



HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING

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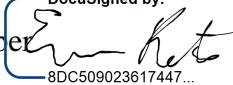
Voice/Relay

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Subject: Planning Board Recommendation for the General Plan Guidelines

To: Deb Jung, Council Chair
 Liz Walsh, Council Vice-Chair
 Christiana Mercer Rigby, Council Member
 Opel Jones, Council Member
 David Yungmann, Council Member

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From: Erica Roberts, Chair, Howard County Planning Board

Date: May 19, 2020

General Plan Background

The current General Plan, PlanHoward 2030, was adopted December 31, 2012, and serves as the comprehensive long-range plan for all of Howard County. It guides decisions related to development, land preservation, changing demographic and employment trends, neighborhood sustainability, capital projects, County services and other key issues. The Plan is the basis for land use decisions made by the Planning Board, County Council, and Zoning Board.

General Plan Guidelines

Title 16, Subtitle 9, Section 16.900(j)(4) of the Howard County Code requires the Planning Board to prepare general guidelines for preparing and/or revising the County's General Plan. The clause states:

(4) General plan guidelines:

- (i) Preparation of guidelines. Within five years from the adoption of this comprehensive rezoning plan, the Planning Board shall prepare general guidelines to be used by the Department of Planning and Zoning in the preparation and/or revision of the general plan.
- (ii) Adoption of guidelines. The County Council shall adopt the guidelines by resolution prior to the formulation of the general plan utilizing these guidelines.

Mr. Matt Noonkester, City Explained, Inc., the County's consultant for the General Plan Update, presented the draft General Plan Guidelines. Mr. Noonkester explained that the Guidelines are focused on establishing a planning process at a very early stage, rather than establishing a specific set of policy objectives. They provide a framework for collecting and organizing information to develop the County's new General Plan. They also emphasize a comprehensive strategy to stakeholder engagement; highlight the value of data and analysis to promote more informed decision making; and encourage strategies that sustain the flow of information to stakeholders throughout the planning process.

The Guidelines were developed based upon examination of: community input from the development regulations assessment; stakeholder interviews; existing Howard County plans and policies; best practices used around the country; and recommendations provided by the Planning Board at a workshop held on April 9, 2020.

Planning Board Recommendations for the General Plan Guidelines

The Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) posted the draft Guidelines on their website on April 23, 2020, two weeks prior to the Planning Board meeting. On May 7, 2020, the draft General Plan Guidelines were presented to the Planning Board. At that meeting, the Planning Board members received public testimony and held a work session following public testimony. A recording of the proceeding is available at <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/Departments/Planning-and-Zoning/Boards-and-Commissions/Planning-Board>.

During the work session, the Planning Board commented that they were pleased with the strategic framework approach, the positive comments from the public during public testimony and the public engagement strategy. The Board recommended that the General Plan include a graphic, or set of graphics, that highlight the roles of the Planning Board and Council in Planning and Zoning processes and where there are opportunities for the public to provide input. One Board member suggested that the General Plan focus on both redevelopment and revitalization and noted some concerns with the tagline “Every Voice, One Vision”. Several Board members emphasized the need to educate the public about growth and development.

Based on the information presented, and the Board’s discussion, Mr. McAliley made a motion that the Board recommend the County Council approve the General Plan Guidelines as presented at the May 7, 2020 Planning Board Meeting. Mr. Engelke seconded the motion, which passed 5-0.