



# DEFERRAL CODE AMENDMENTS: AGE-RESTRICTED HOUSING

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction to BCC – July 30, 2026



# TOPICS

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PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

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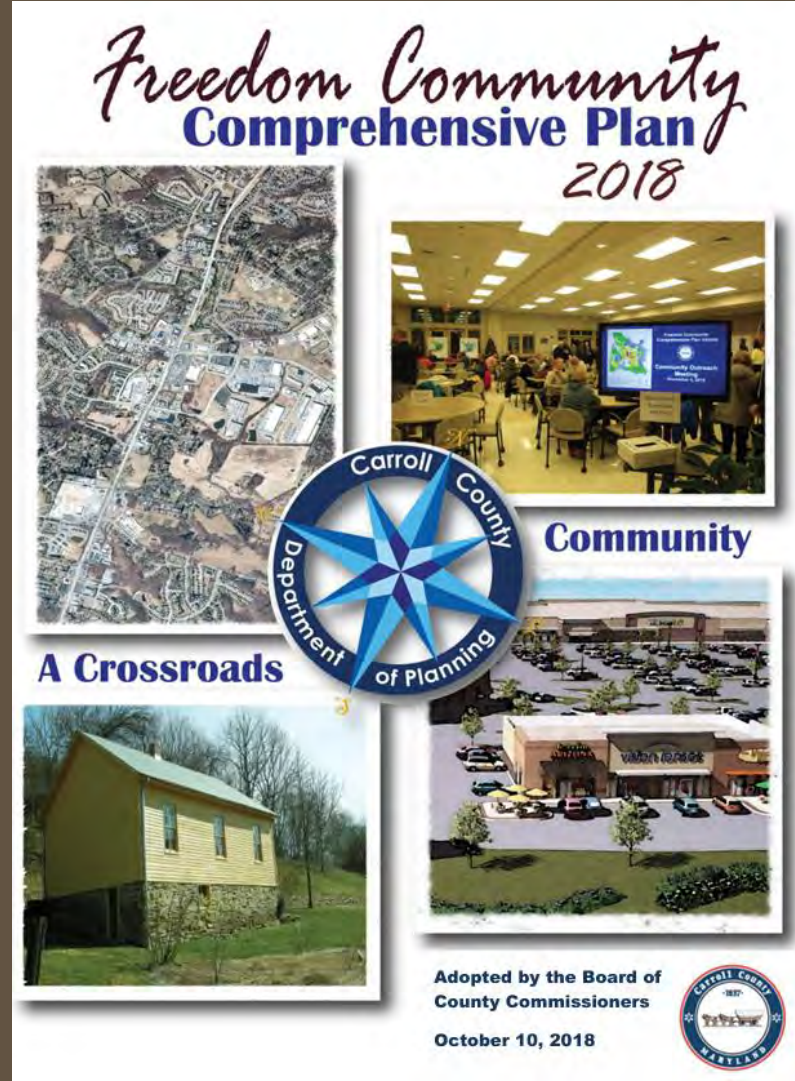
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
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# REVIEW OF DIRECTION

1. Concerns and Deferral Ordinance
2. Task 1 & 2 Report and Recommendations from Consultant
3. BCC Direction to PZC



# BCC CONCERNS AND DIRECTION

## Concerns Identified Fall 2025

- Consistency of zoning code and development practices with Planning Documents
- Overall site design related to surrounding communities
- Density of development
- Emergency service access
- Roadway widths
- Sufficient parking
- Open space
- Amenities
- Universal Design Guidelines

## Deferral Passed - December 18, 2025

- |                           |   |                                   |
|---------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| • Freedoms Grant          | - | 237 Unit Age-Restricted Community |
| • Eldersburg Overlook     | - | 156 Unit Age-Restricted Community |
| • Reservoir Run           | - | 72 Unit Age-Restricted Community  |
| • Piney Ridge Villas      | - | 31 Unit Age-Restricted Community  |
| • Legends at Luers Avenue | - | 192 Unit Age-Restricted Home      |

## Consulting Firm - Michael Baker International - Hired - February 5, 2026

# CONSULTANT ANALYSIS



**Scale and Compatibility:** Recent projects (e.g., Snowden Creek) are perceived as out-of-scale relative to surrounding neighborhoods—too tall, too large, or visually incompatible.



**Lack of Community Amenities:** Developers receive significant density bonuses, yet provide minimal amenities, resulting in dense clusters of units without corresponding community benefits.



**Universal Design / Aging in Place:** County Code Chapters 155 (Development and Subdivision of Land) and 158 (Zoning) do not require universal design or age-responsive features. Developers often claim to include them, but there is no standard or enforcement mechanism.



**Disparity Between Zoning and Expectations:** In projects like Nells Acres, areas originally envisioned for low-density single-family homes instead saw high densities (e.g., 150+ townhomes vs. 20 as-of-right) due to the bonus structure.



**Emergency Access.** Project site design and layout needs to consider requirements affecting emergency access and operations. For example, both Snowden Creek and Nells Acres buildings have possible firefighting operation challenges, and both have one point of ingress/egress.

## Primary Issue Identified:

- Lack of standards addressing age-restricted housing (including 55+ active retirement living needs)
- Heavy reliance on discretionary review of plans
- ***No inconsistencies with past planning documents, but there is room for improvement.***

**April 28, 2026 - BCC Direction to develop text amendments with Planning and Zoning Commission**

# PZC MEETINGS



- ① **JUNE 3**  
Introduction presentation from consultant  
on findings and recommendations

**JUNE 16**

Initial review of  
recommended code

Summary of community  
input meeting

②

**JULY 15**

Developer Q&A

Continued review of  
recommended code

④

**JULY 8**

Continued review of  
recommended code

③

**JULY 21**

Decision-point  
discussion

Final recommendations  
made on code  
amendments

⑤



**HELP SHAPE THE  
RETIREMENT  
COMMUNITIES OF  
TOMORROW!**

TAKE THE SURVEY TODAY.  
YOUR RESPONSES WILL HELP  
GUIDE THE FUTURE DESIGN  
OF **AGE RESTRICTED HOUS-  
ING** IN CARROLL COUNTY.

 SCAN THE QR CODE OR  
FOLLOW THE LINK:  
<https://bit.ly/4aaNuI0>



SURVEY CLOSES FRIDAY, JULY 3, 2026

## PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH AND INPUT

Community Meeting June 24

Public Survey

Public Comment during PZC meetings

Developer Q&A

Email Comments



# COMMUNITY INPUT SURVEY





# COMMUNITY INPUT SURVEY

## RETIREMENT LIVING COMMUNITY SURVEY – WHAT RESIDENTS VALUE MOST

### LESSONS FOR FUTURE RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES



#### DESIGN FEATURES RESIDENTS CRITICIZED



High-density layouts



Narrow streets



Poor emergency access



Inadequate visitor parking



Excessive HOA fees



Resort-style amenities that increase costs



Stormwater ponds dominating open space



Limited green space



Poor long-term affordability



#### DESIGN FEATURES RESIDENTS ENCOURAGED



Wide streets



Safe intersections



More visitor parking



Detached cottages and villas



Accessible homes



Walking trails



Mature trees



Smaller-scale developments



Infrastructure that keeps pace with growth

#### COMMUNITY VISION



#### Accessible Homes

Designed for aging in place



#### Convenient Parking

Plenty of parking near homes



#### Safe Streets

Wide roads and emergency access



#### Green Spaces

Parks, trails and natural beauty



#### Connected Community

Places to gather and stay connected

THE SURVEY COMMENTS INDICATE THAT FUTURE RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES SHOULD EMPHASIZE PRACTICAL DESIGN, AGING IN PLACE, AFFORDABILITY, AND SAFE, WELL-PLANNED NEIGHBORHOODS.

# PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION DISCUSSION SUMMARY

June 3 – July 21, 2026

# FREEDOM COMMUNITY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

## Summary of Recommendations - Page 3

- Any increases in land use densities will be generally limited in order to mitigate the impact on traffic and existing infrastructure.
- Allow potential for a variety of housing types and densities to serve all ages, particularly the aging population and families with young children, consistent with the Vision Statement of this Plan. Recognizing that many citizens came to the Freedom Area to escape the trappings of urbanization in surrounding counties, the government will not attempt to fundamentally transform communities against the will of existing homeowners and residents.
- Recognizing that Freedom is a suburban/rural area, government will respect the character of the community and its neighborhoods.
- According to the Pew Research Center there is an increasing trend toward "Generational Housing" wherein multiple generations live under one roof. "A record 64 million Americans live in multigenerational households." Freedom should remain a place that will accommodate larger homesites that can accommodate additions of in-law suites or similar improvements that enable multiple generations of families to live together. Facilitate residential infill development consistent with the character of adjacent housing in Freedom's existing established neighborhoods, recognizing the value that many citizens place on larger lot development.





# FREEDOM COMMUNITY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

## Housing Needs - Page 59

"Eventually, most baby boomers may need or demand different housing types as they age, moving out of their single-family homes located on large lots and into smaller attached or detached homes such as villas, townhomes, apartment-style living communities, retirement age-restricted communities, in-law apartments, or townhomes located on smaller lots."

## A Great Place to Live, Raise a Family and Retire - Page 60

"This may be realized through the following:"

"(d) The County's Zoning and Subdivision Codes, (Chapters 155 and 158), which currently allow for a limited variety of housing types and development patterns to serve a diverse population."



# FREEDOM COMMUNITY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

## Recommendations - Page 66

1. Review and possibly amend the County Zoning Code (Chapter 158) and Subdivision Regulations (Chapter 155) to facilitate a variety of housing types to serve all ages, including single-family detached, attached, and semi-detached, townhouses, and multifamily homes in the Freedom area.
2. Review and possibly amend Chapters 155 and 158 to facilitate, where appropriate, higher density development in the Designated Growth Area.
3. Conduct an assessment of the PUD provisions, as well as other development tools currently in place, in order to improve their applicability in providing well- designed communities with diverse housing types and onsite amenities.
4. Investigate a variety of new techniques and incentives, including density bonuses and flexible lot size and bulk regulations, to enable development and housing design that is desirable for residents at all stages of life.
5. Encourage, in the limited number of remaining sites, large mixed-use planned developments that allow for a variety of housing types, businesses, and recreational amenities to serve all ages.
6. Encourage, in areas where appropriate, particularly areas with planned or existing water and sewer availability, infill development in character with the existing housing in Freedom's established neighborhoods to meet the county's future needs for higher density.
7. Designate future residential development, particularly for senior citizens, in proximity and accessible to commercial and recreational opportunities.
8. Continue to investigate the adequacy of water and sewer capacity in the Freedom area to accommodate the increased residential development proposed in this plan.



# FREEDOM COMMUNITY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

## Residential - Medium Density - Page 213

Areas within the Designated Growth Areas where residential development is the primary land use. Development densities are generally two dwelling units per acre, and single-family detached homes are the use. In cases where clustering is approved, yields shall remain the same. Water and sewer service should be planned to these areas. 55+ Age restricted and retirement communities are permitted providing they do not exceed the height restrictions of the zoning district, and do not exceed a total density of 3.5 units per acre. Planned Unit Developments (PUD) are prohibited.

***Currently, plan's Designated Land Use descriptions and associated Zoning code align.***





# CONSULTANT RECOMMENDATIONS



## RECOMMENDATION CATEGORIES

- Emergency Access Standards
- Standalone Age-Restricted Housing Section
- Definitions
- Reassess Density Calculations
- Context-Sensitive Design Standards
- Universal Design/Aging-in-Place Site Design and Exterior Standards
- Refine the Approval Process
- Parking Design & Minimum Standards
- Minimum Housing Type Mix
- Revise Community Amenity Requirements
- Open Space Calculations
- Sidewalk & Pedestrian Standards

# PROPOSED CODE: PRINCIPAL USES

## **Age-Restricted Home -** Multi-Family Buildings

- R-10,000
- R-7,500
- C-1
- C-2



- Change to Principal Permitted Use
  - With better defined requirements, multi-step approval involving Board of Zoning Appeals is not needed.
  - Simplified and clearer process.

# PROPOSED CODE: PRINCIPAL USES

## **Age-Restricted Community** –

Mix of attached and detached single family dwelling units

- R-20,000
- R-10,000
- R-7,500
- C-1
- C-2



- Change to Principal Permitted Use
  - With better defined requirements, multi-step approval involving Board of Zoning Appeals is not needed.
  - Simplified and clearer process.



# PROPOSED CODE: PRINCIPAL USES

## Age-Restricted Community Including Age-Restricted Home -

Mix of attached and detached single family as well as multi-family buildings

- R-10,000
- R-7,500
- C-1
- C-2



- Prior to 2022, all age-restricted housing was considered a "retirement home," including multi-family and single family (attached and detached) housing types
- In 2022, Code created new "retirement village" (community) use and restricted "retirement homes" from R-20,000
- By separating uses, Communities with Homes were no longer allowed. Examples like Winifred Manor show how this use can help create transition areas.



# PROPOSED CODE: EMERGENCY ACCESS STANDARDS

## **Defined "Fire Lane"**

- Fire lane must have clearance of 20 feet of width and 13.5 feet vertical.
- Must be in place for building construction
- Must allow access to within 50 feet of building entrance (150 feet if sprinklered)
- Multiple fire lane access points to site can be required
- Turn arounds required
- Markings can be required

## **Access**

- Rear of buildings to be within 150 feet (450 feet if sprinklered) to fire lane.
- Minimum of 20 feet between buildings

# PROPOSED CODE: DENSITY AND HOUSING MIX

## Age-Restricted Communities

### Density

- R-20,000 – 3.5 Dwelling Units per acre (Specified in Planning Documents)
- R-10,000 and R-7,500 – 6 Dwelling Units per acre
- C-1 and C-2 – To be approved by PZC

### Housing Mix

Age Restricted Community Projects >50 Dwelling Units

- At least 30 percent of total units must be single family detached.



# PROPOSED CODE: DENSITY AND HOUSING MIX

## Age-Restricted Homes

### Density

- R-10,000 and R-7,500 – 1 Dwelling Unit per 3,000 square feet of parcel area
- This is equivalent to 14.5 Dwelling Units per acre
- This metric has been in place in County code since 1971.
- C-1 and C-2 – 20 Dwelling Units per acre

## Age-Restricted Community containing Age-Restricted Home

### Density

- 20 Dwelling Units per acre

### Housing Mix

- 70% of dwelling units must be in multi-family homes





# PROPOSED CODE: COMMUNITY DESIGN STANDARDS

## **Building spacing**

- Minimum space between buildings - 20 feet

## **Townhomes**

- Maximum number of dwelling units in a building - 5
- Maximum townhome building width - 150 feet

**Architectural features** shown in plans to be reviewed and approved by PZC

## **Required Universal Design Features**

- At least one-step free entrance
- Front doors a minimum of 36 inch in width.
- Wide corridors and doorways - Minimum 36 inch wide recommended.

## **Recommended Universal Design Features**

## **Safety and Security**

- Well lit parking areas, walkways, and entrances



# PROPOSED CODE: PARKING DESIGN STANDARDS

## Age--Restricted Communities

- Two parking spaces per dwelling unit
- One guest parking space for every five dwelling units

## Age-Restricted Homes

- One and a half parking spaces per dwelling unit
- One Guest parking space for every ten dwelling units

## Driveways

- Must be 18 feet long to allow unobstructed parking
- 12 feet wide when single car garage
- 20 feet wide when two car garages

## Guest parking

- Must be evenly distributed through community
- No dwelling to be more than 600 feet from guest parking
- May be on street or off street
  - On street must be striped to delineate
  - Must maintain fire lane access width

# PROPOSED CODE: PEDESTRIAN DESIGN STANDARDS

## **Sidewalks along roadways**

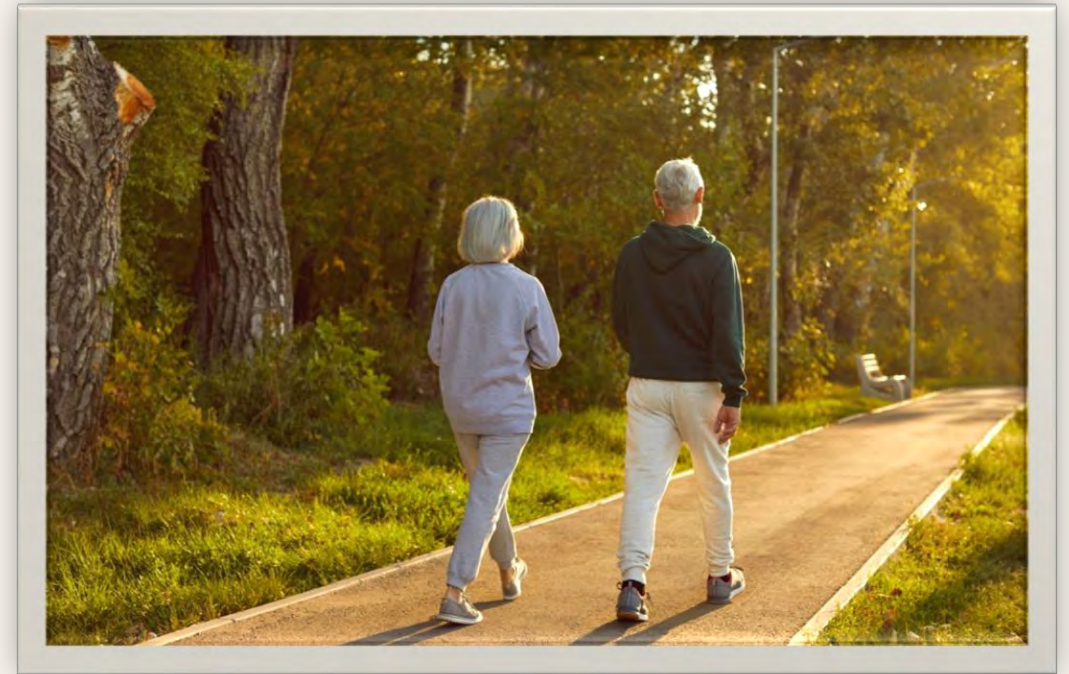
- Minimum five feet wide
- Two feet of buffer from sidewalk to roadway

## **Sidewalks along parking areas**

- Minimum six feet wide
- No buffer required

## **Pathways**

- Pedestrian pathways
  - Minimum 5 feet wide
- Shared-use pathways (bike/ped)
  - Minimum 10 feet wide
- Hardened material, either gravel or pavement



<https://parsonshouselaporte.com/how-walking-benefits-seniors/>

# PROPOSED CODE: OPEN SPACE STANDARDS

- Minimum of 25% open space required
  - Open space is all area not encumbered by hard infrastructure (roads and buildings)
- A maximum of 50% of required open space may be environmental features such as steep slopes, streams, ponds, stormwater management facilities.
- A minimum of 10% of required open space must be suitable for active recreational use.

## **Example: 100 Acre site**

- 25 Acres of required open space
- 12.5 Acres can be environmental and counted towards open space req.
- 2.5 Acres must be suitable for active recreational use



# PROPOSED CODE: AMENITY DESIGN STANDARDS

- Amenity report is required and submitted as part of concept plan.
  - Identify, describe, and illustrate the type, size, and location of all indoor and outdoor amenities.
  - Identify the long-term maintenance plan for amenities.
  - Amenities must be completed prior to occupancy of 50% of the dwelling units.
  - Amenities shall be bonded.
- Planning and Zoning Commission will review and approve the amenity plan as appropriate for the community or home being proposed.

# NEXT STEPS

- July 30 – Presentation to Board of County Commissioners
  - Direct staff to hold public hearing
- August – Any Board directed activities to further conversation
  - Work sessions?
  - Public meetings?
- September 3 – Public Hearing
  - Board leaves record open for 10 days
- September 3 to September 17 – Any Board directed activities to further conversation
  - Work sessions?
  - Public meetings?
- September 17 – Adoption if directed by Board
- September 27 – Code is in effect 10 days after adoption by Board
- October 1 – State residential early vesting law goes into effect

*I move the Board of County Commissioners direct staff to schedule a public hearing for proposed text amendments to County code related to Age-Restricted Communities and Homes.*

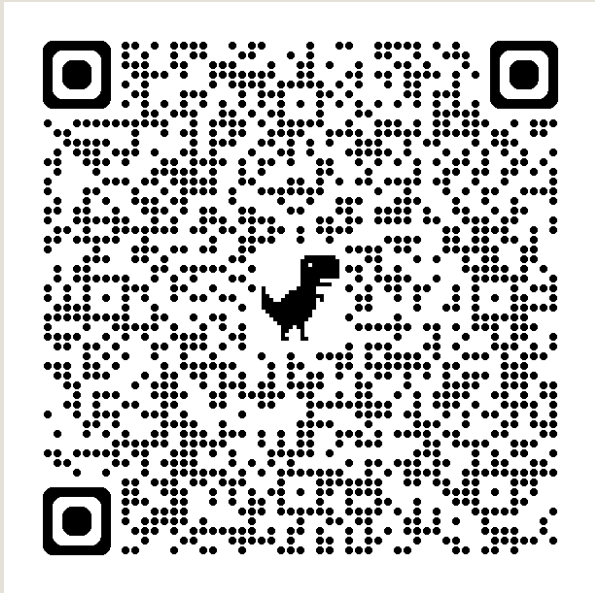
# STAFF REQUEST

[www.carrollcountymd.gov](http://www.carrollcountymd.gov)

Directory

- Planning & Land Management
  - Comprehensive Planning
    - Rezoning and Text Amendments
      - Zoning Text Amendments

*Freedom Area Deferrals:  
Retirement Homes and  
Retirement Villages*



# PUBLIC INPUT

- PROPOSED CODE AMENDMENTS CAN BE REVIEWED ON COUNTY WEBSITE
- COMMENTS SHOULD BE SENT TO THE BCC AND DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND LAND MANAGEMENT

[commissioners@carrollcountymd.gov](mailto:commissioners@carrollcountymd.gov)

[cheyn@carrollcountymd.gov](mailto:cheyn@carrollcountymd.gov)