

City of Rockville Report – Rockville Economic Development, Inc.
Board of Directors Meeting
March 27, 2025

February 24, 2025 - Mayor and Council Meeting

Authorization to File a Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) to Implement Certain Zoning Recommendations of the Town Center Master Plan, Including Implementation of Floating Zones

The Mayor and Council authorized the filing of this ZTA, which provides for three “floating zones” that may be applied for in the Town Center Planning Area. The floating zones would implement in part the zoning recommendations from the Town Center Master Plan, adopted in January and correspond to the three character areas identified in the Town Center Plan: MD 355 Corridor, Core and Edge. These three core areas are recommended for additional height from what is currently allowed in the code. For example, the MD 355 Corridor area would have a maximum height of 235 feet, with the potential for a bonus height of an additional 100 feet if MPDUs in excess of the current requirements are provided. In addition, the ZTA eliminates off-street parking and ground floor retail space requirements for projects that develop under the floating zone. The Planning Commission will make a recommendation on March 12, and the Mayor and Council will hold a public hearing and potentially adopt the ZTA on March 24.

March 3, 2025 - Mayor and Council Meeting

Work session on the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite (ZOR) focusing on development review process improvements (FAST 2)

Staff presented four recommendations:

1. Streamline the Project Plan process to be achievable within six months by combining multiple area meetings into a single post application area meeting, removing the required briefings for Planning Commission and Mayor and Council, and allowing subsequent site plans to be approved administratively.
2. Streamline the Planned Development amendment process to be achievable within six months by combining multiple area meetings into a single post application area meeting, removing the required briefings for Planning Commission and Mayor and Council, and allowing the requests to proceed directly to Mayor and Council with Planning Commission deciding subsequent site plans.
3. Allowing site plans to be approved administratively when in the most intense Mixed-Use zones (MXB, MXCT, MXE, MXCD, and MXTD) when not within 300 feet of a residential zone.
4. Allowing other types of site plans to be approved administratively, including R&D in the MXE zone, nonresidential to residential conversions, housing for senior adults, and other small residential projects.

During the work session, Mayor and Council expressed general support for streamlining processes. A majority of Mayor and Council expressed support for both recommendations 1 and 2 as presented while also requesting:

- Planning Commission’s feedback
- How to ensure Mayor and Council can be updated on projects (and provide feedback prior to hearing) if briefings are removed

Mayor and Council did not move forward with recommendations 3 and 4. They requested the following information for further consideration:

- Planning Commission’s feedback
- Examples of similar changes from other cities that have been successful
- Examples of cases to be affected by this change

Public Hearing - Ordinance to Grant Zoning Text Amendment to Modify Parking Requirements for Certain Residential Dwellings; The Mayor and Council conducted a public hearing on the ZTA, which would reduce the parking requirement for townhouse units that are also Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs).

The new requirement will be one space instead of two, provided that the units are MPDUs within a Planned Development; that there exist on-street spaces at a rate of .5 spaces per townhouse unit within the site plan containing the units; and that a Metro station is within 7/10 of a mile of the units, or a bus stop is nearby. This ZTA is intended to solve the problem with garage spaces in townhouse MPDUs in the Reserve at Tower Oaks being built with insufficient width. Representatives of The Reserve at Tower Oaks HOA as well as several MPDU owners spoke at the hearing, generally supportive of the ZTA. One homeowner raised the issue of the bioswales that are parallel to the roadway which are causing concerns with access to the units, and the potential for reducing the amount of on-street parking. However, this ongoing effort will not reduce the parking below the .5 spaces per unit.

Consider Approval of an Ordinance to grant Zoning Text Amendment to Modify Parking Requirements for Certain Residential Dwellings

The Mayor and Council adopted the Zoning Text Amendment described above.

March 17, 2025 Mayor and Council meeting

Introduction of an Ordinance to Appropriate Funds and Levy Taxes for Fiscal Year 2026

The Ordinance to Appropriate Funds and Levy Taxes for Fiscal Year 2026 was introduced. The FY2026 Budget is scheduled for adoption on May 5, 2025.

FY 2026 Budget Worksession #1 - Strategic Initiatives, Reorganization, and Revenues

The City Manager and Finance leadership provided an overview of the City Manager's Recommended FY2026 Operating and Capital Budget. The Mayor and Council discussed and asked questions relating to the strategic initiatives, reorganization and revenues associated with the Recommended Budget. The operating budget totals \$174.9 million which is a 3.9% increase over the current year. The CIP includes \$33.8 in new funding for a total of \$94.7 million supporting 65 CIP projects. The general fund includes new funding for several initiatives that align with the Mayor and Council's guiding principles in the areas of public safety, housing, economic development, effective and efficient service delivery, and stewardship of the environment and infrastructure. The reorganization entails the Procurement function and the Communications and Community Engagement function operating as separate stand-alone departments. For additional details, please see the staff report at <https://www.rockvillemd.gov/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/03172025-7443>.

FY 2026 Budget Public Hearing #2

The Mayor and Council held the second FY2026 budget public hearing. Residents, local non-profits representatives, and other stakeholders made budget requests and provided input on City programs and services for the FY2026 Rockville Budget. The public record will remain open until April 7.

Upcoming Mayor and Council Meeting:

March 24, 2024 Meeting:

- FY2026 Budget Public Hearing #3
- M&C Worksession #2 – Grants, and Fund Balance
- Town Center Master Plan Floating Zone Text Amendment Public Hearing and Adoption