

MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION  
Prince George's County Planning Department

# PLANNING 101

## Session 2

Prince George's County  
Neighborhood Planning Academy

March 11, 2026

# SESSION 1

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# REFLECTION



# AGENDA

● Introductions

● Activity

● Lecture

- What is Planning?
- Tradeoffs
- Managing Expectations
- What is Zoning

● Post-Session Homework



# PLANNING DEPARTMENT

## Office of the Planning Director

Human Resources —●— Finance

### Community Planning Division

- Long Range Planning
- Master Plans and Studies
- Neighborhood Revitalization
- Placemaking

### Countywide Planning Division

- Environmental Planning
- Historic Preservation
- Transportation Planning
- Special Projects

### Development Review Division

- Urban Design Review
- Subdivision Review
- Zoning Review

### Intake Regulatory Review Division

- Applications
- Permit Review
- Planning Information Services

### Information Management Division

- Data Resources
- Data Systems
- Geographic Information Services
- Network Support
- Research

### Management Services Division

- Facilities Management
- Office Services
- Publications and Graphics
- Visual Media Services
- Web Development

# INTRODUCTIONS

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# PRESENTERS/GUEST SPEAKER



**Scott Rowe, AICP, CNU-A**  
Master Planner  
Community Planning Division  
[brandon.rowe@ppd.mncppc.org](mailto:brandon.rowe@ppd.mncppc.org)

# ACTIVITY



Breakout into groups of five;  
select a recorder/reporter



**First five minutes:** Each person  
gets 60 seconds to discuss  
their top words for an ideal  
community



**Next five minutes:** Your  
group must collaboratively  
pick top three words



Meet back as full group and  
share the group's collective  
vision

# LECTURE

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# WHAT IS --- PLANNING?

# PLANNING IS FUN!!!



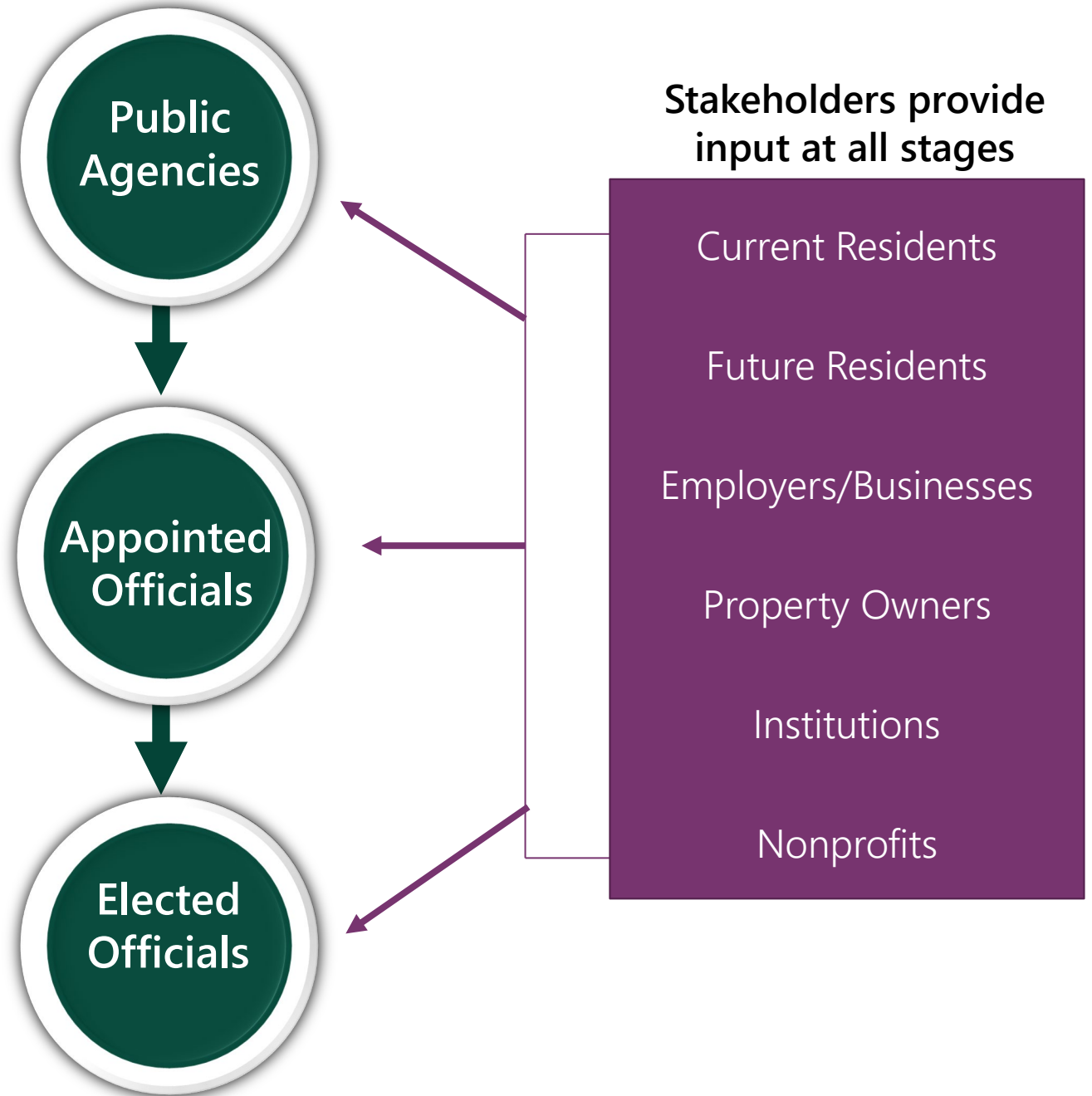
# PLANNING IS...

## A public process to:

- Envision the future of a neighborhood, community, or broader area.
- Identify policies and strategies to manage change
- Capitalize on opportunities
- Address challenges



# WHO PLANS?





# PLANNING..

- Is fact-based
- Seeks consensus among competing goals
- Balances immediate and long-term goals
- Is often long-term (20-25 years)
- Aims for success



# WHY PLAN?

- Take ownership of our future
- Identify a blueprint for achieving the vision
- Identify key investments, capital improvement projects, and programs
- Build relationships for success

# WHAT DO PLANNERS DO?

Planners are educated and trained to:

- Convene and facilitate discussions
- Monitor, evaluate, and anticipate market, scientific, demographic, and sociological trends
- Evaluate differing viewpoints and arrive at consensus approaches that lead to success
- Translate a community's vision into policy and action language



# WHAT PLANNING CAN DO & CAN NOT DO



## CAN DO

- Recommend what types of land uses should go where
- Identify where public facilities should be constructed
- Identify what types of streets should be built in which locations



## CAN NOT DO

- Mandate or force outcomes
- Stop development
- Supersede County, state, and federal law
- Dictate how a private property shall develop

# HOW DO YOU MAKE A PLAN?



# TRADE OFFS

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# PLANNING GREAT SPACES



# RECOGNIZING TRADE OFFS

Meeting the desires/  
needs of current residents



Meeting the desires/  
needs of future residents

Shopping/Dining



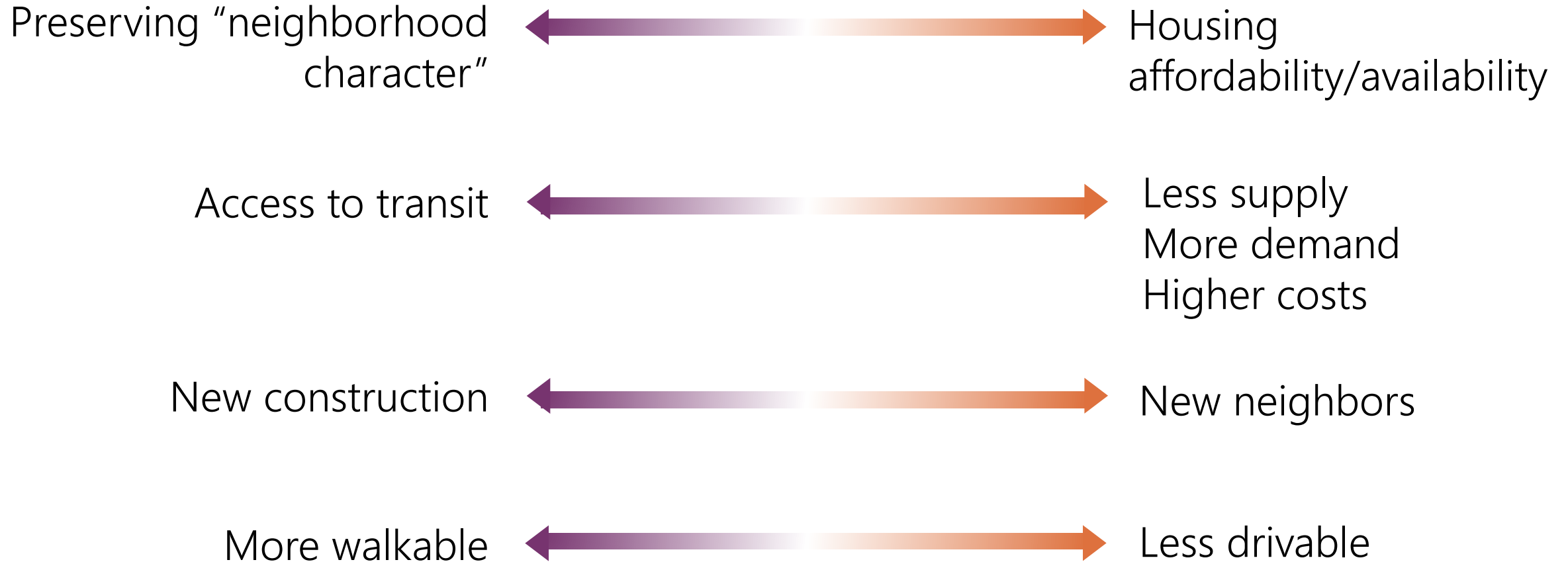
Traffic congestion

Living in a single-family  
detached house

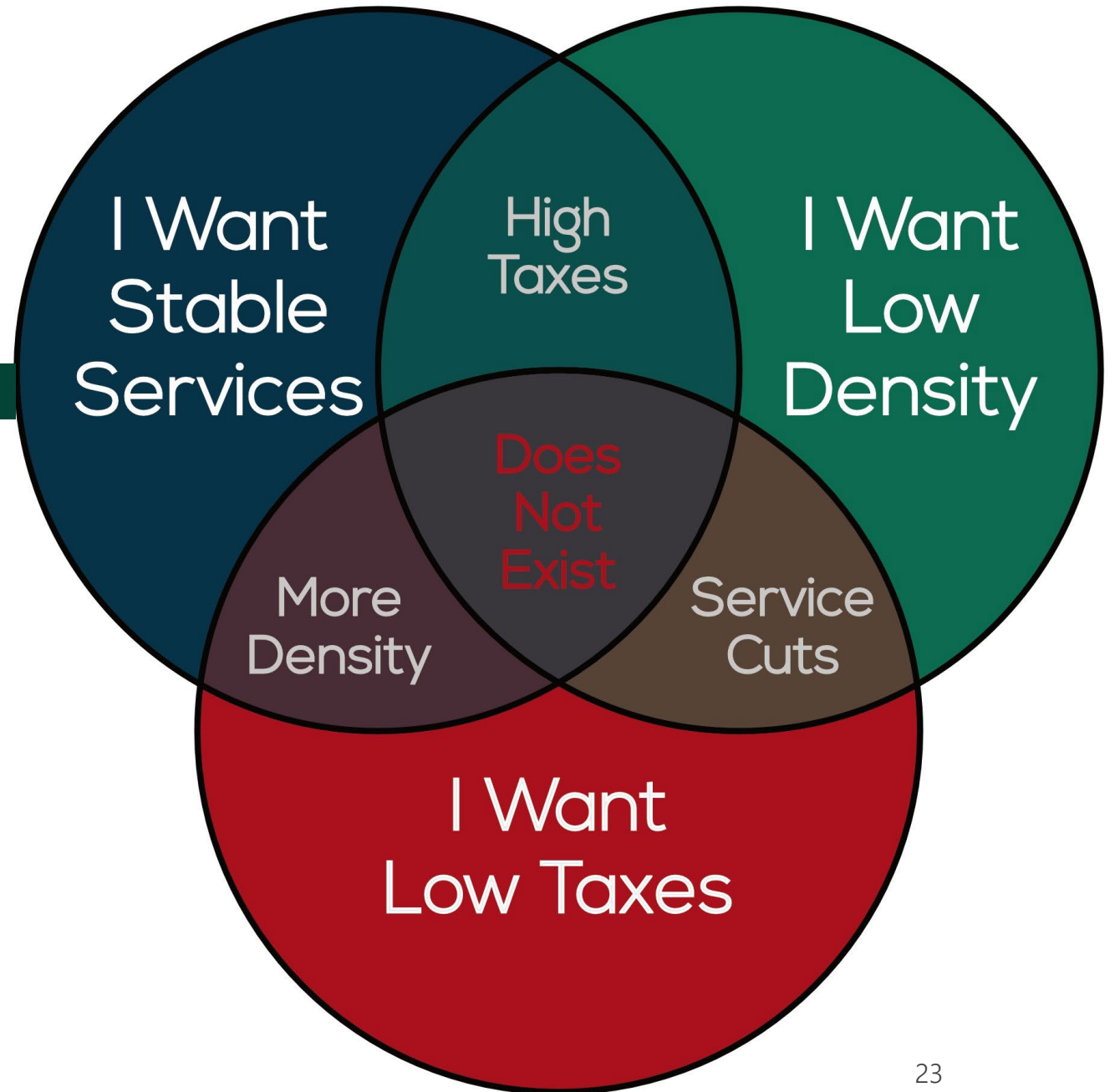


Longer commute  
Higher taxes  
More schoolchildren  
More traffic  
Less healthy

# RECOGNIZING TRADE OFFS



# RECOGNIZING TRADE OFFS



# MANAGING --- EXPECTATIONS



# PLANNING IS..

Managing expectations

- Plans may take decades to become reality
- Economic conditions do not change overnight
- Infrastructure investments take time and money
- What is important to you may not be important to future generations.
- Plans must be realistic and achievable

# QUESTIONS?

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# WHAT IS ZONING?



# WHAT IS ZONING?

The law that determines:

● WHAT can be built

● WHERE we can build it

● HOW it is built

# HOW DOES ZONING WORK?



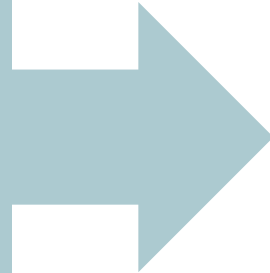
Zoning Ordinance sets the rules



Zoning Map shows where the rules apply

# WHAT DOES ZONING REGULATE?

- Uses
- Buildings
- Landscape
- Streetscape
- Infrastructure



Size



Density and bulk



Location on a property



Design



Procedures for approval

# WHAT ZONING CAN DO & CAN NOT DO



## CAN DO

- Tell you what you can do with your property
- Permit or prohibit certain types of uses in certain places.



## CAN NOT DO

- Allow the public or elected officials to stop legal development they do not want or like
- Apply retroactive regulations
- Undo or erase previously-legal development

# WHAT ZONING CAN DO & CAN NOT DO



## CAN DO

- Determine the number of housing units or the amount of nonresidential development that can occur on a particular property.
- Mitigate impacts of incompatible uses



## CAN NOT DO

- Prevent specific brands of businesses
- Force specific businesses to move to a community
- Limit the number of cars in a neighborhood.
- Stop ugly architecture.

# KEY ZONING CONCEPTS

TERM	APPLICABILITY
Property rights	If your proposed use is permitted by the Zoning Ordinance, the government cannot prevent you from developing that use, even if your neighbors don't want it or like it. No zoning rule can prohibit all economic use of a land, or require its preservation as open space (without owner consent and/or just compensation)
Rational nexus	The government can only require a developer to construct public improvements to address or mitigate the impact of <b>their</b> development on the public.
Special exception	A special exception <b>is not</b> an "exception" to the zoning rules. It is a permitted use that requires additional conditions be met to further protect the public health, safety, and welfare.
By-Right Development	These are uses that are permitted without conditions. In almost every jurisdiction in the United States (but not in Prince George's County) these uses are entitled by issuance of a permit by staff.

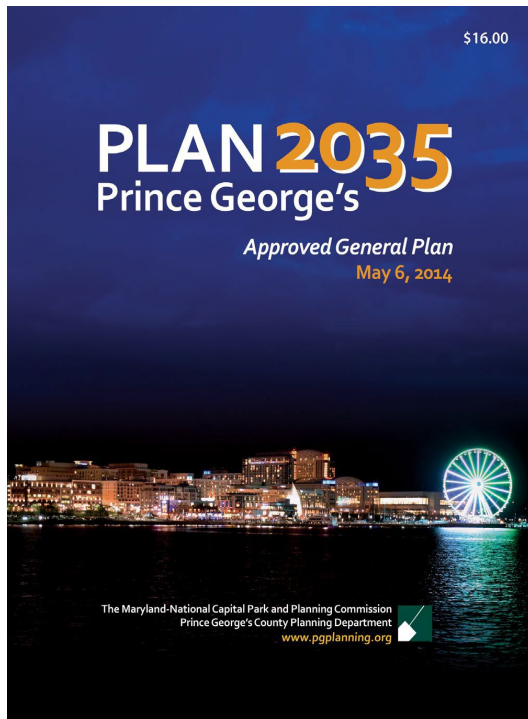
# PLANNING

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## IN PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY



# GENERAL PLAN



## GENERAL PLAN

Plan Prince George's 2035 (Plan 2035) provides long-range guidance for the future growth of the County. It covers the entire County.



## MASTER PLAN

Guides the way an area should be developed. Master Plans amend the General Plan for a specific area within the County.

# PREVIOUS GENERAL PLANS



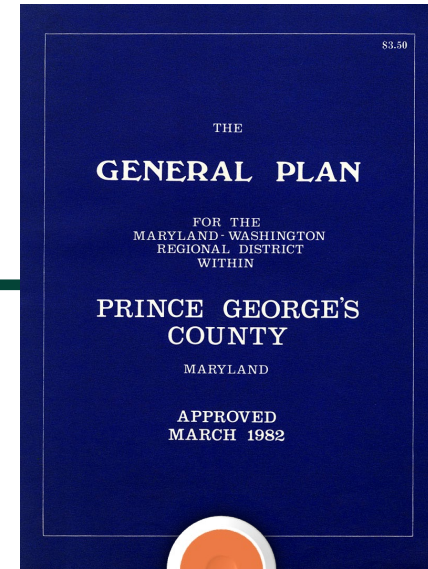
**1957**

Looking Ahead



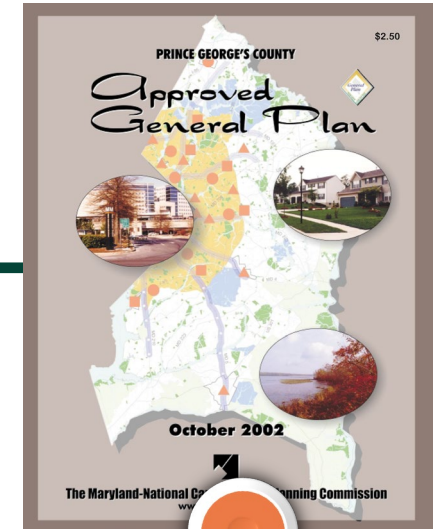
**1964**

...On Wedges and Corridors



**1982**

General Plan



**2002**

Approved General Plan

\$16.00

# PLAN 2035

Prince George's

*Approved General Plan*  
May 6, 2014



## GENERAL PLAN

- Guiding land use document for Prince George's County
- Establishes development and capital improvement goals through 2035
- Provides policy recommendations and strategies
- Targets growth to
  - 3 Downtowns
  - 5 other Regional Transit Districts
  - 26 Local Centers



The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
Prince George's County Planning Department  
[www.pgplanning.org](http://www.pgplanning.org)



# GROWTH POLICY MAP



## REGIONAL TRANSIT DISTRICTS

- BA - Branch Avenue Metro
- CP - College Park/UM Metro/M Square Purple Line
- G - Greenbelt Metro
- LTC - Largo Town Center Metro
- NC - New Carrollton Metro
- NH - National Harbor
- PGP - Prince George's Plaza Metro
- S - Suitland Metro

Blue Line

Green Line

Orange Line

Purple Line

Plan 2035 Growth Boundary

Employment Areas

Future Water and Sewer Service Areas

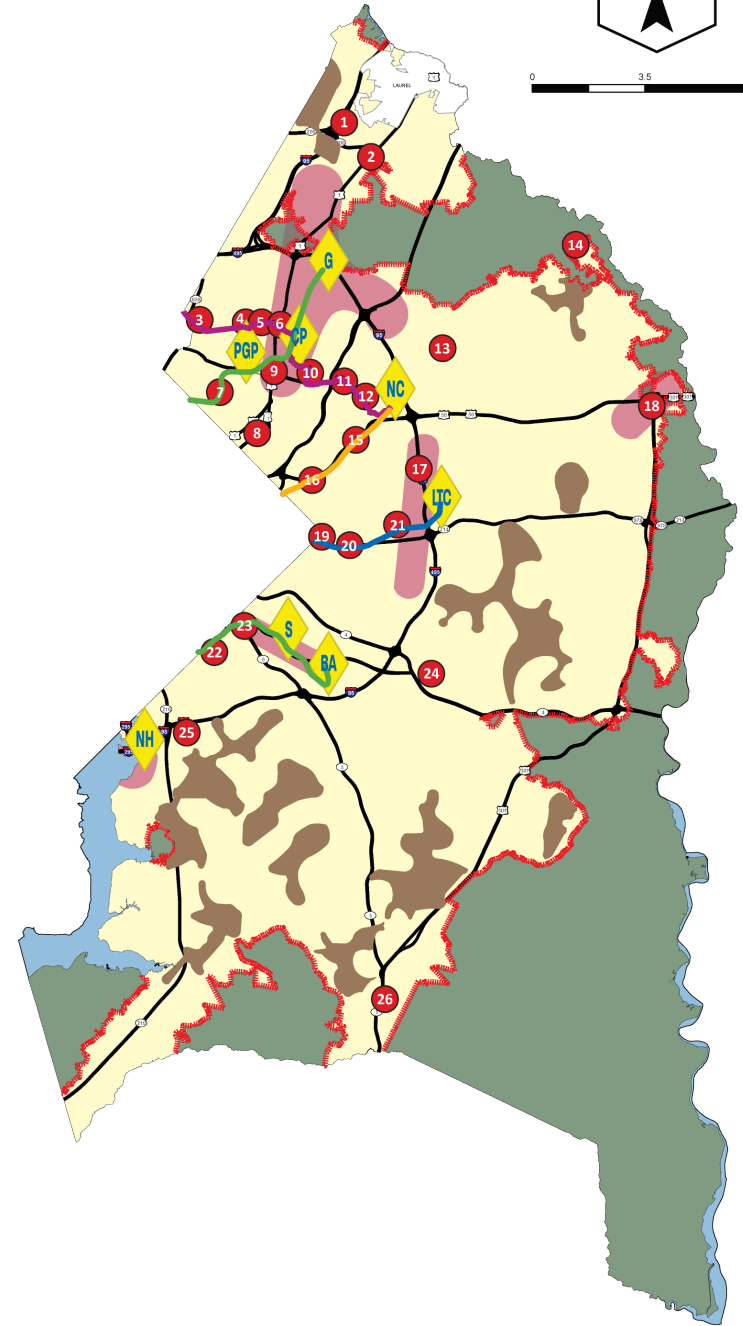
Established Communities

Rural and Agricultural Areas

## LOCAL CENTERS

1. Konterra
2. Muirkirk MARC
3. Takoma/Langley Crossroads
4. UMD West\*
5. UMD Center\*
6. UMD East \*
7. West Hyattsville
8. Port Towns
9. Riverdale MARC
10. Riverdale Park\*
11. Beacon Heights\*
12. Annapolis Road/Glenridge\*
13. Seabrook MARC
14. Bowie MARC
15. Landover Metro
16. Cheverly Metro
17. Landover Gateway
18. Bowie
19. Capitol Heights
20. Addison Road
21. Morgan Boulevard
22. Southern Avenue Metro
23. Naylor Road Metro
24. Westphalia
25. Oxon Hill
26. Brandywine

\*Future Purple Line Centers



# PLAN ELEMENTS



Land Use



Housing and  
Neighborhoods



Economic  
Prosperity



Community Heritage,  
Culture, and Design



Transportation  
and Mobility



Healthy  
Communities



Natural  
Environment



Public  
Facilities

# TYPES OF PLANS



Comprehensive Plan

1

Countywide



Functional Master Plans

8

Countywide



Area Master Plans

38

Specific areas

# FUNCTIONAL MASTER PLANS

PLAN	YEAR
Public School Sites	1983
Anacostia Trails Heritage Area Management Plan	2001
Public Safety Facilities	2008
Transportation	2009
Historic Sites and Districts	2010
Water Resources	2010
Parks, Recreation and Open Space (Formula 2040)	2013
Resource Conservation	2017

# AREA MASTER PLANS



Reflect the County's vision for a defined area

Contain the County's growth policies for that area

Make recommendations for development of land

Make recommendations for public investments

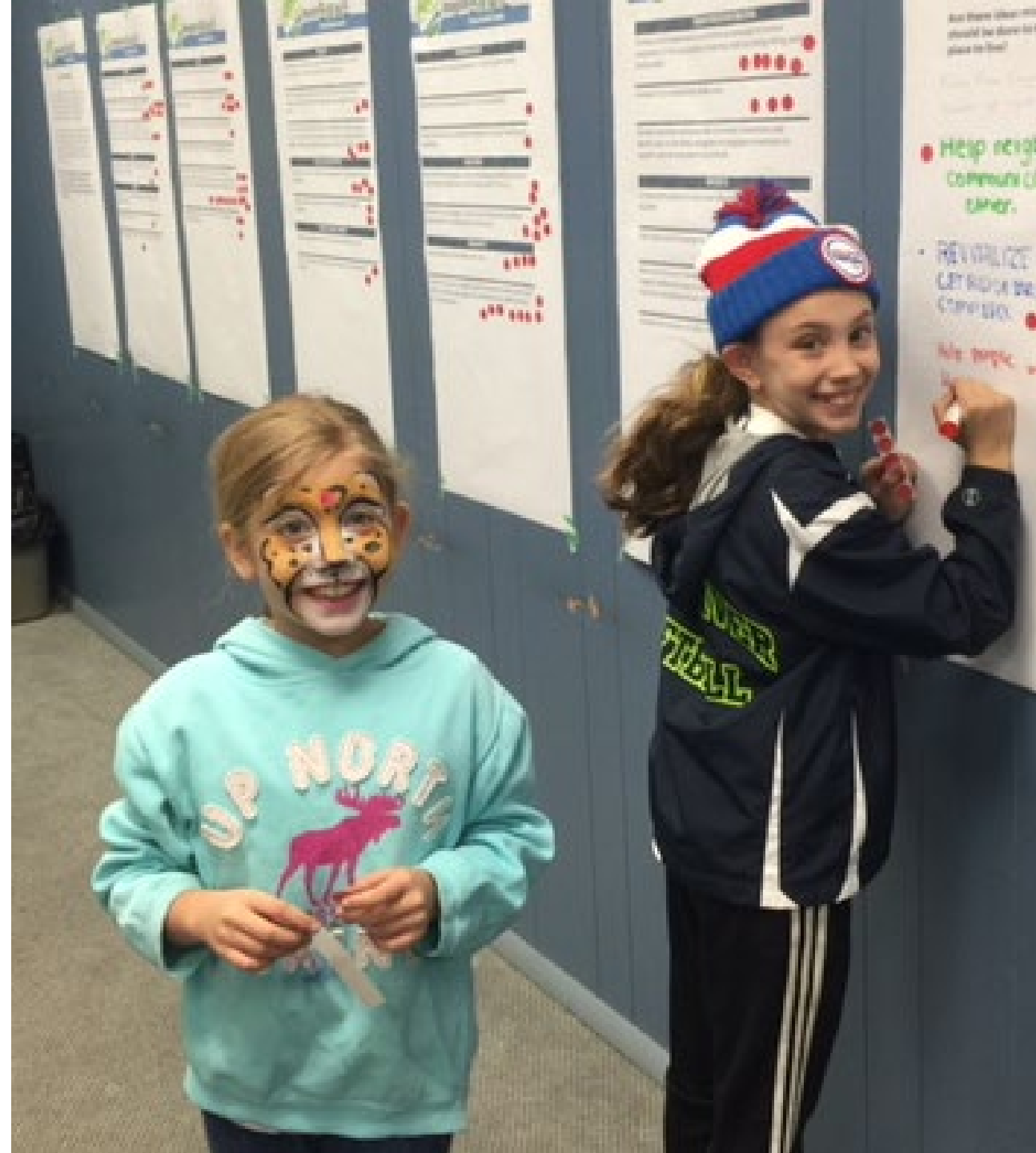
Identify a clear path to achieve the County's economic development and preservation goals

# COMPREHENSIVE AREA MASTER PLANS

Plan Type	Definition	Active Plans
Master Plan	When approved, covered one of the County's 36 legally-defined Planning Areas	4
	When approved, covered multiple Planning Areas within a Subregion	4
	When approved, covered an entire Subregion	3
Sector Plan	Covers a portion of one or more Planning Areas	23
Transit District Development Plan	Covers an area that, prior to April 1, 2022, was classified in the Transit District Overlay Zone	4

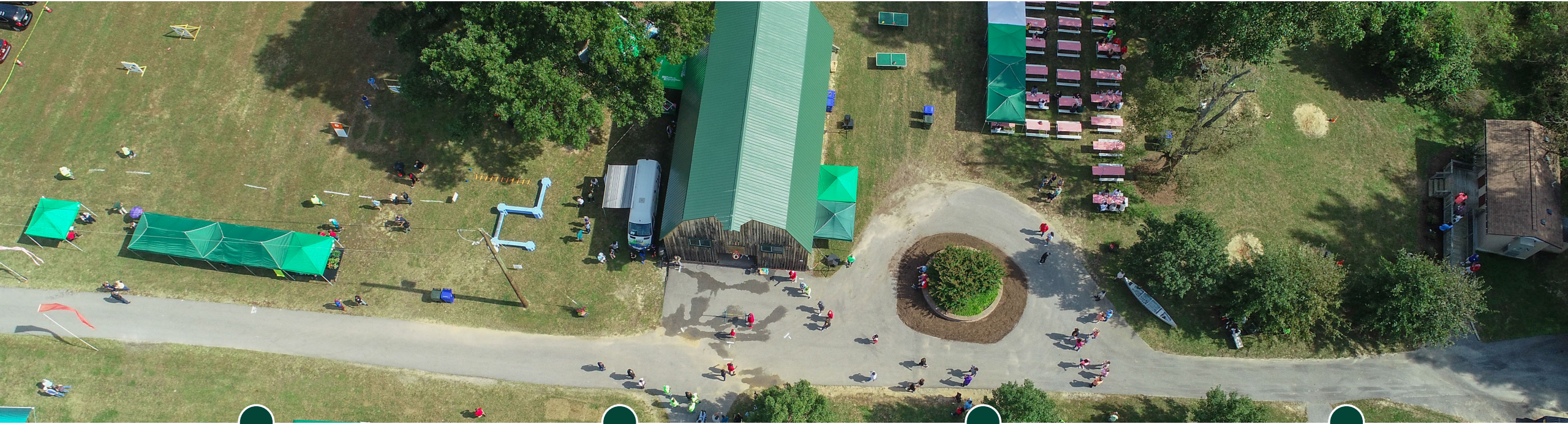
# WHAT IS THE PROCESS?

- Council initiates
- Planning Department conducts:
  - Outreach
  - Data and field analysis
  - Stakeholder engagement
  - Coordination
  - Comment
  - Writing the plan
- Planning Board adopts
- Council approves



# YOUR ROLE IN --- PLANNING

# HOW CAN WE MAKE THE PLAN A REALITY?



Keep up-to-date  
on the plan's  
progress

Follow up with  
elected officials

Organize  
community

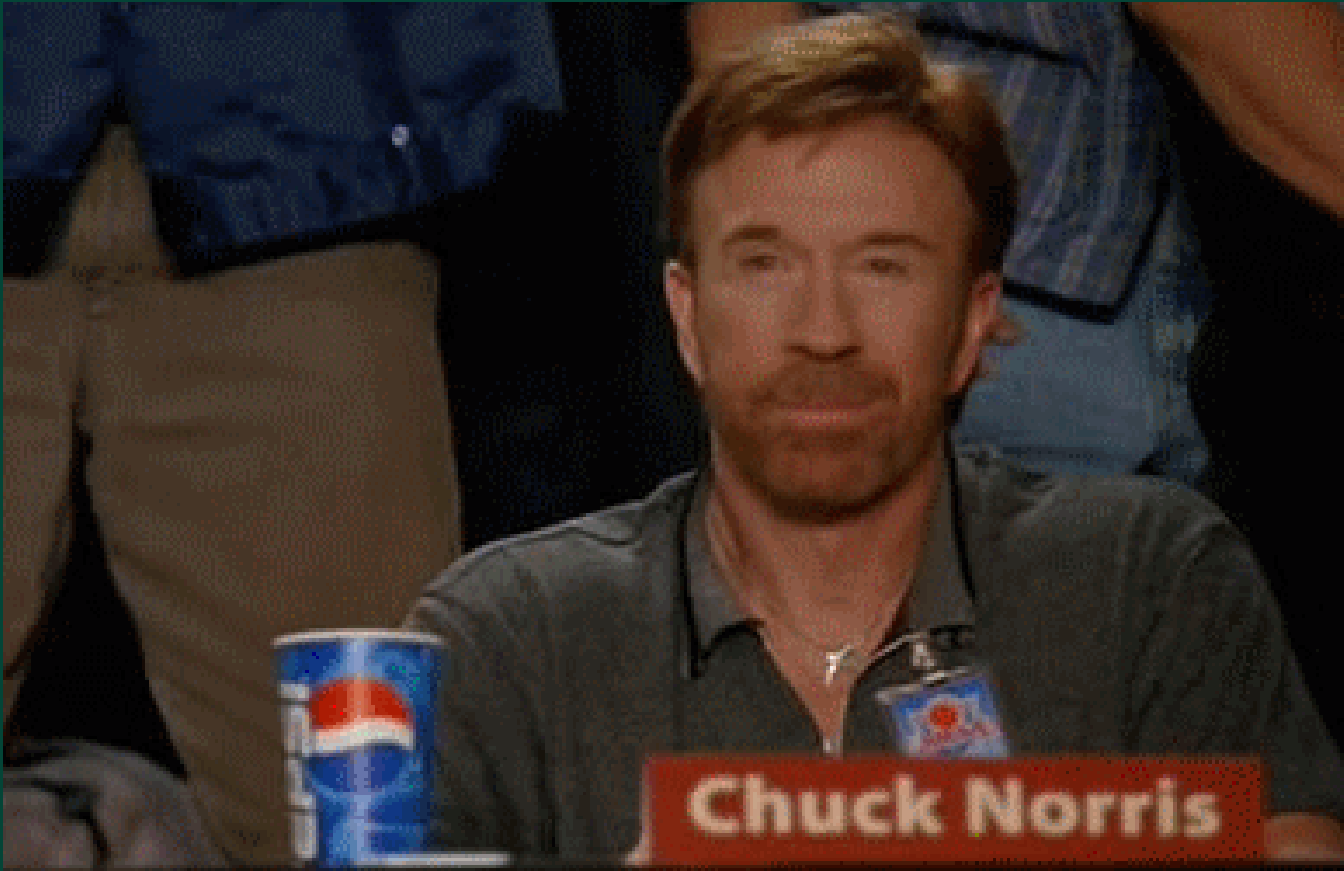
Engage with  
the Planning  
Department

# HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

- Attend meetings
- Online notification
  - Mailing lists
  - Social media
  - PGAtlas notification
- Contact elected representatives
- Submit comments
- Share information!



# GET INVOLVED



Things you can do at **any time** to be a part of the process:

- Citizen Registry at [pgplan.org/record](https://pgplan.org/record)
- Civic Association Registration at [pgplan.org/association](https://pgplan.org/association)
- Weekly Development Activity Notification at [notify.pgatlas.com](https://notify.pgatlas.com)
- Join our email lists at [pgplan.org/email](https://pgplan.org/email)
- Contact DPIE at: 301.636.2000
- Follow us on social media @PGPlanningMD



# SPEAK AT A MEETING



## **Planning Board**

• Virtually - Register to speak by **noon** Tuesday before the weekly Thursday meeting at [pgplan.org/speak](https://pgplan.org/speak) Join us at Largo Headquarters the day of the meeting.

## **Joint Public Hearing**

Register to speak by 3 p.m. the day prior to the meeting at [pgccouncil.us/Speak](https://pgccouncil.us/Speak)

## **SDRC Meetings**

Virtual, every other Friday at 9:30 a.m. Meetings are open to the public, but not for public comment. Please contact staff directly with comments/questions. Attend the meeting at [pgplan.org/sdrc](https://pgplan.org/sdrc)

# QUESTIONS AND --- DISCUSSION

# HOMework

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# HOMWORK ASSIGNMENT

- Learn how to navigate a Prince George's County Planning Board Meeting
- View an archived Planning Board meeting recording
- While viewing the meeting, complete the homework assignment on page 50

# PROJECT MILESTONES



- **Week 1:** Pick an issue, challenge, or concern (topic) in your community.
- **Week 2:** Research and analyze Plan 2035, Master or Sector Plan.
- **Week 3:** Consider how, when, and who you might engage to implement a solution.
- **Week 4:** Consider possible solutions, tradeoffs, and other perspectives.
- **Week 5:** Complete a rough draft of the project.
- **Week 6:** Finalize presentation and email project to [PGCNPA@ppd.mncppc.org](mailto:PGCNPA@ppd.mncppc.org)



# Spring 2026 webpage

- [academy.pgplanning.com/spring2026](https://academy.pgplanning.com/spring2026)
- Password: NPAspring2026
- Email us at [PGNPA@ppd.mncppc.org](mailto:PGNPA@ppd.mncppc.org)

# END OF SESSION

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If you need assistance before our next meeting,  
email us at [PGCNPA@ppd.mncppc.org](mailto:PGCNPA@ppd.mncppc.org)