



REGION PLANS 5, 6, & 8 STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE



PROCEDURES DOCUMENT

This document outlines the purpose, guiding principles, and approach to preparing Region Plans. The purpose of this document is to provide clarity, set expectations, and support effective collaboration among Stakeholder Advisory Committee (Committee) members and Anne Arundel County staff. This document includes the following sections:

1. Overview
2. [Planning Process](#)
3. [Roles and Responsibilities](#)
4. [Communications](#)
5. [Ethics and Conflicts of Interest](#)
6. [Decision Making](#)

1. Overview

Region Plans offer community members an opportunity to get together and develop a shared vision for their future. With the adoption of [Plan2040](#), the County's update to the General Development Plan (GDP), the County Council directed the Office of Planning and Zoning (OPZ) to work with communities to prepare plans for each of the County's nine regions. Plan2040 and County Code ([Article 18-2-103](#)) establish the nine regions, the composition of Stakeholder Advisory Committees (SAC) for each region, and outline the content of the plans. The Region Plans will build on the work of the previous Small Area Plans and Plan2040. See Plan2040 ([Vol. 1](#), pgs. 68-71, and [Vol. II](#), pgs. 225-232) for more information. A [Region Plan Handbook](#) is also available to support the planning process.

1.1 Relationship between Region Plans and the General Development Plan

The GDP establishes policies for guiding decisions relating to future development, resource management and protection, and provision of public services in the County. As part of the GDP, a Planned Land Use Map is adopted that shows land use in broad terms, as a basis for guiding future land use and zoning. The GDP and the Planned Land Use Map serve as the overall policy guide for developing the Region Plans. The Region Plans provide area-specific recommendations for achieving and refining the goals of the GDP, including a comprehensive assessment of Zoning Map designations. Because the Region Plans focus on a smaller geographic area, they can provide parcel-specific recommendations with regard to planned land use and zoning. Region Plans can recommend changes in land use from the Planned Land Use Map adopted in Plan2040; however, the land use analysis and category definitions should be consistent across regions. After they are adopted by the County Council, Region Plans will be considered amendments to the GDP.

1.2 Office of Planning and Zoning (OPZ) Work Products

Office of Planning and Zoning staff will develop and provide the following materials during the Region Plan process:

- Public Involvement Plan;
- Community Engagement Activities—materials and summary reports;
- Existing Conditions and Trends Analysis—online maps, graphs, and brief memos;
- Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meetings—briefing materials, presentations, summary notes;
- Preliminary Draft, Planning Advisory Board Draft, Final Recommended Draft, and Council-Adopted Region Plan; and,
- Updated Development Policy Area, Planned Land Use, and Zoning Maps.

1.3 Outcomes

The following are outcomes the County aims to achieve from the Region Plan process:

- Engaged and empowered communities with a deeper understanding of the perspectives of different stakeholders, their Region’s issues, and tools to address them;
- Broad respect and support for both the planning process and the plan document;
- Articulation of a vision for the future or the Region that is broadly supported;
- Specific, place-based implementation strategies that resonate with the community and address key issues and concerns;
- A clear set of prioritized actions and pathway to implementation; and,
- Establishment of systems to track plan implementation progress and effectiveness.

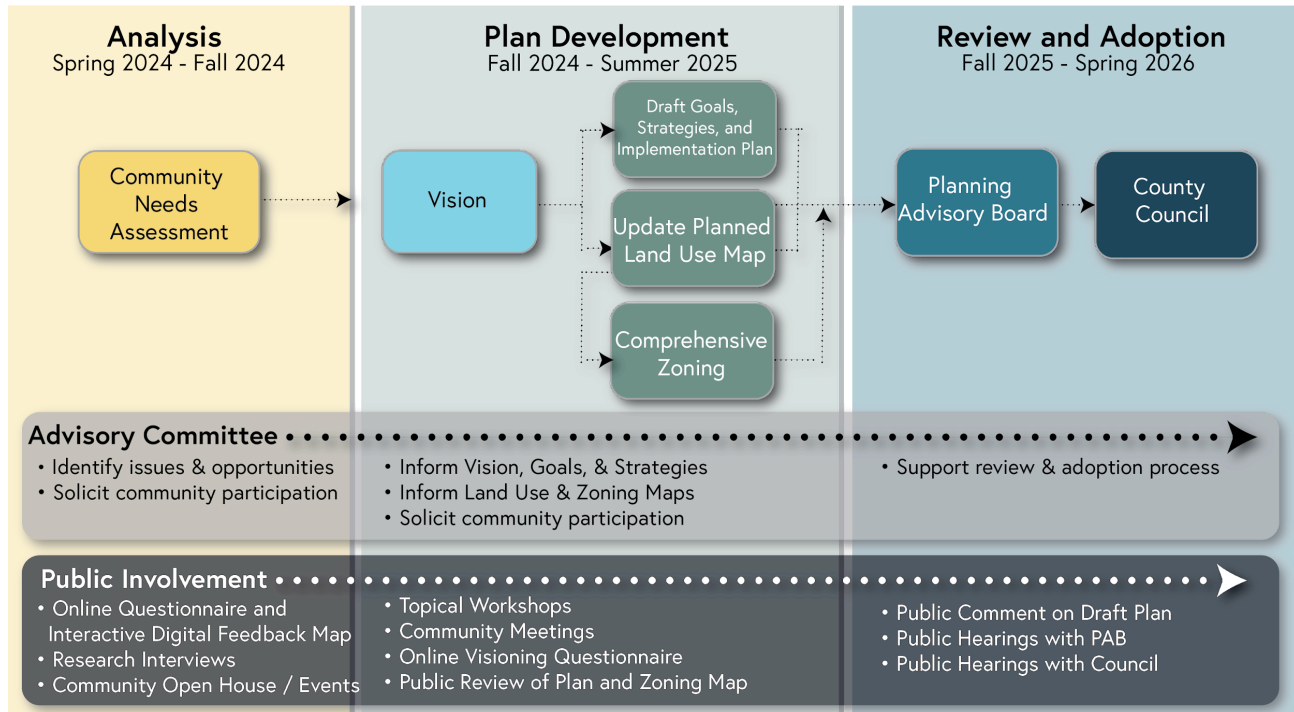
1.4 Guiding Principles

The Region Plan process and outputs will incorporate the following guiding principles:

- Inclusivity—The planning process will proactively engage with a broad cross-section of the region to listen to their concerns and incorporate their perspectives into the plan.
- Respect—We recognize that people have different perspectives, experiences, and aspirations, and we will engage in respectful dialogue in the planning process.
- Health—The plan will chart a course to make the community more healthy through increased access to nature and recreational opportunities, reducing pollution, and increasing opportunities for mobility alternatives, including walking and biking, for all people, including those with disabilities.
- Environmental Protection—The plan will prioritize protecting the environment.
- Equity—The planning process and resulting plan document will address racial and social inequity.
- Economic Vitality—The plan will seek ways to support economic vitality in the region.

2. Planning Process

Each Region Plan will follow the same general planning process. The details of the process will be tailored to the unique characteristics and needs of each region. The process is illustrated in the following graphic.



3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC or Committee)

The Committees will play a key supporting role in developing the Region Plans. They will meet regularly and collaborate with County staff to provide input and assist the County in examining specific community challenges and opportunities, as they relate to land use and zoning, for the respective Region. The SAC will also advise County staff in drafting a vision, goals, and strategies, as well as make recommendations for changes to the Development Policy Area, Planned Land Use, and Zoning maps.

Committee meetings will be open to the public, however, the intent of these meetings is for the Committee members to collaborate with staff and each other in developing a Region Plan. Engagement opportunities for the general public are provided throughout the process, so public input at the committee meetings is limited to a time defined by the Committee chair. Agendas will be posted to the Region Plan Hub websites prior to the meetings. Meetings will be recorded, where feasible, and video recordings of the meetings will be posted shortly after the meeting, when available. Meeting notes will be made available following the subsequent SAC meeting.

3.2 Committee Time Commitment

- The Committee is scheduled to meet 10 times during the planning process; however, additional meetings can be added if staff or the Committee determine a need. Meetings are expected to be two to three hours long.
- The Committee may also be expected to attend a driving tour of the Region.

- A member of the Committee may be removed following three consecutive absences from scheduled Committee meetings, when combined with a lack of communication with either the Committee chair, vice chair, and/or OPZ staff. Committee members may be replaced by a County Executive appointment and approval by the County Council on a case-by-case basis.
- Committee members may not appoint another individual to participate in their absence.
- Committee members are expected to participate in community outreach events and public meetings during the planning process.
- Once the planning process is concluded and an acceptable plan is drafted, Committee members are encouraged to proactively participate in the Planning Advisory Board and County Council deliberations.

3.3 Roles and Responsibilities

These are roles of the Committee chair (and vice chair):

- Work collaboratively and constructively with OPZ staff to facilitate the Region Plan Process.
- Facilitate the Committee meetings and discussions.
- Ensure that Committee members stay focused on agenda items.
- Ensure that each Committee member participates and is heard.
- Complete the Open Meetings Act training.
- Preserve order and decorum during each meeting, as described in [§ 4-106. Order and decorum](#).

Committee members are expected to engage in the following ways:

- Complete County [Ethics training](#); complete the County's [Conflict of Interest disclosure form](#); and, sign this document acknowledging the purpose, process, and roles and responsibilities prior to the first Committee meeting.
- Become familiar with the goals, policies, and strategies of Plan2040.
- Become familiar with planning concepts, land use regulations, and community trends.
- Be familiar with the built and natural environment of the Region.
- Be prepared for meetings by reviewing all relevant materials ahead of time.
- Be respectful of work products and avoid sharing draft materials outside of the established public review and input process.
- Work to understand the ideas and needs of various groups in the community (e.g., businesses, developers, environmentalists, preservationists, immigrants, etc.) and ensure these groups' views are considered.
- Seek input from their associated communities on a long-term vision, issues, and opportunities.
- Be a constructive partner with County staff and other Committee members to review and provide input on a vision, strategies, and the draft Region Plan.
- Participate on subcommittees as needed.
- Assist/support in the public forums, Planning Advisory Board meetings, and County

Council meetings.

- Be proficient in the use of computer technology and willing to use technology as a means of Committee engagement, including email, standard word processing applications, publicly accessible mapping applications, Google Suite, video conferencing software, and electronic document review.
- Be respectful of OPZ staff time outside of regularly scheduled meetings.
- Respect the schedule, the time of the entire group, and settled decisions.

The members of the Committee are listed in Attachment A.

3.4 Project Team

A team of planners from OPZ's Long Range Planning Section is assigned to each Region Plan. They will manage the planning process, conduct analyses, facilitate Committee meetings, prepare the draft plan, and guide it through the public review and adoption process. The role of County Staff will be to perform the following activities throughout the planning process:

- Work collaboratively and constructively with the SAC.
- Be respectful of the time of the SAC.
- Lead and coordinate technical analyses for the Region Plan, with support from other County departments and partners as needed.
- Lead and coordinate community engagement activities, with support from other County departments and partners as needed.
- Facilitate and provide summary notes for the SACe meetings.
- Prepare the Region Plan document in collaboration with the SAC, with support from other County departments and partners as needed.

A Project Team, including representatives from key departments (as in Plan2040), will be convened to support the Region Plans. Key members of the Project Team will include representatives from the following County agencies and stakeholder groups:

- OPZ, Zoning Division
- OPZ, Development Division
- OPZ, Planning Division, Cultural Resources Section
- OPZ, Planning Division, Research and GIS Section
- Office of Law
- Department of Recreation and Parks
- Department of Public Works
- Office of Transportation
- Department of Inspections and Permits
- Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation
- Anne Arundel Community Development Services
- Department of Aging and Disabilities
- Anne Arundel County Public Schools
- Anne Arundel County Public Library
- Partnership for Children, Youth and Families
- Department of Health
- Police Department
- Fire Department
- Office of Emergency Management

4. Communications

Primary point of contact:

- Each region will have an assigned team of planners; the senior planner on each team will be the primary point of contact for the Committee.

Group communications:

- The primary communication tool for the Committee will be emails to the group email address assigned to each region. All recipients will be blind copied to avoid violation of the Open Meetings Act.
- County staff will be available for individual meetings with Committee members. These should be limited to respect staff time commitments.
- County staff will meet with the Committee chair and vice chair prior to each Committee meeting to review meeting logistics.

Open public meetings:

- Committee meetings will comply with the [Maryland Open Meetings Act](#).
- A meeting where there is a majority of Committee members to consider or transact public business is considered a public meeting and public notice must be provided.

Treatment of draft materials:

- Committee members will be provided “Committee review draft” documents for review. Members must keep these documents internal and not distribute them to the public or other associates, until comments are reconciled and the County prepares a “public review draft” version.

5. Ethics and Conflicts of Interest

5.1 Discussion and Voting

At the time when a draft strategy or land use/zoning recommendation is proposed and where a member has a financial interest in a property being evaluated for a recommendation, SAC members must act in the following ways:

- Have filed a conflict of interest statement if they want to participate in discussion, and
- Recuse themselves from the vote on any item for which there is a financial interest.

5.2 Questioning a potential conflict of interest

- OPZ will not be the arbiter.
- Committee members or members of the public may discuss with or submit a complaint to the County Ethics Commission.

5.3 Authority

Given that the draft recommendations of each SAC are only advisory in nature and have no regulatory or legal authority or effect, if improper conduct is discovered at a later point, prior to final action by the County Council, then such conduct should be reported to the County Council to make whatever decisions the Council concludes are appropriate.

6. Decision Making

The Committee will provide advice and guidance to develop the Region Plan. The planning process will seek consensus from the Committee. Committee deliberations will follow the norms described in the following sections.

6.1 Quorum

More than 50% of the voting members of the Committee will constitute a quorum for the Committee meeting to be held. In the event of hybrid meetings, members joining by phone or video conference in the discussion are considered attendees and count towards the quorum.

6.2 Reaching consensus

The Region Plan process is a collaborative process. Each member should contribute and remain open-minded. Every effort should be made to reach consensus decisions as a first course of action.

When a proposal is made by OPZ or a Committee member, Committee members will have the opportunity to discuss the merits of the proposal. In order to reach consensus, each Committee member must be confident their ideas have been heard, whether expressed by the member or others, represent the interests of their constituency, and agree that they can live with and actively support the decision, even if it is not their first choice. If a member is unable to support a proposal, they are encouraged to have an alternate proposal. When the discussion ends, the chair will ask if there is any opposition to the proposal.

During in-person meetings:

- If there is not a majority of opposition judged by a visual vote (physical acknowledgment by hand raise or other designated gesture), consensus has been reached.
- If there is a majority of opposition judged by a visual vote (physical acknowledgment by hand raise or other designated gesture), discussion may continue and alternative proposals may be shared. When that discussion ends, the chair will call for a vote.

During virtual meetings:

- Members will utilize the chat feature to clearly indicate agreement or disagreement with the proposal at the time of the chair's question. If there is not a majority of opposition, consensus has been reached.

- If a majority of opposition exists at the time of the chair’s question, discussion may continue and alternative proposals may be shared. When the discussion ends and the chair calls for a vote, members will utilize a voice vote to indicate whether they agree, disagree, or abstain.

Interest levels and/or expertise, as well as involvement level, should be weighed by the member, considering the people or interests they represent. Members who have a low level of interest, expertise, and involvement in a particular decision are encouraged to appreciate the views or members with a high level. Every effort should be made to reach a consensus prior to reverting to a vote, in order to achieve the highest level of support for Committee decisions.

6.3 Voting

Once efforts to achieve consensus have been exhausted, the chair may recommend that the discussion be brought to a vote.

- For non-policy issues (e.g., adoption of meeting notes or changing a meeting time), a 51% majority vote of those members present and voting will be required to pass a motion.
- For policy decisions (e.g., plan strategies or zoning recommendation), a 2/3 majority vote of those persons present and voting will be required.

6.4 Post-decision policy

The Committee and County project team can keep an open door and open mind for continued voicing of concerns; however, if a decision is made to proceed during a part of the process, the decision will not be reopened for discussion or reversed. The decision may be revisited after new information is received, such as after a public input period concludes.

The Office of Planning and Zoning requires all Stakeholder Advisory Committee members to sign this document to acknowledge they have read it and understand it.

Stakeholder Advisory Committee member name

Stakeholder Advisory Committee member signature

Date

Region number

Consensus Continuum



STOP

"I do not agree and feel the need to stand in the way of this decision."

HOLD

"I believe more work is needed before we make a decision."

STAND ASIDE

"I trust the group and will not block this decision but need to register my disagreement."

**AGREEMENT
WITH
RESERVATIONS**

"I can live with it."

ENDORSEMENT

"I like it."



Source: Adopted from University of Maryland, Center for Leadership & Organizational Change

ATTACHMENT A

*Once adopted, signed legislation for Region 5, 6, & 8 Stakeholder Advisory Committees
will be included in this document.*