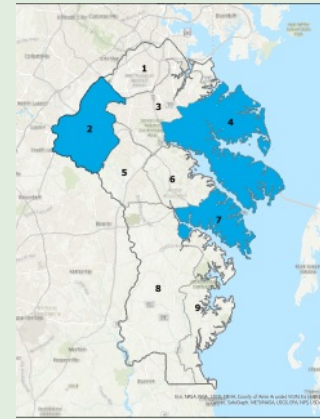




Council begins deciding the future for almost 25% of the County as early as next week



The Council will begin discussion of comprehensive rezoning in Regions 2 and 7 on March 18.

Residents of Region 2 (Jessup, Annapolis Junction, Laurel, Maryland City, parts of Hanover, and Ft. Meade) and Region 7 (Annapolis, Annapolis Neck, Parole, Bay Ridge, Highland Beach, and Riva) should review the ***Final recommended draft of the Comprehensive Zoning Map*** and the ***Table of final recommended comprehensive zoning changes*** for their region to check areas of particular interest to them. The map and table are available at the [Region Planning Hub](#). The maps allow quick identification of parcels proposed for rezoning, and the change table provides detailed information about the proposed change.

Pay attention to what is happening in your neighborhood, as some of the proposed changes are significant and will affect the quality of life there for generations. Your support of or objection to any proposed zoning change should be conveyed directly to your **Council Representative** as soon as possible, and testimony at the coming Council meetings is highly encouraged.

Small Business zoning changes meet resistance

Two areas zoned for Small Business and Residential in Regions 2 and 7 have been proposed for rezoning to Commercial and Industrial categories in the draft Region Plans now before the Council. These are areas in the Route 175 area in Jessup and near Ridgley Avenue adjacent to Annapolis.

It has been said that Small Business (SB) category has not worked as intended, and OPZ has proposed rezoning of these areas to C1 Commercial or W1 Industrial. The reasoning behind this statement is not well understood. Many residents in and around these areas have voiced firm opposition to the rezoning, and Councilmember Rodvien, representing Ridgely, has stated that she will oppose all commercial up-zoning on Ridgely. However Councilmember Smith, who represents Jessup, has not made his position clear on this issue.

Recently, Councilmember Fiedler has introduced Bill 14-24 which broadens the permitted types of businesses in SB and may address any perceived limitations of the SB category.

Long range planning by GAN Board



On February 16 the GAN Board met for an all-day long range planning meeting to review progress over the past year, identify areas of emphasis for 2024, discuss relevant issues and select subgroups for pursuing the identified topics.

Priority issues for 2024 include:

-- **Housing** -- GAN is increasingly aware of the urgent need for more housing for essential workers in our area. This is a topic of growing concern, and we have increased our attention and commitment to addressing it. We contributed input to drafts of the bill to require moderately priced housing in all new developments over 10 homes, and to incentivize the construction of housing in commercial areas which are underutilized and diminishing the surrounding areas. Regrettably, neither bill passed the Council last year. GAN is working closely with the administration and other housing advocates to develop reasonable and feasible solutions to increase housing without adding more sprawl or deforestation.

-- **Transportation** -- GAN continues to be concerned that the pace of development is far outstripping the expansion of transportation capacity in the county, adding traffic in areas that are already badly congested. We are looking carefully at the County's draft Transit Development Plan and will provide comments and suggestions. In the meantime, GAN will continue to press the county to follow its own rules to create the infrastructure before development. We have also just received the draft study of Adequate Public Facility (APF) fees. APF code sets the standards that new developments must meet, or correct, or pay a fee in lieu of other actions, for traffic and transportation and schools. It also includes the recommendation that the county create and establish minimum standards for parks before new developments can be approved.

-- **Lack of a Planning Commission in AACo** -- GAN has been concerned for several years that, unlike 22 of the other 24 jurisdictions in Maryland, AACo has no Planning Commission (PC). In other counties, PCs review all changes to the land use portions of the code and any major land use changes before they go to the County Council. Though not binding, their recommendations are public and have significant weight in the Council's deliberations. Our version, the Planning Advisory Board, has none of those responsibilities. We believe that is a major shortcoming the AACo's approach to land use planning. GAN is exploring ways to bring those greater responsibilities to our PAB, which will give citizens much greater visibility and voice into how land use decisions are made.

-- **Member outreach** -- GAN is embarking on a member outreach campaign that involves contacting all of our member HOAs and community associations over the next months to hear how GAN can better support them and their work.

-- **Meetings with administrative leaders** -- GAN is also continuing a series of Zoom meetings, open to all GAN members, with the AACo Planning and Zoning Officer, and expanding these to include other leaders in County government.

-- **Meetings with Council Members** -- GAN held a series of conversations last year with all 7 council members, open to all of our members via Zoom. Plans are being formulated now for another round of those conversations in 2024.

-- **Stormwater management** -- GAN has persuaded the County Executive to create a focal point on stormwater management and support for HOAs in his Community Engagement and Constituent Services department. It has taken us a couple of years, but we are thrilled that the county is taking these needs seriously, and we hope to have some

news on to announce soon.

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