

FINAL COMMITTEE PRESENTATION

Pro-Business & Pro-Citizen Code Review Recommendations

Overview of Executive Order 2025-01



Executive Mandate

Issued July 7, 2025, by Mayor William T. Martin to review the complete City Code and administrative policies.



Key Targets

Identify and eliminate regulations that are outdated, cumbersome, or more stringent than Maryland state law.



Committee Vision

Cultivate administrative predictability and accountability, turning regulations into clear, supportive frameworks.

The City Code is a Living Document

Continuous Modernization

Prevents rules from persisting decades past their practical utility.

Community Alignment

Align municipal policy with real resident and commercial needs.

Statutory Compliance

Ensures city regulations remain fully defensible under Maryland state law.

Methodology & Committee Review Process

1 Code Review

Direct section-by-section analysis across dozens of City Code chapters from zoning to administration.

2 Staff Collaboration

Joint working sessions with the City Attorney, Department of Public Works, and Planning Department.

3 Public Testimony

Receiving written and oral testimony.

4 Special Hearing:

Convened a dedicated hearing focusing on RO, RB, and MOE/MOU mixed-use commercial districts.

R-031

Technical Review Committee (TRC) Model



Consolidated Agency Review

Joint evaluation by Planning, DPW, and outside agencies, mirroring Harford County's DAC model.



Frontloaded Citizen Input

Public meeting early in review cycle so community concerns can be integrated while plans remain fluid.



Planning Commission Authority

Planning Commission retains final approval, for plats in accordance with MD Land Use Article

Unified Development Code (UDC)

Consolidating 14 Fragmented Chapters

Current rules require applicants through 14 separate chapters with overlapping procedures and conflicting provisions.

- ✓ **Core Rules:** Zoning (205), Subdivision (173), Site Plan (155)
- ✓ **Site Standards:** Landscaping (102), Parking (122), Signs (151)
- ✓ **Infrastructure:** APF (2), Stormwater (169), Water & Sewer Rates

R-033

Administrative Adjustments for Minor Deviations/dimension standards

MAXIMUM VARIATION CAP

20%

Expedited Staff Approval Window

15 Calendar Days

▶▶ Bypasses Board of Appeals

💰 Eliminates Citizen & Business Costs

🛡️ **Clear Guardrails (MD LU § 4-205)**

Requires written findings; preserves BOA appeal; excludes critical environmental areas.

R-026, R-027, R-029, R-030

Rezoning Standards & Table Conflicts

Comprehensive Rezoning (R-026)

Establishes a proactive legislative process following Comprehensive Plan updates, eliminating reliance on piecemeal rezonings.

Map Amendments (R-027)

Standardizes application submission packets, mandatory pre-filing consultation, and requires the statutory "change or mistake" narrative.

Zoning Conflicts Resolved

Finding: Conflicts exist between zoning table entries and text provisions.

R-029: Codify that written text language prevails over table data.

R-030: Split Table 1 into Residential vs. Commercial.

Standardizing Chapter 25: Boards & Commissions



Section 1: Decision-Making

Delineates quasi-judicial and statutory bodies: Planning Commission and Board of Appeals.



Section 2: Advisory Bodies

Standardizes Mayoral appointment, Council confirmation, quorums (50% + 1), and non-voting Council liaisons.



Consolidation & Cleanup

Brings scattered boards (Ethics, Historic, Tree) into Ch. 25; repeals defunct Appearance & Preservation body.

Mandatory Land Use Training (R-023)

Establish a dedicated municipal budget line item for regular training of Board of Appeals, Planning Commission, and staff.

R-010, R-011, R-023

Fines Modernization

FINES MODERNIZATION

Ordinance 776 Update

\$1,000 → \$5,000

Increases maximum municipal criminal (§ 1-1) and civil (§ 1-2) sanction fines from \$1,000 to \$5,000.

Directly enabled by 2025 Md. Laws, Ch. 621 (MD Code, Local Govt § 6-101/102).