Amendment 48 to Council Bill No. 28 -2023

BY: The Chairperson at the Request
    of the County Executive

Legislative Day 11
Date: October 2, 2023

Amendment No. 48

(This Amendment adds an action item to develop criteria for zoning changes for suburban commercial character areas adjacent to redeveloping activity centers.)

1 In the *HoCo By Design* General Plan, attached to this Act as Exhibit A, amend the following
2 pages as indicated in this Amendment:

3 • Chapter 7, Quality By Design – page 34

4 • Chapter 11, Implementation – page 47

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6 Correct all page numbers, numbering, and formatting within this Act to accommodate this

7 amendment.

When developing activity centers, integrating transportation design principles creates cohesive, fluid, and engaging experiences for cyclists and pedestrians. Many suburban rights-of-way (ROW) were designed for high-speed, auto-only travel. By narrowing travel lanes and adding on-street parking, sidewalks, and planting strips, streets can be made safer and more walkable, creating a more user-friendly, aesthetically-pleasing public realm. Redevelopment can also address barriers to non-motorized connectivity in places like aging shopping centers by enhancing pedestrian connections and creating internal drives with infill buildings fronting onto them. Rather than having large surface parking lots between the building and the street, this redevelopment approach relocates parking to the rear of buildings, thereby achieving better land use transition patterns.

Many of the activity centers identified in the FLUM are existing suburban shopping centers and office parks that contain large swaths of impermeable areas and often reflect outdated automobile-centric site designs. Retrofitting aging building sites allows developers to take advantage of existing infrastructure and services. Such redevelopment further helps to mitigate the effects of sprawl by providing better connections to transit and mobility corridors.

Green Redevelopment

Redevelopment of existing shopping centers provides significant environmental benefits by introducing open space, community gathering areas, and stormwater management where none currently exist. Examples of open space elements that can be added in redeveloped centers include small parks, squares, plazas, and community gardens. New or improved stormwater management, which incorporates environmental site design practices, reduces impervious area and adverse impacts to sensitive watersheds. The County currently reviews energy and water efficiency requirements in its Building Code every three years and during the Building Code update process. The County should continue to review these requirements to ensure they reflect the most recent best practices. To further these green initiatives, the County should explore integrating additional environmentally sustainable design standards in future updates for the Zoning Regulations, site design requirements, and environmental programs.

In 2020, Howard County added bird-friendly design standards to its pre-existing Green Building requirements (which apply to new public buildings of 10,000 square feet or larger and new private buildings of 50,000 square feet or larger). The purpose of bird-friendly design is to reduce the likelihood that birds will collide with buildings. Design techniques include use of façade materials that are more visible to birds and reduction of excessive artificial lights that can disorient migrating birds.

QBD-2 Policy Statement

Use the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) to guide redevelopment in identified activity centers, which present opportunities for mixed-use development, mixed-income housing, small parks or community gathering spaces, increased stormwater management, and multi-modal transportation options.

Implementing Actions

1. Use the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) during the rezoning process to create activity centers consistent with the character area descriptions.
2. Assess existing Subdivision and Land Development Regulations, Zoning Regulations, and Design Advisory Panel design review policies for opportunities to create or strengthen regulations and design standards for activity center development/redevelopment. Evaluate potential standards for frontage design, main entrance location, and parking calculations. Incorporate accessibility by including standards and guidance to ensure there is direct access to the building from the street.
3. Review the Zoning Regulations and design manuals to identify ways to mitigate the impacts of auto-oriented uses and minimize negative impacts, including odor, noise, light, air pollution, and diesel emissions.
4. Ensure redevelopment of suburban shopping centers and office parks reduces impervious surface, increases open space, and provides adequate stormwater management, where none or little existed before.
5. Explore integrating additional environmentally sustainable design standards in future updates to the Zoning Regulations, site design requirements, and environmental programs to further green initiatives.
6. When retrofitting shopping centers and business parks, investigate opportunities to create mixed-income housing for all residents.
7. Develop criteria for zoning changes for suburban commercial character areas adjacent to redeveloping activity centers.

Table 10-1: Implementation Matrix

Policy and Implementing Actions	Lead Agency	Timeframe (Mid-Term five-year, Long-Term six+ years, Ongoing)
QBD-2 - Use the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) to guide redevelopment in identified activity centers, which present opportunities for mixed-use development, mixed-income housing, small parks or community gathering spaces, increased stormwater management, and multi-modal transportation options.		
1. Use the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) during the rezoning process to create activity centers consistent with the character area descriptions.	**DPZ**	Mid-Term
2. Assess existing Subdivision and Land Development Regulations, Zoning Regulations, and Design Advisory Panel design review policies for opportunities to create or strengthen regulations and design standards for activity center development/redevelopment. Evaluate potential standards for frontage design, main entrance location, and parking calculations. Incorporate accessibility by including standards and guidance to ensure there is direct access to the building from the street.	**DPZ**	Mid-Term
3. Review the Zoning Regulations and design manuals to identify ways to mitigate the impacts of auto-oriented uses and minimize negative impacts, including odor, noise, light, air pollution, and diesel emissions.	**DPZ**	Mid-Term
4. Ensure redevelopment of suburban shopping centers and office parks reduces impervious surface, increases open space, and provides adequate stormwater management, where none or little existed before.	**DPZ**	Ongoing
5. Explore integrating additional environmentally sustainable design standards in future updates to the Zoning Regulations, site design requirements, and environmental programs to further green initiatives.	**DPZ** OCS DILP	Ongoing
6. When retrofitting shopping centers and business parks, investigate opportunities to create mixed-income housing for all residents.	**DPZ** DHCD	Long-term
7. Develop criteria for zoning changes for suburban commercial character areas adjacent to redeveloping activity centers.	**DPZ**	Mid-Term

Table 10-1: Implementation Matrix

Policy and Implementing Actions	Lead Agency	Timeframe (Mid-Term five-year, Long-Term six+ years, Ongoing)
QBD-3 - Focus on creating active, walkable, and universally accessible public realms in all new development and redevelopment and include a broad range of community spaces, as appropriate to each character area.		
1. Prioritize the orientation of buildings toward the street in all new development and redevelopment to create more walkable places.	**DPZ**	Ongoing
2. Work with stakeholders and community members to incorporate policies for diverse and inclusive public art and cultural expression throughout the County. Identify potential partnerships for strengthening public art programs and art education opportunities.	**DPZ**	Long-term
3. Continue to work with stakeholders of all ages and abilities to identify strategies for universal access to employment centers, stores, parks, and recreation and community amenities.	**OOT** DRP DCRS DILP	Ongoing
4. Establish goals and guidelines for providing community open spaces and park spaces to create more equitable access across different neighborhoods in Howard County. Ideally, residents should have a variety of open space choices within walking or biking distance of their home.	**DRP** DPZ	Mid-Term
5. Evaluate the goals described in the Route 1 Manual, Route 40 Design Manual, Clarksville Pike Streetscape Plan and Design Guidelines, and Complete Streets Policy for updates and determine if there are items in these manuals that could be adapted more broadly within the County.	**DPZ** OOT	Mid-Term
6. Use a holistic approach to incorporating transportation infrastructure into the public realm that focuses on connections and universal user experience.	**OOT** DPW	Long-term