to reach other groups, i.e. Spanish language speakers.

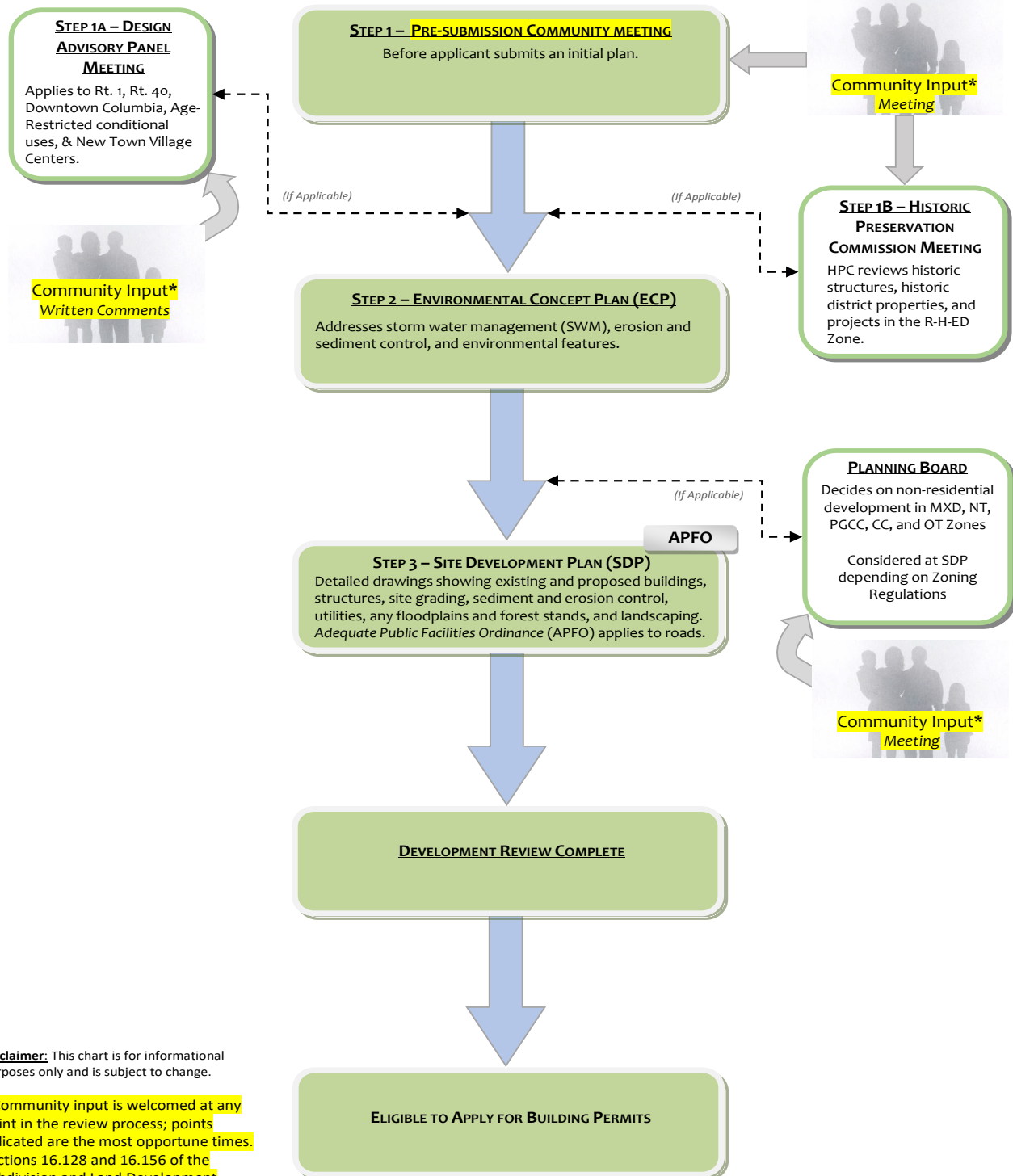
Jeff noted it is important to work with trusted partners in the community. Kris shared that there are projects where the County does a lot of outreach and 2-3 people show up, and there are projects where there is less outreach and hundreds show up. Jeff noted that in theory it is possible to reach every county resident for every project, but that is not a good use of County resources.

Jeff closed by mentioning that the next CSIT meeting is scheduled for March 4, and that he would email a follow up with "homework" questions.



Jeffrey R. Riegner, PE, AICP, PTOE
Vice President

NON-RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PROCESS



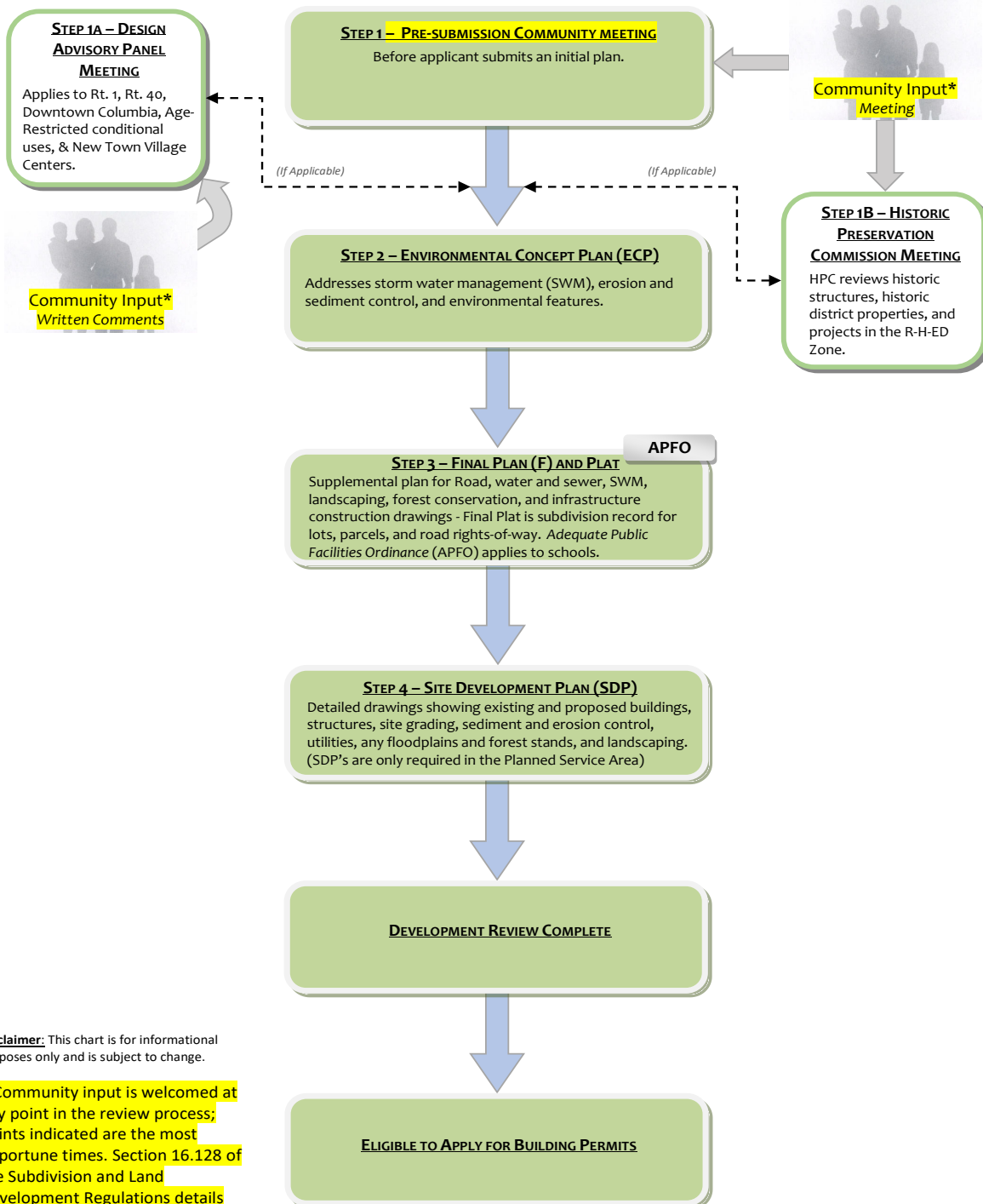
Disclaimer: This chart is for informational purposes only and is subject to change.

* Community input is welcomed at any point in the review process; points indicated are the most opportune times. Sections 16.128 and 16.156 of the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations details pre-submission community meeting requirements.

Updated 3/20/2019



MINOR SUBDIVISION PROCESS (4 LOTS OR LESS)



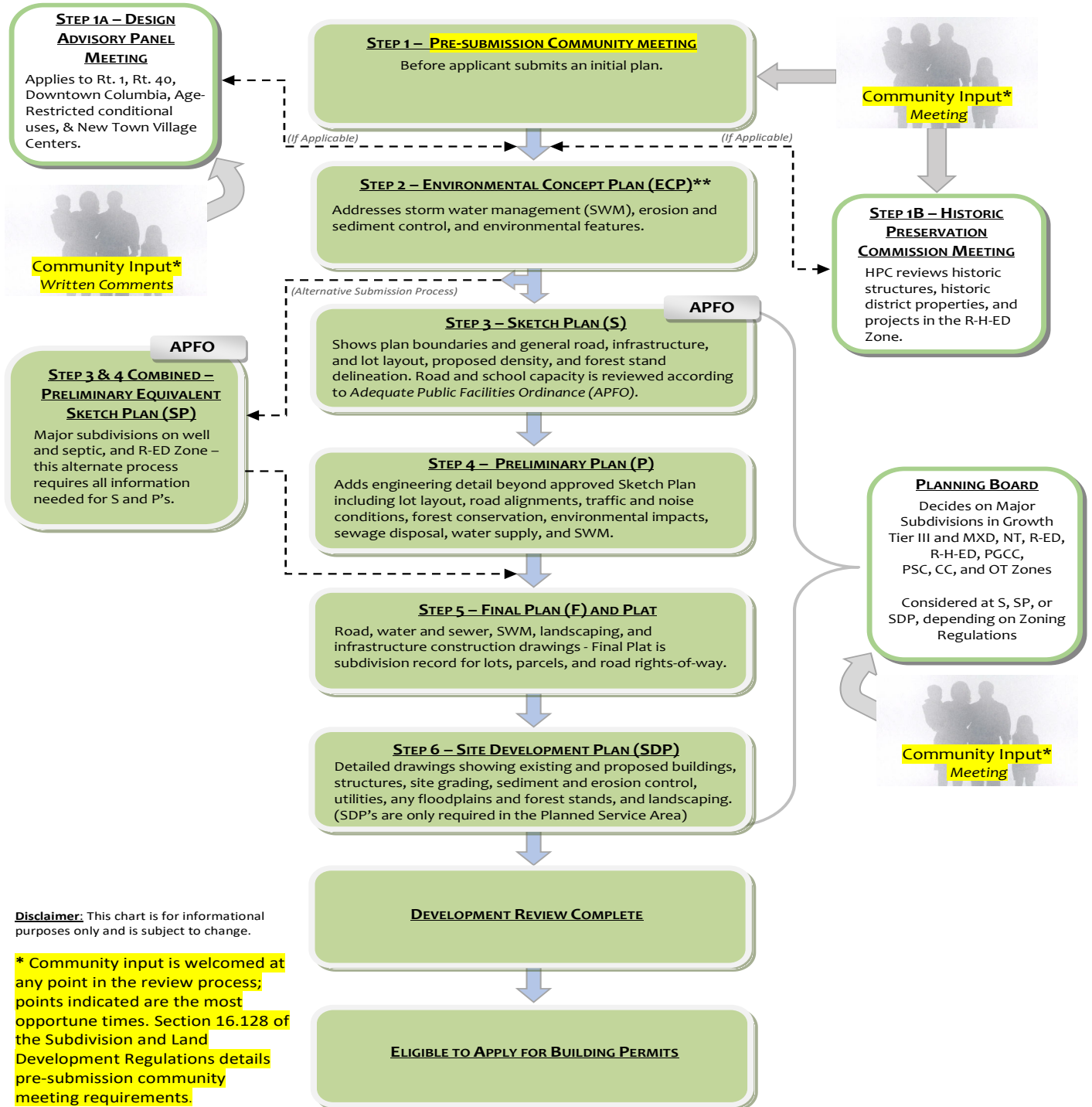
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Updated 3/20/2019



MAJOR SUBDIVISION PROCESS (5 LOTS OR MORE)



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** Environmental Concept Plan (ECP) must be submitted with S or SP and prior to SDP and Resubdivision Final Plans.

Updated 3/20/2019

