

ORDINANCE NO. ORD-2012- 38

AN ORDINANCE TO ENACT THE ADDRESSING ORDINANCE FOR  
WASHINGTON COUNTY, MARYLAND

**Recitals**

Washington County, Maryland (the *County*) has the authority to adopt an addressing ordinance (*Ordinance*) pursuant to the Land Use Article, Annotated Code of Maryland.

The purpose of this Ordinance is to provide a reliable and consistent system of assigning unique addresses to habitable structures, commercial and industrial structures, communication towers, and certain public utilities within the County, thus eliminating the confusion and potential hazards to the public health, safety, and welfare which might otherwise exist.

Public hearings were held on July 31, 2012 and December 18, 2012, following due notice and advertisement of a fair summary of the text of the Ordinance, and copies were made available to the public upon request.

Public comment was received, reviewed, and considered concerning the draft of the Ordinance.

The Board believes it to be in the best interests of the citizens of the County for the Board to adopt the attached Ordinance.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED** by the Board of County Commissioners of Washington County, Maryland, that the attached ordinance entitled "Addressing Ordinance for Washington County, Maryland," is hereby adopted.

Adopted and effective this 18<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2012.

ATTEST:

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
OF WASHINGTON COUNTY, MARYLAND

Vicki C. Lumm  
Vicki C. Lumm, Clerk

Terry L. Baker  
Terry L. Baker, President

Approved as to form  
and legal sufficiency:

Kirk C. Downey  
Kirk C. Downey  
Deputy County Attorney

Mail to:  
County Attorney's Office  
100 W. Washington Street, Room 202  
Hagerstown, MD 21740-4735

I:\Documents\Planning\Addressing Ordinance\ORD\Adopting ordinance.doc

**ADDRESSING ORDINANCE FOR  
WASHINGTON COUNTY, MARYLAND**

**ADOPTED AND EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 18, 2012**

**ADDRESSING ORDINANCE  
FOR WASHINGTON COUNTY, MARYLAND**

**Article 1. Authority and Purpose**

**1.1. Authority.** These regulations are based on the statutory authority contained in the Land Use Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

**1.2. Purpose.** The purpose of this Ordinance is to provide a reliable and consistent system of assigning unique addresses to habitable structures, commercial and industrial structures, communication towers, and certain public utilities within Washington County (*County*), and to promote the public health, safety, and welfare in the following ways.

- A. By improving the response time of law enforcement, fire, ambulance, and other emergency services;
- B. By maintaining a standardized numbering system for assigning addresses;
- C. By creating a standardization for road naming;
- D. By providing a set of standards for displaying the addresses of a property or structure;
- E. By establishing a process for rectifying pre-existing addressing errors;
- F. By preventing and resolving duplication of addresses and road names, confusing or misleading addresses and road names, and multiple addresses for a single location;
- G. By improving the delivery of public services such as, but not limited to, building inspections, road maintenance and repair, soil

evaluations, utility service, health inspections, property tax administration, parcel mapping, school redistricting, bus routing, and various other public services; and

H. By providing a basis for various County departments to coordinate via Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping capabilities.

**1.3. Municipalities.** This Ordinance is not binding on any incorporated city or town, unless said city or town shall adopt its provisions by resolution or otherwise, whereby said city or town will fully comply with this ordinance.

**1.4. Authoritative Body.** This Ordinance will be enforced by the Director of the Department of Planning and Zoning (*Department*) or the Director's duly-authorized agent, in order to assign or correct addressable structure numbers and assign, approve, or change road names, as required herein and in coordination with the Division of Emergency Services.

## **Article 2. Definitions**

**2.1. Definitions.** The following words and phrases when used in this ordinance shall have the meaning ascribed to them in this section unless the context clearly indicates a different meaning.

### **2.2. Words and Phrases.**

A. Access – A means of ingress and egress from a building or the entrance to a parcel of land.

B. Address – The combination of structure number and road name.

C. Addressable Structure – Any permanent building used for human habitation or gathering or any commercial or industrial

structure, communication tower, or public utility structures concentrated at a single site.

D. E911 – Refers to the Washington County Division of Emergency Services, Department of Emergency Communications.

E. Map – The official digital address map that is used by E911 and maintained by the Department.

F. Owner – Any person, firm, entity, partnership, trust, corporation, association, or other organization that owns the fee simple title to, or has an undivided interest in, any real property.

G. Private Road – Any road that has not been dedicated to the County and is still privately owned.

H. Public Road – Any road that is maintained by the Board of County Commissioners of Washington County, Maryland or the State of Maryland, with taxpayer funds.

I. Road – Any public or private path for vehicular traffic that has been named for E911 purposes.

J. Road List – The list of reserved and approved road names maintained by the Department.

### **Article 3. Naming and Renaming of Roads**

**3.1. Road Naming.** All road names are subject to the approval of the Department with input from E911.

A. All new road names in the County will not duplicate or sound like an existing road name in the county and will be easy to pronounce and spell.

B. All road names will not duplicate, or be similar in pronunciation to the name of any recorded or proposed subdivision, unless said road is within the bounds of the subdivision.

C. Certain words are expressly prohibited for use as road names in the County due to their overabundant use in existing road names. The list of prohibited words will be maintained by the Department and will be made available upon request.

D. The following are expressly prohibited in road names:

1. Initials;
2. Suffixes as a primary road name;
3. Names with less than 3 characters; and
4. Special characters such as, but not limited, to hyphens, dashes, apostrophes, and other typographic symbols other than Arabic numbers or letters.

**3.2. New Roads.** New roads shall be created and named by either a land development plat or when more than 3 addressable structures or developable lots share an unnamed private access.

A. If by plat, then new roads shall follow the provisions of § 3.1 for road naming.

1. The developer or developer's representative shall be responsible for submitting road names to the Department for approval.
2. The development plat will not be approved until prospective road names are approved by the Department.

**B.** In instances where it is discovered that more than 3 addressable structures or developable lots share an unnamed private road, it will be named for E911 purposes.

1. All affected owners along the road will be notified that the road must be named pursuant to the provisions of this Ordinance.

2. Owners will be given the opportunity to submit road names for approval within 30 calendar days of being notified that the road must be named.

3. Once all owners have responded or 30 days has expired, whichever comes first, owners will be notified of the approved road names in the pool, as well as any submitted but denied road names, along with the reasons for any denials. Within 2 weeks of said notification, owners must respond with their preferred name from the pool. Fifty-one percent (51%) of the owners must choose the same road name.

4. If one name fails to receive a majority of the votes cast, and if a significant, but not majority, of owners select the same approved road name on the first attempt, then the Department will submit that name and a name of the County's choosing to owners. Within 2 weeks of the submittal, owners must respond with their preference amongst those two names. The name receiving the greatest number of votes will be assigned as the new road name.

**3.3. Renaming of Existing Roads.** A road may be renamed to correct duplicative or similarly-sounding road names.



A. When a road is found to have a duplicative or similarly-sounding name, it shall have its name changed to improve E911 response.

1. All affected owners along the road will be notified that the road name must be changed.

2. Owners will be given the opportunity to submit road names for approval within 30 calendar days of being notified that the road must be named.

3. Once all owners have responded or 30 days has expired, whichever comes first, owners will be notified of the approved road names in the pool, as well as any submitted but denied road names, along with the reasons for any denials. Within 2 weeks of said notification, owners must respond with their preferred name from the pool. Fifty-one percent (51%) of the owners must choose the same road name.

4. If one name fails to receive a majority of the votes cast, and if a significant, but not majority, of owners select the same approved road name on the first attempt, then the Department will submit that name and a name of the County's choosing to owners. Within 2 weeks of the submittal, owners must respond with their preference amongst those two names. The name receiving the greatest number of votes will be assigned as the new road name.

B. If an owner requests that an existing road name of a road contiguous to the owner's property be changed, then the following will apply.

1. All affected owners along the road will be notified by the owner that made the request.

2. Owners shall be given the opportunity to submit prospective road names for approval within 30 calendar days of the original request.

3. All affected owners must consent to the change of the road name. This approval shall be provided to the Department via signed letter from all owners indicating agreement to the road name and re-addressing, and the new name will be assigned to the road.

**3.4. Road Realignment Procedures.** When either Washington County or the State of Maryland realigns a roadway to improve traffic flow, the existing road name will apply to the new section of road.

A. If the realignment causes there to be a remaining section of old road bed serving addressed structures, then § 3.3.A. of this Ordinance shall apply.

B. If the realignment causes a change in property access points, then addressable structures will have new address numbers assigned pursuant to § 5.5.G. of this Ordinance.

#### **Article 4. Road Signage**

**4.1. New Road Signs.** Road signs in the County shall be constructed pursuant to the standards set forth in the latest adopted version of the Maryland Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).

A. Road signs in a new subdivision shall be constructed at the owner's or developer's expense per the requirements of the Washington County Policy on Construction of Infrastructure for Acceptance and Ownership by Washington County (S-3), latest edition.

B. New road signs for private roads that E911 requires to be named shall be constructed at the County's expense.

C. New road signs for a road that has been renamed or newly named due to the request of owners shall be constructed at the owners' expense.

D. Road signs that are needed as a result of road realignment procedures shall be erected at either the County or the State's expense.

**4.2. Replacement of Road Signs.** Road signs shall be replaced, as needed, by the Washington County Highway Department or the State of Maryland, depending on which jurisdiction is responsible for the maintenance of the associated road.

#### **Article 5. Addressing**

**5.1. Addresses.** Addresses are based on the Washington County Grid System, which is comprised of a numerical component and a street name, with the numeric values increasing from west to east or from south to north, as designated on the official map maintained by the department.

**5.2. Application for an Address.** The following will be considered as an official application for an address.

A. A building permit application will be considered as a formal application for an address.

B. An entrance permit application will be considered as a formal application for an address.

C. A site plan submittal will be considered as a formal application for an address.

1. Required addresses must be shown on the approved final site plan.

2. The following note must be on the site plan. "Each address is based on the entrance location as shown on this plan. If an entrance is constructed at a different location, then the address for that lot will be VOID, and the owner/developer of the lot must reapply to the Department for a new address assignment."

D. A subdivision plat submittal will be considered as a formal application for an address.

1. Required addresses must be shown on final approved subdivision plat.

2. The following note must be on the site plan. "Each address is based on the entrance location as shown on this plan. If an entrance is constructed at a different location, then the address for that lot will be VOID, and the owner/developer of the lot must reapply to the Department for a new address assignment."

3. Corner lots shall not be addressed on a subdivision plat but will be addressed when an application for a building permit is made.

E. A request for an address may be made by an owner of a property, with the approval or denial of an address assignment being made on a case by case basis.

1. An owner will need to show proof of ownership of the property.

2. An owner will need a plot plan of their property showing where the entrance to the property will be located.

**5.3. Address of Structures.** Any addressable structure will receive a unique address as follows.

A. A single-family dwelling will receive one unique address.

B. A semi-detached dwelling will receive two unique addresses, one for each side.

C. A duplex will receive two unique addresses, one for each side.

D. A townhouse will receive one unique address for each unit of the building.

E. An apartment building will receive one unique address for the building.

1. The individual units in the building will be assigned an apartment number by the building owner.

2. The building owner shall provide two sets of floor plans to the Department showing where all the apartments are located within the apartment building with the apartment numbers shown.

3. Any change in the apartment numbering scheme shall require two new sets of floor plans to be submitted to the Department.

F. A condominium will receive one unique address for the building.

1. The individual units in the building will be assigned a unit number by the building owner.

2. The building owner shall provide two sets of floor plans to the Department showing where all the units are located within the Condominium with the unit numbers shown.

3. Any change in the unit numbering scheme shall require two new sets of floor plans to be submitted to the Department.

G. A mobile home will receive one unique address for the mobile home.

H. A commercial structure will receive one unique address for the building.

I. A strip mall will receive one unique address for each unit in the complex.

J. A mall will receive one unique address for the building.

1. The individual units in the building will be assigned a unit number by the building owner.

2. The building owner shall provide two sets of floor plans to the Department showing where all the units are located within the mall with the unit numbers shown.

3. Any change in the unit numbering scheme shall require two new sets of floor plans to be submitted to the Department.

K. A mixed-use structure will receive one unique address for the building.

L. An industrial building will receive one unique address for the building and may be assigned a secondary address for shipping and receiving at its owner's request, which will be determined on a case by case basis by the Department and E911 and at their sole discretion.

M. An institutional building will receive one unique address for the building.

N. A barn will receive one unique address for the building if it is being used as an office for agricultural purposes.

O. A communication tower will receive one unique address for the tower.

P. A public utility structure will receive one unique address for each structure or site.

**5.4. Display of Addresses.** The numeric portion of the address must be visibly displayed on every addressed structure, with the numbers required to be high contrast or reflective Arabic numerals and in the size required by the applicable building code.

A. Residential dwellings are required to have numbers affixed to the structure.

1. If the front of the dwelling is less than 25 feet from the roadway, then only the structure needs to be numbered.

2. If the front of the dwelling is more than 25 feet from the roadway, then both the structure and the access point need to be numbered with numbers affixed to the structure and access sign.

**B.** All other addressable structures are required to have numbers affixed to the structure.

1. If the front of the building is less than 25 feet from the roadway, then only the structure needs to be numbered.

2. If the front of the building is more than 25 feet from the roadway, then both the structure and the access point need to be numbered with numbers affixed to the structure and access sign.

**C.** Any structure having rear access by way of an adjacent alley, drive, right-of-way, or thoroughfare serving two or more structures are required to affix numbers to the rear of the structure, in addition to those required in the front.

**D.** Any newly-constructed addressable structure must have its address displayed in the manner proscribed by this Ordinance before a Use and Occupancy Certificate is issued by the Division of Plan Review and Permitting.

**5.5. Changing of Address Numbers.** Because of the nature of addressing, there will be times when an addressed structure needs to be assigned a new address number. An address number may be reassigned if:

**A.** The existing address number is not in sequence;

**B.** The existing address number does not run consecutively in the same direction as the address system;

**C.** The existing address number fails to observe the following odd-even protocol:



1. For west–east roads, even numbers will be on the north side and odd numbers will be on the south side of the road;
  2. For south–north roads, even numbers will be on the west side and odd numbers will be on the east side of the road;
- D. The existing address number is such that the assignment of address numbers for new structures is not practical;
- E. A new road is constructed, realigned, or recognized, which results in the most appropriate address for a structure to be to the new road rather than to the existing road;
- F. The existing address number is a duplicate of another existing address;
- G. For any reason the entrance point to an addressed structure changes, then the current address for said structure may be voided and a new one assigned; or
- H. The existing address number is deemed a threat to the public health, safety, or welfare.

#### **Article 6. Notification**

**6.1. Owner Notification of Address.** An owner will be notified of the address for new construction as follows.

- A. Building Permit.** The approved address shall be shown on the final approved building permit.
- B. Entrance Permit.** The approved address shall be shown on the final approved entrance permit.

**6.2. Notification of Address Change.** When an address change is deemed necessary, the following will be notified by letter:

- A. The property owner;
- B. The State Tax Assessment Office;
- C. The local U. S. Postal Office of the respective zip code where the address change occurs;
- D. E911; and
- E. Other agencies, as applicable on a case by case basis, at the discretion of the Department.

**6.3. Information to be included on Address Change Letter.** The following information will be included in a letter of address change:

- A. The owner's name;
- B. The existing address;
- C. The new address;
- D. The State Tax Assessments District Account number;
- E. The State Tax Assessments Parcel number;
- F. The acreage of the property; and
- G. The reason for the address change.

### **Article 7. Duty of Owners**

**7.1. Duty of Owners.** In order to preserve the continuity of the numbering system, it is the duty of the owner to procure the correct address number, as designated, and immediately fasten the number upon the building and at the access point from the road to the structure when required, pursuant to § 5.4 of this Ordinance. It shall also be the duty of the owner to inform their telephone and/or cellular telephone carriers of any change in their address for E911 purposes.

### **Article 8. Master Address File**

**8.1. Master Address File.** The Master Address File will be maintained and updated, in a digital format, as necessary by the Department.

**8.2. Users.** Due to the sensitive nature of some addressed sites in Washington County, the master address file will be restricted to certain types of users as determined by the Department and E911, in their sole discretion.

### **Article 9. Violations and Penalties**

**9.1. Violations.** Any owner found in violation of this Ordinance shall be guilty of a civil offense which shall be prosecuted in accordance with Article 23A, § 3(b) of the Annotated Code of Maryland. Each day that a violation continues after due notice has been served shall be deemed a separate offense.

**9.2. Penalties.** The penalty for a civil offense shall be established by resolution of the Board of County Commissioners of Washington County, Maryland.

**Article 10. Effective Date**

**10.1. Effective Date.** This Ordinance shall be effective immediately upon adoption by the Board of County Commissioners of Washington County, Maryland.