



Agenda Report Form

Open Session Item

SUBJECT: Public Hearing: Application for Zoning Text Amendment RZ-26-002

PRESENTATION DATE: July 21st, 2026

PRESENTATION BY: Kyla Shingleton, Comprehensive Planner, Department of Planning and Zoning

RECOMMENDED MOTION: The purpose of this public hearing is to take public comment on the rezoning application. The Commissioners have the option to reach a consensus to either approve or deny the request after the public hearing closes or deliberate on the issue at a later date.

REPORT-IN-BRIEF: Application is being made to amend the Special Economic District of the Washington County Zoning Ordinance.

DISCUSSION: The applicant, Cascade Properties LLC, is proposing a text amendment to amend parts of Article 19C of the Washington County Zoning Ordinance.

The applicant proposes adding and deleting specific types of principally permitted manufacturing and industrial uses to Section 19C.2 in order to attract uses once compatible with the property. The new uses are similar to those permitted in the light industrial districts of the county.

In addition to commercial and manufacturing uses, new retail sales and services are being proposed to foster a town-like environment on the property. These uses fit with the retail sales and services already permitted in the district.

In Section 19C.3 the proposed amendments allow for the addition and deletion of some limited special exception uses that are consistent with former uses on the property, thus making reuse of existing structures more feasible.

The amendments to Section 19C.6 are being proposed to update the residential lot size, width and setback requirements to those of a high-density district. Along with new setbacks, new design criteria has been proposed in Section 19C.7 to ensure consistency within the district while allowing for development that best fits the character of the SED. All proposed amendments are specifically listed/stricken in the application packet.

This item was presented to the Washington County Planning Commission at a Public Information Meeting held during their regular meeting on May 4, 2026. At their regular meeting on June 1,

202, members unanimously recommended in favor of the proposed map amendment. No public comments have been received in favor or opposition of this proposal.

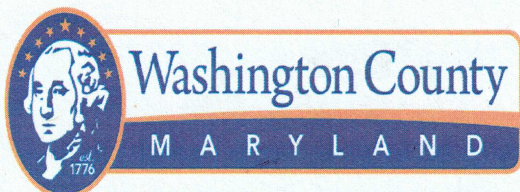
FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

CONCURRENCES: Washington County Planning Commission

ALTERNATIVES: N/A

ATTACHMENTS: Application, staff report, Planning Commission recommendation, and approved Planning Commission minutes

AUDIO/VISUAL NEEDS: None

**FOR PLANNING COMMISSION USE ONLY**

Rezoning No. _____

Date Filed: _____

**WASHINGTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
ZONING ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENT APPLICATION**Cascade Properties, LLC

Applicant

25009 Lake Wastler Dr.

Address

Jill Baker

Primary Contact

same

Address

☒ Property Owner☐ Contract Purchaser☐ Attorney☐ Consultant☐ Other: _____301-241-2231

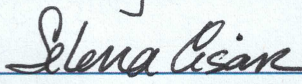
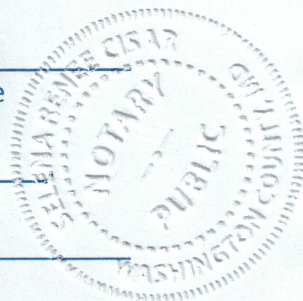
Phone Number

jbaker@ritchirevival.com

E-mail Address

☐ Water and Sewerage Plan☐ Comprehensive Plan☐ Subdivision Ordinance☒ Zoning Ordinance☐ Other: _____Section No. Article 19C

Please provide the proposed text on a separate sheet of paper as follows: strike-through should be used for deletions [~~deletions~~], unchanged wording in regular type, and new wording should be underlined [new wording].

See Attached
Applicant's SignatureSubscribed and sworn before me this 18 day of February, 2020My commission expires on May 17, 2029
Notary Public**FOR PLANNING COMMISSION USE ONLY**

- ☐ Application Form
- ☐ Fee Worksheet
- ☐ Application Fee
- ☐ Proposed Text Changes
- ☐ 2 hard copies and one digital copy of the complete application packet



WASHINGTON COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF
PLANNING & ZONING FEE WORKSHEET

FOR PLANNING COMMISSION USE ONLY

Rezoning No. _____

Date Filed: _____

PLEASE COMPLETE ONLY THE
SECTION THAT APPLIES.

Applicant's Name: _____ Date: _____

Zoning Ordinance Map Amendment \$ 2,000.00

Number of Acres * _____ x \$20.00 [1 acre minimum]
per acre \$ _____

Engineering Review Fee \$ 150.00

Technology Fee \$ 15.00

TOTAL FEES DUE – MAP AMENDMENT \$ _____

*Minimum charge of \$20.00 [if less than one acre]

Text Amendment \$ 2,000.00

Choose One: ☐ Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance
☐ Forest Conservation Ordinance
☐ Solid Waste Plan
☐ Subdivision Ordinance
☐ Zoning Ordinance
☐ Other: _____

Technology Fee \$ 15.00

TOTAL FEES DUE – TEXT AMENDMENT \$ 2,015.00

Water and Sewer Plan Amendment \$ 2,000.00

Technology Fee \$ 15.00

TOTAL FEES DUE – WATER AND SEWER PLAN AMENDMENT \$ 2,015.00

Forest Conservation Exemption \$ 25.00

Technology Fee \$ 15.00

TOTAL FEES DUE – FOREST EXEMPTION \$ 40.00

Please make checks payable to **“Washington County Treasurer”**.



WASHINGTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
ZONING ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENT

REQUIRED APPLICATION MATERIALS CHECKLIST

All materials must be clearly labeled

Original plus 1 copy and one digital copy sent to

askplanning@washco-md.net of complete application package

- ☐ 1. **Application Form:** A completed and signed application form. A copy of the proposed changes to the existing language must accompany the application.
- ☐ 2. **Fee Worksheet and Application Fee:** A completed Fee Worksheet must be submitted at the time application is made. If paying by check, please make checks payable to the "Washington County Treasurer". If paying by credit card, the application must be accepted for completeness and initialized by the Department prior to accepting payment. An invoice will be e-mailed to the applicant and **must** be paid prior to the deadline specified in the e-mail. The rezoning process will not begin until payment has been received.
- ☐ 3. **Justification Statement:** A written explanation of the reasons why the amendment is being requested, setting forth in sufficient detail to properly advise County officials as to the justification for the amendment. The justification statement must include the following:
 - i. Describe how the request is consistent with the County's most recent adopted Comprehensive Plan; AND
 - ii. Provide a statement describing how the request is logical and appropriate.
- ☐ 4. Any other material facts that support the amendment.

Cascade Properties, LLC – Proposed Text Amendments

Article 19C – Special Economic Development District

Section 19C.2. Principal Permitted Uses

Single Family Residential Units.

Two Family Dwelling or Duplex.

Multi-Family Residential Units including Apartments, Townhouses &
Condominiums.

Alcohol Beverage Sales.

[Alcohol Production Facilities](#)

[Antique, Consignment, or Thrift Shops](#)

Assisted Living Facility.

[Automobile/Motorcycle Sales and Services](#)

[Bakery/Confectionary Shops](#)

[Banquet/Reception Facilities](#)

[Bed and Breakfast](#)

[Blacksmith/Welding shops](#)

[Boarding and Rooming Homes](#)

[Bowling Alley](#)

[Butcher shop](#)

Cannabis Dispensary, Standard and Micro. Provided that the use is a minimum 500 feet from pre-existing or secondary schools in the State or a licensed childcare center or registered family childcare home; a pre-existing playground, recreation center, library public park or place of worship; at that the use be a minimum of ½ mile from another dispensary.

[Carpentry or Woodworking shops](#)

[Car wash](#)

Child or Adult Day Care Facilities.

[Comprehensive Care Facilities](#)

Conference Centers.

[Convenience Stores](#)

~~[Data Processing Facilities](#)~~

Emergency Service Structures and Facilities.

Financial Institutions.

[Fitness/Recreation Centers](#)

[Florist Shops](#)

Garden Shops and Nurseries

Gift Shops

Golf Course, Country Clubs, Private Clubs and similar Recreation Uses.

Grocery Stores

Health and Beauty Shops.

Helipads

Home Improvement Stores

Hospitals.

~~Hotels, Boarding Houses, Nursing or Retirement Homes.~~

~~Indoor Firing Range.~~

Laboratories – Chemical, physical and biological

Laundry or Dry Cleaning Store.

Libraries

Manufacture and/or Assembly of Electronics, Communications,

Scientific, Photographic or Optical Products and/or Equipment.

Manufacturing and/or assembly of semi-conductors, microchips, circuits, and circuit boards.

Manufacturing and assembly of medical, scientific and/or technical instruments, devices, and equipment.

Manufacturing and assembly of machine parts, components, and equipment.

Manufacturing of small parts such as coils, condensers, transformers, and crystal holders, including Electroplating.

Manufacturing, compounding, processing, packaging or treatment of cosmetics, hair products, and/or pharmaceuticals

Manufacturing of yeasts, molds, and other natural products necessary for medical and biotechnical research and development

Medical/~~Dental~~ Clinics and/or Pharmacies.

Mixed Use Building.

Museum, Arts Center or Tourism Entertainment Facility.

Offices, Business and Professional.

Outdoor/Recreational Outfitters

Parks and Recreational Facilities, Public or Private.

Pet grooming

Pet shops

Printing or Publishing Establishments.

Public or Civic Buildings, Structures or Facilities.

Radio, Television, and Film Studios or Recording Facilities.

Religious Institutions.

Research and Development Facilities.

Restaurants & Taverns.

Resorts

Satellite terminal stations and communications satellite systems

Schools, Public or Private including College, Trade and Technical Institutions.

Short-term Residential Rentals

Skating Rink

Skilled Nursing Care Facilities

Spas

Specialty Retail Shops.

Taxidermy business

Towing Service and associated Impound Yard

Theaters.

Variety Store

Veterinary Clinic and/or Hospital.

Warehouses.

Section 19C.3. Special Exception Uses

Contractor's Equipment and Storage Yards

Factory for Manufacture and/or Assembly of Electronics, Communications,
Scientific, Photographic or Optical Products and/or Equipment.

Food and Beverage processing and package plants; provided such use shall be
located two (2) times the distance requirements specified in Section 4.9

Indoor Firing Range

Machine Shop.

Military Communication, Training or Operations Support Facilities.

Commercial Communications Towers, subject to the requirements of Section
4.22.

Any other use that the Board of Appeals finds is functionally similar to any principally permitted use or special exception listed in this Article. The Board of Appeals shall not grant any special exception that is inconsistent with the purpose set forth for this District.

Section 19C.6. Lot Area, Lot Width, and Yard Requirements

	Net Lot Area	Lot Area per unit	Lot Width	*Front Yard	Side Yard	Rear Yard
Dwelling, Single Family	10,000 sq. ft.	10,000 sq. ft.	70 ft.	25 ft.	8 ft.	40 25 ft.
Dwelling, Two Family	10,000 sq. ft.	6,250 5,000 sq. ft.	75 60 ft.	25 ft.	8 ft.	40 25 ft.
Dwelling, Semi-Detached	10,000 sq. ft.	6,250 5,000 sq. ft.	75 60 ft.	25 ft.	8 ft. (exterior sides only)	40 25 ft.
Dwelling, Townhouse	20,000 sq. ft.	** 3,500 sq. ft. per unit	16 ft.	25 ft.	10 ft. (exterior sides only)	20 ft.
Dwelling, Multi-family	20,000 sq. ft.	3,600 2,000 sq. ft.	100 ft.	5 ft.	10 ft.	20 ft.
Mixed Used	2,500 sq. ft.	2,500 sq. ft.	25 ft.	5 ft.	0 ft. *	20 ft.
Non-residential	None	None	None	None	None	None

*If attached to an adjacent building or 5 ft. if not attached to an adjacent building.

** Minimum lot size per unit is 1,600 sq. ft. The difference between lot size and net lot area per townhouse shall be allocated to open space common area.

Section 19C.7. Design Standards

M. Walkways. All development plans shall provide a cohesive pathway system for pedestrians using the site.

a. Walkways shall connect, or provide future connection for, residential uses to contiguous off-street parking areas, transit, schools and school bus waiting areas, and parks.

b. It shall be the goal of the system to provide access to all locations within the development and to off-site facilities such as transit, local businesses and services, and cultural institutions such as schools and places of worship. The system should provide convenience and safety.

N. Lighting. Adequate lighting shall be installed to enhance safety, security and the visual environment. Lighting shall be provided to any areas where night-use is expected such as sidewalks and parking areas. All building-mounted and free-standing lighting shall be designed and installed to be fully shielded.

Lighting shall be directed downward to prevent glare and light trespass onto adjacent properties.

O. On-street parking requirements

- a. On-street parking may be used to meet the standards set forth in this section to reduce the amount of off-street parking required.
- b. All on-street parking facilities shall follow the same regulations as off-street parking facilities outlined in Article 22 Division I.

Cascade Properties, LLC - Justification Statement

Amendments to Article 19C – Special Economic Development District

Cascade Properties LLC would like to respectfully submit this Zoning Text Amendment related to the Special Economic Development (SED) District Article of the Zoning Ordinance. As this area continues to grow and progress, issues unique to the existing layout and abundance of infrastructure at the former Fort have produced the need for adjustments to the zoning district. This request focuses on several aspects of the regulations including principally permitted and special exception uses, residential setbacks and design criteria.

The purpose of the SED district is to recognize the unique circumstance of the area previously developed as an army base that functioned as its own town. According to Section 19C.1 part of the purpose statement says, “... *the classification needs to be extremely flexible with regard to bulk and area development requirements since existing development patterns and reuse potential will reflect more of a town or campus character than a rural or suburban perspective.*”. These amendments seek to adhere to this purpose.

Justification for Amendments to Principally Permitted and Special Exception Uses

Progress in redeveloping and revitalizing the Fort has generated significant interest in commercial and manufacturing uses. Currently, manufacturing uses are non-existent as principally permitted uses and only two (2) employment-type uses are permitted as a special exception use. This has limited marketing in the SED district for employment related businesses.

In recent years, we have applied to the Board of Zoning Appeals for multiple special exception uses for manufacturing and employment opportunities. Only allowing these uses through the special exception process introduces added risk and time that can stall or deter businesses from locating at the Fort and by association, Washington County.

To be compatible with past land uses and the community, manufacturing and other employment activities should be associated with light industrial uses. After reviewing uses permitted in the Industrial, Restricted (IR) and Planned Industrial (PI) districts, we have included some manufacturing and employment-based uses in the principally permitted and special exception use lists.

The SED district also contains a narrow list of commercial uses. To complement efforts in the district seeking to add new residential uses, retail sales and services will be needed to support the developing community. After reviewing uses permitted in the

Business, Local (BL) and Business, General districts, we have included several new retail sales and service uses that provide logical support in a town-like environment.

Justification for Setback Amendments

It is well known that the State of Maryland is in the middle of a housing crisis, both in available stock as well as affordability. This has driven the need for additional density that can be produced through zoning regulations that allow for more flexible and affordable design.

Currently, the SED zoning district allows a wide variety of residential uses including single-family up to multi-family. In this way, the SED district is intended to act similarly to the Residential, Urban (RU), Residential, Multi-family (RM) or even the Mixed Use (MX) districts in terms of residential variety and density. However, the residential bulk requirements in the SED district are currently more aligned with the Residential, Transition (RT) and Residential, Suburban (RS) districts.

To meet the purpose of the SED district and better align bulk requirements to higher density residential districts, we are requesting the following amendments to Section 19C.6 regarding residential lot size, width and setback requirements (see also attached amendments in track changes).

- Reduce the minimum lot size for two-family and semi-detached units from 6,250 sq. ft. per unit to 5,000 sq. ft. per unit. This amendment would align with the bulk requirements in the RM district.
- Reduce the lot width of two-family and semi-detached uses from 75 ft. to 60 ft. This reduction will allow for smaller homes that can be more affordable.
- Reduce the rear yard setback for single-family, two-family and semi-detached from 40 ft. to 25 ft. These changes would match the requirements set forth in the RU and RM districts and better align with the purpose of the district.
- Include a new row for townhouse uses that sets a minimum Net Lot Area of 20,000 sq. ft., Lot Area per Unit of 3,500 sq. ft., minimum lot width of 16 ft., front yard setback of 25 ft., side yard setback of 10 ft. on exterior sides only, and 20 ft rear yard setback. The requirements for Lot Area per Unit, Lot width, and all setbacks have been copied from Section 22.61 and are not proposed to be changed.

Including this line will streamline the bulk requirements by taking away the need to refer to Article 22 Division VI of the ordinance that regulates townhouse developments.

- To properly integrate the minimum lot areas and lot areas per unit, we propose to add a column for “Net Lot Area”. This has no impact on single-family, two-family or semi-detached lot sizes. Unlike single-family and two-family homes, townhouses and multi-family uses are viewed as communal developments that require shared open space areas that are typically governed by Home Owners Associations or covenants. We’ve included examples below of Net Lot Area calculations for townhouse developments.
- Within the chart we propose reducing the Net Lot Area required in Section 22.61 from 5-acres to 20,000 sq. ft. While the 5-acre requirement may be appropriate in some residential districts in the county, it is overburdensome and conflicts with the purpose of the SED district. It severely limits the ability to design new development that can be sustainable, walkable, and affordable. The reduction is being requested to address the need for potential infill development and the desire to create a more town-like development.

This change also supports the State and county goal of directing development into Priority Funding Areas (PFAs). According to State law, to qualify for PFA status the designated area must have a minimum average residential density of 3.5 dwelling units per acre. Requiring larger Net Lot Areas for townhouse development creates a negative and counterintuitive issue in creating desperately needed housing.

Example 1: Net Lot Area required is greater than 20,000 sq. ft. with open space multiplier

We show 8 townhouse units. The Net Lot Area shall be calculated by multiplying the number of units (8) by the lot area per unit (3,500)

Using the calculation, the Net Lot Area for this townhouse development will be 28,000 sq. ft.

Net Lot Area (28,000 sq.ft.)

Open Space

Minimum
Lot Size
per Unit
(1,600 sq.
ft.)

Example 2: Net Lot Area required would be less than 20,000 sq. ft. with open space multiplier

We show 4 townhouse units. The Net Lot Area shall be calculated by multiplying the number of units (4) by the lot area per unit (3,500)

Using the calculation, the Net Lot Area would be 14,000 sq. ft. However, the absolute minimum Net Lot Area must be 20,000 sq. ft.

Net Lot Area (20,000 sq. ft.)

Open Space

Minimum
Lot Size
per Unit
(1,600 sq.
ft.)

- Include a minimum of 20,000 sq. ft. of Net Lot Area for Multi-family dwellings in the newly formed column. This metric already exists in Section 22.72 and we are not proposing to change it.
- Decrease the Lot Area per Unit for Multi-family dwellings from 3,600 to 2,000 sq. ft. This amendment will fix the conflicting regulations of Article 22 Division 7 and those in RM district. The proposed figure matches the requirements of the RM district.

Justification for Design Standard Amendments

Increasing density is important to address our housing needs but that should not come at the cost of our physical and living environments. Design requirements help guide orderly development that is necessary in urban areas to assess ancillary needs to support development such as roads, sidewalks, and parking as well as human needs to have a good quality of life. Design regulations give consistency and predictability to developers and property owners alike to know up front the livability of their community.

The properties in the SED district effectively operate similarly to a municipal entity. As such, design criteria should be included to guide development in the SED district like what would be required in a municipal environment. We are seeking to supplement this section to better meet the purpose of the district and create a more sustainable and walkable urbanized center. These criteria were developed using similar design regulations in the MX district.

We request the following amendments to Section 19C.6:

- Add walkway requirements. Requiring sidewalks and other pathways in new developments is justified to enhance public safety by separating pedestrians from traffic, boosting property values, and encouraging walkability. To meet these desired effects, we propose that standards should be put in place to require sidewalks and pathways that provide a cohesive system for pedestrians.
- Add lighting requirements that reinforce Article 22 Division X. Lighting standards are necessary to ensure public safety, protect environmental quality and enhance the function and usability of public and private spaces. Amendments presented require all areas where night-time use is expected to be properly illuminated. The amendments also require lighting to be downward directed and shielded to reduce environmental impacts and lighting “hot spots”.
- Allow on-street parking. Currently, the Zoning Ordinance only allows and provides regulations for off-street parking. This is typical for county government regulations due to their rural and suburban characteristics as opposed to the more urban characteristics found in a municipal setting. The uniqueness of the SED district should reflect more urbanized standards that aren’t typical of historic county development. Therefore, we propose to allow on-street parking to count toward the required number of parking spaces per use. All other dimensional requirements would still follow the existing requirements for off-street parking.

There are a national recognition and movement to reduce parking requirements due to their environmental impacts and taking away developable land for seas of pavement that aren’t being used. Excessive parking requirements cost developers money and cost local governments space that could otherwise be used for public, retail, or residential use. These outdated measures often have a negative impact on the kind of local planning and zoning needed to create and maintain vibrant communities.

Members of the American Planning Association have studied this issue and put together a graphic of various parking designs for varying road widths. The graphic

can be viewed at <https://plannersweb.com/2013/09/wide-neighborhood-street-part-1/>. They noted that there was wide variation in regulations across the country, and that this graphic represents an average of regulations reviewed.

Furthermore, studies by the National Parking Association have found that addressing antiquated minimum parking requirements will allow for more clarity in market pricing, resulting in more affordable real estate. Allowing the market to set the right number of stalls will reduce excess supply in some areas and drive more affordable real estate projects.

Conclusion

First, we acknowledge that our properties are not the only ones affected by these proposed amendments. While these changes will also apply to the properties owned by Cascade Town Centre LLC, these amendments will provide the same flexibility and opportunity to redevelop the portion of the Fort given to them while maintaining consistency and comparability between the entities, leading to more cohesive development.

These amendments were written to further promote and support the purpose of this district which is to “...reflect more of a town or campus character than a rural or suburban perspective.” Furthermore, these amendments are consistent with the goals, objectives and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan including:

- Goal 1: Provide a diverse range of housing for citizens that promotes sustainable, livable, and affordable housing opportunities.
 - Enact high-density multi-family zoning.
 - Reduce or eliminate off-street parking requirements.
 - Create greater opportunities for mixed use in targeted areas.
 - Promote compact land use patterns through infill and redevelopment.
- Goal 2: Promote a balanced and diversified economy:
 - Review, and where appropriate, amend permitted land uses in non-residential zoning districts along with the locations of said districts to better match infrastructure needs of particular businesses to ensure appropriate location and use of limited infrastructure resources.
- Goal 3: Provide a safe, efficient, and interconnected multi-modal transportation system.
 - Incorporate walking or bicycling trails into the development of all new County parks to promote lifelong fitness. Trail development in existing parks with unused recreational space should also be considered.

- Review parking requirements to determine whether they encourage transportation by non-motorized means and do not unnecessarily decrease available land for property improvements. Eliminating or reducing minimum parking requirements in select areas such as in Town or city centers is a potential option.
- Goal 8: Encourage infill development and revitalization of existing communities using context sensitive development strategies to maintain and enhance community character.
 - Create high quality communities through improved urban design and development standards
 - Encourage infill and compact, mixed-use development within planned growth areas that creates inherently “walkable and bikeable” communities through policy and regulation.

As economic opportunities continue to grow in the SED district, it is important that the Zoning Ordinance reflects the necessary regulation to allow flexibility in development opportunities but also recognizes the balance of mitigating impacts to our physical and living environments.



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & ZONING

PLANNING | ZONING | LAND PRESERVATION | FOREST CONSERVATION | GIS

RZ-26-002

May, 2026

WASHINGTON COUNTY ZONING ORDINANCE STAFF REPORT AND ANALYSIS

Proposal: Cascade Properties LLC has requested a rezoning text amendment to amend the Special Economic District Article of the Washington County Zoning Ordinance.

Staff Report: The Special Economic District (SED) was created and applied to the land of the former Fort Richie Army Base. The land was converted into a private entity for redevelopment in 1998 after the Fort's closure. Historically, the land associated with the Fort functioned similar to a small town containing residential, commercial, and industrial uses. The district currently permits a wide variety of uses to mimic those that previously occurred on the Fort. The SED was created to allow the unique area to be revitalized back to the small town feel as it did in the past.

The current owners of the property have begun to redevelop the land, by attracting multiple residential, commercial and manufacturing users to the site, using the existing structures to recreate the town feel previously established by the military base.

The proposed amendments aim to expand the uses and allow for more opportunities for redevelopment and revitalization of the site.

Analysis: One current owner, Cascade Properties LLC, is proposing to amend Article 19C of the Zoning Ordinance to include permitted and special exception uses as well as residential setbacks and design criteria.

Currently, the SED does not principally permit any light industrial or manufacturing uses. Special exceptions are needed for these types of uses. Cascade Properties proposes adding and deleting specific types of principally permitted manufacturing and industrial uses to Section 19C.2 in order to attract uses once compatible with the property. The new uses are similar to those permitted in the light industrial districts of the county.

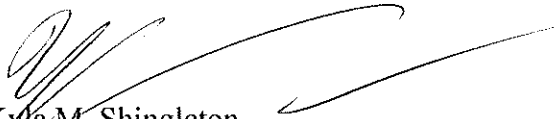
In addition to commercial and manufacturing uses, new retail sales and services are being proposed to foster a town-like environment on the property. These uses fit with the retail sales and services already permitted in the district.

In Section 19C.3 the proposed amendments allow for the addition and deletion of some limited special exception uses that are consistent with former uses on the property, thus making reuse of existing structures more feasible.

Section 19C.6 discusses residential lot size, width and setback requirements. The SED has a large variety of residential types; however, the current setbacks are similar to Residential, Suburban. Amendments to this section are being proposed to update the requirements to those of a high-density district. Along with new setbacks, new design criteria has been proposed in Section 19C.7 to ensure consistency within the district while allowing for development that best fits the character of the SED. All proposed amendments are specifically listed/stricken in the application packet.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends approval of these amendments as presented.

Respectfully submitted,



Kyla M. Shingleton

Comprehensive Planner



Washington County

M A R Y L A N D

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & ZONING

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING | LAND PRESERVATION | FOREST CONSERVATION | GIS

June 12, 2026

RZ-26-002

APPLICATION FOR TEXT AMENDMENT
PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION

On May 4, 2026, the Washington County Planning Commission held a public input meeting to consider a text amendment to Article 19C – Special Economic Development District, Sections 19c.2, 19c.3, 19c.6 and 19c.7 of the Washington County Zoning Ordinance to allow light manufacturing uses to be principally permitted uses and for some heavy industrial uses to be special exception uses in the SED zone.

The Planning Commission took action at its June 1, 2026 regular meeting to recommend approval of the proposed text amendment to the Board of County Commissioners. A copy of the application, proposed text, the Staff Report and Analysis, minutes of the May 4, 2026 public input meeting and June 1, 2026 regular meeting (unapproved) are attached.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer D. Kinzer
Interim Director, Washington County
Department of Planning & Zoning

JLB/KS/dse

Attachments

**WASHINGTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
REZONING PUBLIC INPUT AND REGULAR MEETING**

May 4, 2026

The Washington County Planning Commission held a rezoning public input meeting and its regular monthly meeting on Monday, May 4, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. at the Washington County Administrative Complex, 100 W. Washington Street, Room 2000, Hagerstown, MD.

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The Chairman called the rezoning public input meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Planning Commission members present were: Jeff Semler, Chairman, Jay Miller, Vice-Chairman, Terrie Shank, Laura Lane-Unsworth, BJ Goetz, Doug Wright, Jr. and Ex-officio County Commissioner Randy Wagner. Staff members present were: Washington County Department of Planning & Zoning: Jennifer Kinzer, Interim Director; Travis Allen, Senior Planner; Kyla Shingleton, Comprehensive Planner; Scott Stotelmyer and Misty Wagner-Grillo, Planners; and Debra Eckard, Office Manager.

Chairman Semler announced that the text amendment recommendation listed under Other Business on this evening's agenda for Danielle Eyler Durning (RZ-26-001) is being postponed until a later date at the request of the applicant.

REZONING PUBLIC INPUT MEETING

Cascade Properties LLC [RZ-26-002]

Staff Presentation

Ms. Shingleton presented a proposed text amendment to the Special Economic Development zoning district, Article 19, Sections 19c.2, 19c.3, 19c.6 and 19c.7 of the Washington County Zoning Ordinance. The SED district was created and applied to lands at the former Fort Ritchie Army Base. The land was converted into a private equity for redevelopment after the Fort's closure. The proposed amendment would expand the uses and allow for more opportunities for redevelopment and revitalization of the site.

Applicant's Presentation

Ms. Jill Baker, Site Planning Administrator for Cascade Properties LLC and Ritchie Revival, was present at the meeting representing the applicant. The proposed changes would amend the principally permitted and special exception uses in the SED district, amend the residential setback requirements within the district, and seeks to include design standards within the district.

Ms. Baker stated that the SED district has an extremely focused intent that is related to the redevelopment of Fort Ritchie after its closure in 1998. There are only two properties with this zoning classification that will be affected by the proposed amendments. The proposed changes reflect the need to address the uniqueness of the properties and the related zoning district. As an army base, Fort Ritchie operated as a small town. Significant infrastructure has been installed including water, sewer, storm water and power.

The first part of the proposed amendments focuses on commercial and light industrial uses. The commercial uses are heavily focused on retail sales and service. These uses are taken from the Business Local and Business General zoning districts that are currently found in the Zoning Ordinance. The proposed light industrial uses, which rely on manufacturing, are taken from the Planned Industrial and Industrial Restricted zoning districts. The applicant believes these uses would be compatible with other businesses/services already at the Fort and in the surrounding community. Ms. Baker asked that when considering these amendments, variety stores should be removed from the list of principally permitted uses.

The second part of the proposed amendments are related to lot size and setbacks for residential uses that are permitted within the SED district. She explained that the current setbacks and lot sizes in the Zoning Ordinance mimic the Residential Suburban and Residential Transition districts, which allow for lower density residential uses. The applicant is proposing to amend the setbacks and lot sizes to mimic the Residential Urban and Residential Multi-family districts which allow for higher density residential development. She briefly reviewed the proposed minimum lot sizes and lot widths for two-family and semi-detached units, the rear yard setbacks for single-family and two-family units and the inclusion of new setbacks and lot sizes, lot widths, front yard, side yard and rear yard setbacks for townhomes. The applicant believes this would create a greater diversity in housing types and would provide more affordable housing. The proposed changes would also create a small town setting with a more sustainable

and walkable development and would allow residents to have the necessary goods and services they need.

The third part of the amendment is related to design criteria that are intended to support redevelopment that reflects a town-like setting. These amendments include adding requirements that: provide a cohesive pathway system for pedestrians; reinforces the light regulations included within the Ordinance to mitigate and reduce light pollution; and seek regulations that would allow on-street parking to help meet parking requirements. Currently, only off-street parking is permitted. Due to the historic nature of the Fort, it is difficult to find areas for off-street parking that do not conflict with the historic nature of the area and are located within a reasonable distance.

Discussion and Comments: Mr. Wright expressed his concern that some of the proposed uses would cause a noxious discharge (specifically electroplating) into the sewerage system and asked if alternative uses could be considered that would be more environmentally sensitive. Ms. Baker noted that proposed uses would be required to meet local, State and Federal regulations in terms of environmental standards. These issues would be addressed during the review process of any proposed development. Mr. Wright expressed his opinion that the diversity of residential housing types being proposed would promote higher density development and more affordable housing for the County. He shared his concern that on-street parking limits the space required for emergency equipment access; he encourages the developer to consider alleys to help with parking issues. Ms. Baker stated that the County Engineering Department has the same concerns and recommendations. Mr. Wright noted that retirement homes have been removed from the list of uses. Ms. Baker stated that nursing homes and retirement homes are outdated terms; the County has adopted the term "comprehensive care facilities". The term "skilled nursing facilities" is being proposed in these amendments.

Mr. Goetz expressed his opinion that the residential types being proposed would help meet the needs for affordable housing.

Mr. Miller asked if the Maryland Historic Trust (MHT) governs or oversees anything that is inside the Fort. Ms. Baker stated there is a MHT easement located on a portion of the Fort that includes the parade grounds, the finger buildings, and the buildings along the lake. All proposed uses must seek approval from MHT as well as approvals for grading, exterior appearance, etc.

Mr. Semler asked if there are emergency services on-site. Ms. Baker stated currently there are no emergency services on-site; however, a security service is provided. The developer is currently researching other jurisdictions to see how emergency services are provided. A helipad is currently being installed on-site for the Maryland State Police.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Michael Godinez/Dominion Realty LLC [RZ-26-0031]

Ms. Shingleton presented a proposed map amendment for properties located at 18128 and 18132 Maugans Avenue. The applicant is proposing to rezone the properties from RM (Residential Multi-family) to HI (Highway Interchange). The combined acreage of these two parcels is .72 acres. Each parcel is currently improved with a single-family dwelling and accessory structures. These parcels are buffered from surrounding properties by vegetation. The applicant is claiming a change in the character of the neighborhood as well as a mistake in the original zoning of the property during the Rural Area Comprehensive Rezoning in 2012. In the case of mistake, the applicant contends that the County erred in rezoning the properties from HI-2 (Highway Interchange 2) to RM because the following factors were not considered: 1) the inconsistent application of the HI-1 zoning classification to properties along Maugans Avenue and 2) residential usage of the properties would continue to be viable despite the geographic separation of the properties from adjacent residential neighborhoods and commercial growth in the vicinity. In the case of substantial change in the character of the neighborhood, the applicant contends there has been an increase in average daily traffic on Maugans Avenue and substantial commercial development in close proximity of the subject parcels.

Staff believe that the reassignment of the HI-2 to RM zoning was likely due to the existing Seneca Ridge development prior to 2012 and that the subject properties were grouped with the development even though they are not directly related. The increase of traffic and neglect of the properties have played a significant role in the viability of a residential use at the site; therefore, it is difficult to characterize the decisions made by the County during the 2012 comprehensive rezoning. Staff does not believe the applicant has met the burden in proving a substantial change has occurred in the neighborhood since the 2012 rezoning. The applicant failed to define what constitutes the neighborhood except for the expected and continued commercial/industrial uses in the vicinity.

Applicant's Presentation

Mr. Godinez stated that the primary basis for this application is a mistake in the original zoning of the properties in 2012 from HI-2 to RM. He believes this designation was given due to the residential use of the properties at that time. However, the previous HI-2 zoning permitted retail and commercial uses which are consistent with the uses now being proposed for the properties due to frontage along Maugans Avenue and close proximity to the interstate. These properties are buffered by non-developable land and effectively isolated by a substantial natural and man-made buffer from the residential development of Seneca Ridge. To the east is a Forest Conservation easement owned by the Seneca Ridge HOA; to the north and west lies a permanent storm water management facility owned by Washington County, and a natural creek further separates these parcels from Seneca Ridge.

Mr. Godinez began with his contention that there has been a change in the character of the neighborhood. He expressed his opinion that the existing residential structures on these two parcels have fallen into disrepair due to long-term underutilization thereby no longer making this a viable use for the properties. He noted that traffic has significantly increased since the 2012 rezoning. According to the Staff Report, traffic has nearly doubled in this corridor since 2016. This continued increase reflects the continued growth and intensification of the Maugans Avenue corridor.

The applicant is proposing retail, office and general commercial uses on these properties. Mr. Godinez stated that his business across the street requires additional space to support operations and continued growth. He noted that other local businesses have expressed an interest in the proposed office/retail spaces. He believes that the additional spaces would provide improved services for the surrounding neighborhood, provide convenience for local residents and would have a positive impact on the local economy.

The applicant also contends there was a mistake in the rezoning of these two properties in 2012 and presented the following information to support that claim. Mr. Godinez noted that the subject parcels were rezoned in 2012 from HI-2 to RM. He believes the assumption was made that these two properties were part of Seneca Ridge located behind these two parcels. The Staff Report notes there was no detailed site specific parcel justification for this change despite the parcels' distinct separation from Seneca Ridge and their location along a major commercial corridor. Since the comprehensive rezoning, conditions have continued to evolve with increased traffic volumes, intense commercial development, and the strong influence of nearby I-81. Mr. Godinez expressed his opinion that the parcels are no longer suitable for residential use and would be more appropriate for commercial zoning.

Discussion and Comments: Mr. Miller expressed concern that the developer will be able to meet all requirements for parking, storm water management, and setbacks on these two parcels which total less than one acre. Mr. Godinez stated the properties are unique in shape and a concept plan has already been developed.

Public Comment

- Joshua Norris, 18113 Maugans Avenue, Suite 100 – Mr. Norris owns a fish and reptile business located across the street from these two properties. He is in favor of the proposed rezoning because he believes it will bring more people to the area businesses. He also would like to occupy a small office space in the proposed commercial development.
- Alisha Resendiz, 18123 Boxford Lane – Ms. Resendiz stated she recently moved to the area and expressed her opinion that the two existing residences do not match the aesthetics of the Seneca Ridge development; however, the plaza across the street does match. She believes it would be advantageous for the community and she is in favor of the rezoning.
- Preston Greene, 18132 Maugans Avenue – Mr. Greene owns one of the subject parcels and is in favor of the rezoning. The property is surrounded by businesses and a very busy road. He expressed his opinion that this is not a good location for his child.
- Joshua Dull, 18117 Maugans Avenue, Suite 201 – Mr. Dull is in favor of the rezoning and stated there is a vegetative buffer between these two properties and Seneca Ridge. He believes this would be a good addition to the area. Mr. Dull owns his business and stated it is very challenging to find smaller office space such as the ones being proposed.
- Alina Huihai, 18113 Maugans Avenue, Suite 102 – Ms. Huihai is in favor of the rezoning because it is more appropriate for commercial uses than residential. She expressed her opinion that it is not safe for children or pets along the busy street. Ms. Huihai believes this would be a benefit to the community.
- Brittany Compton, 18113 Maugans Avenue, Suite 103 – Ms. Compton is in favor of the rezoning. She believes the community and current residents/commercial businesses would greatly benefit.

The public input meeting was closed at 6:55 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS

MINUTES

Motion and Vote: Ms. Shank made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 6, 2026 Planning Commission meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Wright and unanimously approved with Mr. Goetz abstaining from the vote.

ORDINANCE MODIFICATION

John R. Oliver Co., Inc. Lots 1 and 2 [OM-26-001]

Mr. Stotelmyer presented an ordinance modification to allow for proposed Lot 2 to be developed without 25-feet of usable road frontage. The site is located at 19325 Longmeadow Road and is currently zoned RS (Residential Suburban). The modification is needed to allow both sides of the duplex to utilize the single access provided to the property under separate ownership. If approved, a joint maintenance agreement will be prepared. In addition to the modification, variances would be required from the Board of Zoning Appeals.

Discussion and Comments: Mr. Goetz asked if the maintenance agreement would be recorded. Mr. Schreiber of Frederick, Seibert & Associates, the consultant, stated it would be part of the chain of title.

Motion and Vote: Mr. Goetz made a motion to approve the ordinance modification request as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Miller and unanimously approved.

PRELIMINARY PLAT

Arborview Phase I [PP-25-001]

Ms. Wagner-Grillo presented a preliminary plat for the proposed development of Arborview located on the north side of Mt. Aetna Road. The total acreage of the parcel is 218.23 acres which is currently zoned RT (Residential Transition). The cluster provision was approved by the Planning Commission on May 4, 2024 and a preliminary consultation was presented to the Commission on August 6, 2024. Phase I consists of 91 single-family dwellings and 100 semi-detached homes. The average lot size will be 8,868 sq. ft. for the single-family lots and 4,186 square feet for semi-detached lots. Parking required and provided will be two spaces per unit with 137 on-street parking spaces to also be provided. Sidewalks, street lighting, tot lots, and open spaces are proposed and will be maintained by the HOA. A photometric plan for street lighting will be required with the final plat submission. A sewer pump station is proposed as well as a water tower to be located at outlet 4. The water tower will be dedicated to the City of Hagerstown. Access to the development is proposed from Mossy Nook Gateway to Mt. Aetna Road and along Pergola Crossing to Sasha Boulevard. Two future road extensions are proposed from Trellis Way and Pergola Crossing. A note has been added to the plat for Phase I which states, "The developer shall be required to widen, to a minimum 20 ft. total pavement, any segment of road outside of the County's planned vertical/horizontal curvature corrections. Prior to final plat approval for the 126th lot, the development must have approved and bonded widening plans for Mt. Aetna Road, and the anticipated final plat approval must be within two years of the Capital Improvements Plan project. Alternately, should the developer wish to record the 126th lot prior to 2028, they may obtain approved and bonded plans for correction of the vertical/horizontal curves in addition to widening. Should the developer record at least 20 lots, but not more than 125 lots within 4 years of this approval, they will be responsible to widen those same segments of road to a minimum 18 ft. total pavement width." Any other conditions for future phases of the Arborview development will be included as part of the review and approval process for those phases. Schools that will serve Phase I are Greenbriar Elementary, Boonsboro Middle, and Boonsboro High. Capacity will be assessed at the final plat stage. Forest Conservation mitigation will be met through a combination of on-site planting, retention of existing forest, and payment-in-lieu of planting. All agency approvals have been received.

Discussion and Comments: Mr. Wright asked if there is a maximum number of units that can be built before alternate access points will be required. Ms. Kinzer stated that during Phase II, alternate access points will be required as a condition of approval by the Engineering Department. Mr. Wright expressed his opinion that more traffic circles should be required in Phase I to control traffic. Mr. Poffenberger of Fox & Associates, Inc., the consultant, stated that Phase I has been engineered and approved by all reviewing agencies and traffic circles cannot be added at this time; however, more traffic circles could be worked into Phase II. He also noted that four-way stops are proposed and the streets have been designed as "local" streets. Mr. Wright stated that some of the front yards consist of more than 50% concrete for parking and he believes that alleys should be added for additional parking.

Mr. Miller asked if the water tower will help alleviate water pressure issues in this area. Mr. Poffenberger stated it would help alleviate this issue and has been the topic of discussion for several years.

Forest Conservation

Mr. Allen presented a request to remove one specimen tree in Phase I. Specimen trees are greater than 30-inches in diameter and prioritized for retention under Article 8 of the Forest Conservation Ordinance. The specimen tree is located outside of a qualified forest and is in the direct path of Sassafra Drive. Retention of this tree would be very difficult. Mitigation for Phase I will be on-site retention.

Motion and Vote: Mr. Goetz made a motion to approve the removal of the one specimen tree as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Lane-Unsworth and unanimously approved.

Motion and Vote: Mr. Goetz made a motion to approve the preliminary plat as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Lane-Unsworth and approved 6-1 with Mr. Wright in opposition.

SITE PLAN

AC&T Williamsport [SP-24-020]

Ms. Wagner-Grillo presented a site plan for the redevelopment of an existing convenience store located at 16510 Virginia Avenue. The property is 1.94-acres in size and is currently zoned HI (Highway Interchange). A portion of this property was rezoned in October 2025. The proposed convenience store will be 6,138 sq. ft. with two fuel canopies; one canopy will be a diesel fueling station and the second canopy will have five fueling stations. Proposed hours of operation will be 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Four employees per shift are proposed. No new signage is proposed; new and existing lighting is proposed. A photometric plan was included with the site plan. Buffer yards of 25-feet and vegetative screening are proposed along the property lines adjoining residential uses; a landscape plan was included in the site plan submittal. Parking required is 31 spaces; 43 vehicular parking spaces and 6 truck parking spaces will be provided. There will be one access from Brookmeade Road and one access from Virginia Avenue as well as an existing alley. Water service will be provided by the City of Hagerstown; sewer service will be provided by Washington County. Forest Conservation requirements will be met by a payment-in-lieu of planting of \$2,352.24. Storm water mitigation is on-site through a bio-retention underground system. Approvals are pending from the Washington County Engineering Department, Soil Conservation District, Washington County Planning Department, and the State Highway Administration.

Discussion and Comments: Mr. Goetz asked if there will be a full movement access from Virginia Avenue. Mr. Trevor Frederick of Frederick, Seibert & Associates, the consultant, stated it would be a full movement access. Mr. Goetz asked if there is any concern regarding stacking back into the parking spaces on-site. Mr. Frederick stated there is a second access to the site to help alleviate the stacking issue.

Mr. Wright noted that the concrete pad for the dumpster is a lower grade concrete than the pad for the diesel dispenser. He asked if it would be beneficial to use the higher grade concrete for the dumpster pad. Mr. Frederick stated they will review the plan to ensure that the correct grade of concrete is used for both pads. Mr. Wright asked if the 20-foot alley is owned by the applicant. Mr. Frederick stated it is owned by Washington County.

Motion and Vote: Mr. Miller made a motion to approve the site plan contingent upon all agency approvals. The motion was seconded by Ms. Shank and unanimously approved.

BSE, LLC Building #1 [SP-25-049]

Ms. Wagner-Grillo presented a site plan for the redevelopment of the former Citicorp Building #1 located at 14704 Citicorp Drive. Total acreage of the site is 59.56-acres and is currently zoned HI (Highway Interchange). The developer is proposing to use Building #1 as a warehouse facility. Parking required for this use is 56 spaces. There are currently 2,146 existing parking spaces on-site. There are two designated parking areas shown on the site plan for this building. Hours of operation will be Monday thru Saturday, 6 am to 6 pm and 40 employees are proposed. No new signage or pole mounted lighting is proposed. Water service is provided by the City of Hagerstown and sewer service is provided by Washington County. Forest Conservation requirements will be met by using the payment-in-lieu of planting in the amount of \$1,306.80. All agency approvals have been received.

Motion and Vote: Mr. Goetz made a motion to approve the site plan as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Miller and unanimously approved.

FOREST CONSERVATION

Bowman North LLC [S-23-065]

Mr. Allen presented a request to provide forest mitigation requirements off-site for a four-lot subdivision located at 17425 Snyders Landing Road. The total planting requirement is 4.50-acres. There is no qualified forest on-site; the property is currently used for agricultural purposes. The applicant owns property ¼ mile away across the road from the subject site which is the proposed location for the off-site mitigation area. This area is currently in a Maryland Environmental Trust easement; however, the easement does not guarantee retention of the existing forested area. MET will need to approve the request to place a forest easement on the property. The off-site easement would require a 2:1 ratio of retention; therefore, nine acres of forest would be retained within the easement.

Motion and Vote: Mr. Miller made a motion to approve the off-site forest retention area contingent upon approval by MET. The motion was seconded by Ms. Shank and unanimously approved.

Fletcher's Grove Phase 3 – Dean North [FP-25-002]

Mr. Allen presented a request to provide a portion of forest mitigation requirements at an off-site location for a 53-lot subdivision located along Mapleville Road in the Town of Boonsboro. There is a 7.16-acre total planting requirement; 2.8-acres of forest mitigation will be accomplished on-site by establishing a planted easement and planting street trees within the development. The remaining 4.36-acres of mitigation will be accomplished by an off-site easement at 12275 Pleasant Valley Road near Smithsburg.

Motion and Vote: Mr. Wright made a motion to approve the forest mitigation request as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Miller and unanimously approved.

OLD BUSINESS

2003 Mason Dixon LLC [WS-25-004]

Mr. Allen reminded members that during the April 6th meeting, a public input meeting was held to consider an amendment to the County's Water and Sewerage Plan for property at 17939 Mason Dixon Road. The applicant is requesting a change in the priority classification for water and sewer service from W-5/S-5 to W-3/S-3 and to recognize the public water distribution and public wastewater system of Antrim Township Municipal Authority to provide these services. No public comments were received either in favor of or in opposition to this request and staff have no objections.

Motion and Vote: Mr. Miller made a motion to approve the request as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Shank and unanimously approved with Mr. Goetz and Commissioner Wagner abstaining from the vote.

OTHER BUSINESS

Update of Projects Initialized

Ms. Kinzer provided a written report for land development plan review projects initialized during the month of March including six site plans.

Motion and Vote: Mr. Miller made a motion to adjourn to Closed Session. The motion was seconded by Ms. Lane-Unsworth, unanimously approved and so ordered by the Chairman.

CLOSED SESSION

To discuss the appointment, re-appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom this public body has jurisdiction; or any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals.

Motion and Vote: Mr. Miller made a motion to adjourn Closed Session and to resume Open Session. The motion was seconded by Mr. Goetz, unanimously approved and so ordered by the Chairman.

RE-APPOINTMENT OF PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBER

Motion and Vote: Mr. Miller made a motion to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners the re-appointment of Ms. Shank to her first five-year term. Ms. Shank was appointed in The motion was seconded by Ms. Lane-Unsworth and unanimously approved with Ms. Shank and Commissioner Wagner abstaining from the vote.

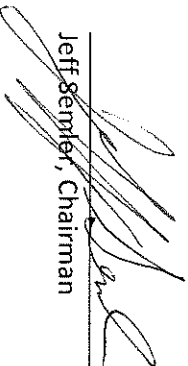
ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Goetz made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m. The motion was seconded by Ms. Lane-Unsworth and so ordered by the Chairman.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

1. June 1, 2026, 6:00 p.m. – Washington County Planning Commission regular meeting

Respectfully submitted,



Jeff Semler, Chairman

**WASHINGTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
REZONING PUBLIC INPUT AND REGULAR MEETING
June 1, 2026**

The Washington County Planning Commission held a rezoning public input meeting and its regular monthly meeting on Monday, June 1, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. at the Washington County Administrative Complex, 100 W. Washington Street, Room 2000, Hagerstown, MD.

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The Chairman called the rezoning public input meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Planning Commission members present were: Jeff Semler, Chairman, Jay Miller, Vice-Chairman, Terrie Shank, Laura Lane-Unsworth, and Doug Wright, Jr. Staff members present were: Washington County Department of Planning & Zoning: Jennifer Kinzer, Interim Director; Travis Allen, Senior Planner; Kyla Shingleton, Comprehensive Planner; Misty Wagner-Grillo, Planner; and Debra Eckard, Office Manager.

REZONING PUBLIC INPUT MEETING

Washington County Board of County Commissioners [FCO-26-001]

Mr. Allen presented a text amendment application to amend several sections of the Forest Conservation Ordinance to comply with requirements of Maryland Senate Bill 256 (SB 256) and to provide clarification of existing regulations currently found in the Ordinance to meet the intent of Maryland's Forest Conservation Act. The majority of proposed amendments are mandated by SB 256 which was passed in 2023. Subsequent amendments under House Bill 1511 require that most of these changes under the original bill be adopted by July 1, 2026. These changes represent the most significant update to the Statewide Forest Conservation Act in 30 years. A statewide Technical Study on Changes in Forest Cover and Tree Canopy in Maryland was released in 2022, which mandated HB 991 in 2021. The Study was completed using higher resolution aerial imagery than has previously been available and was the most comprehensive study of changes in forest cover since 1991. The purpose of the Study was to evaluate the effectiveness of forest protection laws in Maryland over the last 20 years and to track progress of the State's commitment to completing its portion of the Chesapeake Bay Agreement.

Mr. Allen briefly noted that State laws, such as the Forest Conservation Act have been effective in stabilizing forest loss across the State overall, particularly in the last 10 years, despite a growing population. He noted that the positive nature of this trend is somewhat mitigated by a concurrent trend which revealed a replacement in forest cover with what the Study terms "*tree canopy outside of forests*". This refers to a trend known as "*forest fragmentation*". Fragmented forests do not off the same benefits to people and wildlife as contiguous blocks of intact forest cover.

Mr. Allen summarized some of the major provisions that will take effect Statewide as follows:

1. **Changes to forest mitigation ratios:** Forest cleared for development must be replaced at 1:1 ratio unless in a Priority Funding Area (and not in a priority retention area), in which case mitigation will be a 0.5:1 ratio.
2. **New Qualified Exemption:** Qualified exemptions related to transit-oriented development, multi-family housing and solar photovoltaic facilities mean these types of projects are now responsible for reforestation requirements, not afforestation.
3. **Expanded Priority Areas for Retention:** Existing forests in urban areas and in high value watersheds are among the new areas prioritized for retention during development.
4. **Expanded Opportunities for Public Review and Challenge:** Forest clearing that takes place in the expanded priority retention areas will now sometimes require public notice and/or comment as part of the project approval.
5. **Minimum Distances for Stream Buffers:** Intermittent streams must be buffered at least 50 feet from the stream channel while perennial streams must be buffered at least 100 feet from the stream channel. Unforested stream buffers will need to be planted as part of the project's mitigation.

In addition to the state-mandated changes, staff are proposing other changes to the Ordinance to provide clarification and to clean-up the existing text in the Ordinance. Mr. Allen noted that a comprehensive amendment to the Ordinance has not occurred since its adoption in 1993. Time has clarified how we administer the Ordinance on a day-to-day basis with far greater clarity than was possible 30 years ago.

The proposed changes have been preliminarily reviewed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for consistency with requirements of SB 256. DNR is the agency responsible for administering the Forest Conservation Act statewide. The proposed language incorporates all comments received from DNR. Letters of support have been received from Jill Baker, the former Director of Planning & Zoning and the Washington County Soil Conservation District. Staff recommend approval of these proposed amendments

to meet requirements of SB 256 and to provide consistent implementation of forest conservation policies and regulations.

Discussion and Comments: There was a brief discussion regarding farmers clearing land to use in their farming operations. Mr. Allen stated that if the land is being used for farming operations, they would be exempt from forestation requirements; however, if the land is cleared to be used for a use such as a wedding venue then forestation would be required.

There was a brief discussion regarding the new public notification requirement. Mr. Allen explained that disturbance of forest in specific priority retention areas, such as: forested urban areas, high value watershed areas, forest suitable for interior forest dwelling species and stream buffers would require public notification. Notification could be made by mailing letters to affected property owners and allowing public comment via e-mail or standard mail. If more than 75% of the priority area is being cleared a public meeting for verbal comment would be required. If the Planning Commission would deny a request, the developer would need to seek other forest conservation measures.

Public Comment

Ms. Jill Baker, Williamsport – Ms. Baker spoke in favor of the proposed amendments. She noted that the State is trying to prevent forest fragmentation by providing many options for developers to retain or mitigate disturbed forest. She encouraged the Planning Commission to review each project on an individual basis and consider the proposed technique(s) chosen by the developer for mitigation.

Mr. Semler closed the Public Input Meeting at 6:23 p.m. and called the regular meeting to order.

NEW BUSINESS

MINUTES

Mr. Wright requested a change to the minutes of May 4, 2026.

Motion and Vote: Mr. Miller made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 4, 2026 Planning Commission meeting as amended. The motion was seconded by Ms. Shank and unanimously approved.

PRELIMINARY PLAT/SITE PLAN

Home2Suites – South Hagerstown [PSP-25-003]

Ms. Wagner-Grillo presented a preliminary plat/site plan for a proposed 4-story, 105-room hotel with a footprint of 25,200 square feet at 18565 Champs Crossing Drive. Lot 4 is 2.39-acres and is currently zoned HI (Highway Interchange). Water service will be provided by the City of Hagerstown and sewer service will be provided by Washington County. Storm water management will be handled through an off-site pond east of the McDonald's. Hours of operation will be 24 hours/day, 7 days/week; 20 employees are proposed. Parking required is 106 spaces; parking provided will be 112 spaces. Lighting will be pole and building mounted; a photometric plan has been submitted with the site plan. Pylon pole and building mounted signs are proposed. Landscaping will be provided around the building and throughout the parking area. Forest Conservation requirements were mitigated on a previously approved plat using off-site forest mitigation. All agency approvals have been received.

Discussion and Comments: Mr. Wright expressed his opinion that sidewalks should be provided for ease in access to other businesses in the area.

Mr. Semler asked if storm water management has been sized to accommodate Lots 3 and 5. Ms. Wagner-Grillo stated it can accommodate the remaining lots.

Mr. Miller expressed his concern that the County continues to approve projects and also continues to discuss the lack of water and sewer capacity. Ms. Kinzer stated that the City of Hagerstown as well as the County's Department of Water Quality have reviewed and approved this plan. She explained that this does not guarantee services; however, it indicates there is still allocation available. Allocation is given on a first-come/first serve basis.

Motion and Vote: Mr. Miller made a motion to approve the preliminary plat/site plan as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Lane-Unsworth and unanimously approved.

FOREST CONSERVATION

Fulton Forest Conservation Plan [TWN-26-010]

Mr. Allen presented two requests to meet forest conservation requirements on property located on Conococheague Street in Williamsport. The first request is to provide a payment-in-lieu of planting for 1.16-acres and the second request is to remove one specimen tree. The developer is proposing a gravel parking lot for tractor trailer parking in the Town of Williamsport. Mr. Allen explained that the County approves forest conservation requirements in the Town while the Town will approve the site plan. He noted that under normal circumstances, this project would qualify for the express procedure without Planning Commission approval. However, because the developer is requesting the removal of one specimen tree, the Planning Commission must approve the payment-in-lieu of request. The Forest Conservation Plan indicates the retention of forest on-site in existing floodplains; the remaining existing forest that is not being put under easement is located within a utility easement that precludes retention. The specimen tree is located in a centralized area of the site which makes retention very difficult. One specimen tree will be retained on the site.

Discussion and Comment: Mr. Miller asked if off-site retention on another parcel was considered. Mr. Allen noted that typically this developer does as much on-site retention as possible then requests the payment-in-lieu of planting to meet the remaining mitigation requirements. He reminded members that if the specimen tree removal was not requested, this project would be eligible for express approval without the Planning Commission's approval. Mr. Miller stated he is not in favor of approving the payment-in-lieu of planting request.

Motion and Vote: Mr. Miller made a motion to approve the request to remove one specimen tree. The motion was seconded by Mr. Wright and unanimously approved.

Motion and Vote: Ms. Shank made a motion to deny the payment-in-lieu of planting request and require reforestation. The motion was seconded by Ms. Lane-Unsworth.

Discussion before the vote: Mr. Allen asked for clarification if the Planning Commission wants the developer to provide mitigation on-site or use a different technique of mitigation.

Amended Motion and Vote: Ms. Shank made a motion to deny the payment-in-lieu of planting request and require another mitigation technique. The motion was seconded by Ms. Lane-Unsworth and unanimously approved.

OLD BUSINESS

Cascade Properties LLC [RZ-26-002]

Staff Presentation

Ms. Shingleton stated that a proposed text amendment to the Special Economic Development zoning district, Article 19, Sections 19c.2, 19c.3, 19c.6 and 19c.7 of the Washington County Zoning Ordinance was submitted. The proposed amendments to Article 19 of the Zoning Ordinance would include newly permitted and special exception uses as well as residential setbacks and design criteria which would allow for more opportunities, redevelopment and revitalization of the former Fort Ritchie Army Base.

Discussion and Comment: Mr. Wright expressed his opinion that Section 19.C.2 should not include electroplating or other uses that would put more serious chemical discharge into the sewage system. He believes those types of activities should occur in more industrialized areas in the County.

Ms. Kinzer reminded members that variety stores were stricken as a principally permitted use by the applicant during the public input meeting.

Motion and Vote: Mr. Miller made a motion to recommend approval to the Board of County Commissioners the proposed text amendment with electroplating and variety stores stricken from the text. The motion was seconded by Mr. Wright and unanimously approved.

Michael Godinez/Dominion Realty LLC [RZ-26-003]

Ms. Shingleton stated a proposed map amendment for properties located at 18128 and 18132 Maugans Avenue was submitted. The applicant is proposing to rezone the properties from RM (Residential Multi-family) to HI (Highway Interchange). The applicant is claiming a mistake in the original zoning of the property as well as a change in the character of the neighborhood. In the case of mistake, the applicant contends that the County erred in rezoning the properties due to the inconsistent application of the HI-1 zoning classification to properties along Maugans Avenue during the 2002 comprehensive rezoning. In the case of substantial change in the character of the neighborhood, the applicant contends there has been an increase in average daily traffic on Maugans Avenue and substantial commercial development in close proximity of the subject parcels.

Due to the reasons stated above, Staff believes it is logical to apply the Highway Interchange zoning classification to these properties based on the separation from the neighborhood that is currently zoned RM (Residential Multi-family) and the close proximity to other commercial uses.

Discussion and Comment: Mr. Semler does not believe there was a mistake in the original zoning; however, he does believe there has been a change in the character of the neighborhood.

Motion and Vote: Mr. Miller made a motion to recommend approval of the proposed map amendment to the Board of County Commissioners based on a change in the character of the neighborhood. The motion was seconded by Ms. Shank and unanimously approved.

OTHER BUSINESS

Annual Report

Ms. Kinzer presented the 2025 Annual Report which is required by the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP). She briefly highlighted sections of the Report. During 2025, 63% of the County's permits were issued in six PFAs (Priority Funding Areas), which is where the State wants development focused and 37% were outside the PFA (in the rural area). The County goal in the 2002 Comprehensive Plan was 80% in the PFAs and 20% in the rural areas (80/20 ratio); the 2040 Comp Plan goal is an 85/15 ratio. This goal continues to follow State guidance to keep development where services are available and on smaller lots leaving more of the rural community untouched.

Update of Projects Initialized

Ms. Kinzer provided a written report for land development plan review projects initialized during the month of April including 12 site plans. She also noted that the final plat for the Village at Valencia – Phase I has been submitted.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Miller made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 p.m. The motion was seconded by Ms. Lane-Unsworth and so ordered by the Chairman.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

1. July 6, 2026, 6:00 p.m. – Washington County Planning Commission regular meeting

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Semler, Chairman