

Carroll County Zoning and Site Development Revisions

TASKS 3 – CODE
AMENDMENTS: AGE
RESTRICTED HOUSING

JUNE 16, 2026





Task 3 – Code Amendments: Age Restricted Housing

Amendments Overview

- Chapter 91 – Fire Protection
 - Fire apparatus access standards
 - Enforcement and coordination between Development Review Division and Department of Fire and EMS Review
 - Site design criteria for Site Plan projects
 - Fire Lane marking standards
- Chapter 158 – Zoning
 - Modernize age restricted housing terminology
 - Establish consolidated standards for Active Adult Communities and Active Adult Homes
 - Update use tables
 - Refine parking, connectivity and design standards (site plan and residential features)
 - Standards for a required community amenity plan

§ 91.004 - Definitions

Adds the following terms to support criteria for the location, access, and design of fire apparatus access roads.

- ***FIRE APPARATUS ACCESS ROAD.*** A public or private street or roadway that provides fire apparatus access from a fire station to a facility, building or portion thereof. This is a general term inclusive of all other terms such as Fire Lane, public street, private-street, and parking lot drive aisleways.
- ***FIRE LANE.*** A lane or area for the unobstructed ingress or egress of a fire department and other emergency vehicles.

§ 91.060 - Fire Apparatus Access Road Requirements

- **Key Requirements**

- No site plan approval and no final certificate of occupancy issued without Fire & EMS review and approval
- Access roads must be installed before vertical construction and remain free of obstructions
- Required clearance, width, grade standards

- **Minimum Standards consistent with NFPA 1, Fire Code**

- Apparatus and hose distances, points of access, road design specifications, Fire Lane marking specifications

§ 158.002, Definitions

Replaces the term “Retirement Home” with the following:

- **ACTIVE ADULT HOME.** A Multi-family Dwelling(s) specifically designed to meet the needs of, and exclusively for senior citizens where occupancy is limited in accordance with applicable federal and state law (including the Housing for Older Persons Act of 1995). Such dwellings shall include accessibility and other age-friendly features and shall be subject to the age-restriction requirements applicable to the overall development. An Active Adult Home is not a Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC). The age-restriction requirement shall, in a form satisfactory to the County Attorney, be clearly noted in the approved Site Development Plan, incorporated into a recorded deed restriction against the property, and included in the lease agreement for each rental dwelling unit.

§ 158.002, Definitions

Replaces the term “Retirement Village” with the following:

- **ACTIVE ADULT COMMUNITY.** A residential development that is age-restricted and designed to meet the needs of senior citizens, where occupancy is limited in accordance with applicable federal and state law, including the Housing for Older Persons Act of 1995 (HOPA). Such development shall include accessibility and other age-friendly features and may consist of a mix of housing types intended to provide amenities, design features, and services that support active adult lifestyles. The age-restriction requirement shall be clearly noted in the approved Site Development Plan and shall be incorporated into the deed for each dwelling unit, recorded against the property, in a form satisfactory to the County Attorney.

§ 158.002, Definitions

Adds the following terms:

- **COMMON OPEN SPACE.** Common open space means an outdoor area that is intended for use by residents and their visitors, not including private individual lots, and shall not include streets and off-street parking areas.
- **NET DEVELOPABLE ACREAGE.** The total acreage of a lot, parcel, or tract remaining after the deduction of existing easements that prohibit development activity and existing rights-of-way; streams; stream buffers; 100-year floodplains; and habitats of rare, and threatened and endangered species.

Modifies the following term:

- **RESIDENTIAL USES.** Single-family, two-family, semi-detached, townhouse, multi-family, assisted living, retirement community, active adult community, active adult home, continuum care, and nursing home.

§ 158.063, Minimum Number of [Parking] Spaces

- **Active Adult Community** (single-family, two-family, and townhouses)
 - 2 for each dwelling unit.
 - Dwelling unit garages and driveway areas may be permitted for off-street parking. Garage areas shall only count as one (1) off-street parking space regardless of the garage's ability to accommodate more than one (1) motor vehicle.
 - Overflow/guest parking spaces are required at the following rate: one (1) guest parking space per every five (5) dwelling units shall be distributed throughout the development in centralized or clustered guest parking areas. The overflow/guest parking can be provided as on-street or off-street spaces.

§ 158.063, Minimum Number of [Parking] Spaces

- **Active Adult Home**

- 1.5 for each dwelling unit.
- An additional five (5) percent of the total required parking supply shall be provided as overflow parking distributed throughout the site in centralized or clustered guest parking areas.
- Overflow/guest parking can be provided as on-street or off-street spaces.

§ 158.063, Minimum Number of [Parking] Spaces

- **Comparable Requirements:**

- **Frederick County Code**

- Single family, duplex, or two-family dwelling – 2 for each dwelling unit
- Multi-family dwelling, townhouse – 1 space per unit, plus ½ space for each bedroom in the dwelling unit.

- **Howard County Code**

- Single family – 2 space per dwelling unit + an additional 0.3 spaces per dwelling unit for guest/visitor parking.
- Multi family – 1 space per dwelling unit + an additional 0.3 spaces per dwelling unit for guest/visitor parking.

- **Queen Anne County Code**

- 2 Off street parking spaces for all residential types, except 1.5 spaces for one bedroom DU.

§ 158.075.01 Residential Districts: Regulation of Principal Uses

(A) Table of Principal Uses

Land Use Category Subcategory Description	R- 40,000	R- 20,000	R- 10,000	R- 7,500	Additional Regulations
RESIDENTIAL					
Active Adult Home /age- restricted multi-family housing constructed on or after January 1, 2021	X	X	P	P	§ 158.002, 158.161
Active Adult Home / age- restricted multi-family housing constructed prior to January 1, 2021	P	P	P	P	§ 158.002
Active Adult Community	X	P	P	P	§§ 158.002, 158.161
Townhouse, not in a planned unit development or Active Adult Community	X	X	X	X	§ 158.002
Two-family dwelling, not in a planned unit development or Active Adult Community	X	X	C	C	§ 158.002

§ 158.075.03 Residential Districts: Bulk Requirements

(B) Residential District yard and lot width requirements (in feet).

(4) Nursing homes/assisted living facilities/ **Active Adult Homes**.

NOTE: No changes were made to the current Code's bulk and area requirements.

- The term "Active Adult Homes" was added to (4) above.
- "Active Adult Communities" are addressed under "Other permitted or conditional uses"

§ 158.079 I-1 Light Industrial District

(D) Business/Industrial Parks.

(6) Notwithstanding anything in this subchapter to the contrary, the following uses are prohibited in a Business/Industrial Park:

(h) **Active Adult Homes**

§ 158.082 Commercial, Industrial, and Employment Campus Districts: Regulation of Principal Uses

(A) Table of Principal Uses

<i>Land Use Category Description</i>	<i>C-1</i>	<i>C-2</i>	<i>C-3</i>	<i>I-1</i>	<i>I-2</i>	<i>EC</i>	<i>Additional Regulations</i>
RESIDENTIAL							
Active Adult Home	P	P	X	X	X	P	158.002, 158.161
Active Adult Community	P	P	X	X	X	P	158.002, 158.161

§ 158.161 Active Adult Community and Active Adult Home

- Combined section for Active Adult Community and Active Adult Home uses.
- Comprehensive Purpose and Intent statement

Purpose & Intent – Active Adult Housing Standards

• **Key Goals**

- Diverse, attainable housing options for active older adults
- Safe, walkable, and context-sensitive environments
- Promote independent living, social connection, and long-term stability

• **Housing Choice & Affordability**

- Mix of housing types (single-family, two-family, townhome, multifamily)
- Accommodate varying incomes, mobility needs, and household sizes
- Encourage efficient, flexible, and attainable housing design

• **Establish Design Standards**

- Guide development of age-restricted (55+) communities and homes
- Support housing, lifestyle, and wellness needs of active older adults

• **Core Design Outcomes**

- Active Lifestyle: Integrate amenities (trails, fitness, community spaces, access to parks/services)
- Safety & Accessibility: Lighting, wayfinding, traffic calming, ADA-friendly design, aging in place
- Context-Sensitive Design: Compatible scale, architecture, transitions, and preservation of natural features
- Sustainable Development: Compact, walkable layouts with shared open space and efficient infrastructure

§ 158.161 Active Adult Community and Active Adult Home

(B) Density Requirements

(1) Maximum Density.

(a) Active Adult Community: Eight (8) units per net developable acre.

Note: 8 DU/Acre is recommended to be consistent with neighboring Howard County's density standard.

(b) Active Adult Home: One (1) dwelling unit for every 3,000 square feet of gross area.

Note: Maintains density as to what it has been since 1971 (1 DU per every 3,000 SF = ~14.5 DU/Acre).

(c) Active Adult Community that includes an Active Adult Home: One (1) dwelling unit for every 3,000 square feet of gross area. The Active Adult Home component of the site must contain a minimum of seventy-five (75) percent of the proposed dwelling units.

§ 158.161 Active Adult Community and Active Adult Home

Comparable Density Requirements:

- Howard County – 8 dwelling units per net acre. (Net acre is gross minus floodplain and steep slopes)
- Frederick City – Density is dwelling units per gross acre. In mixed use zoning – 75 dwelling units per acre. Single family and townhomes range from 4 DU to 40 DU depending on zoning.
- City of Westminster – 16 dwelling units per net acre. (Net acre is gross minus floodplain and steep slopes)

§ 158.161 Active Adult Community and Active Adult Home

(B) Density and Unit Mix Requirements

- (a) For Active Adult Community projects comprised of more than fifty (50) dwelling units, a dwelling unit mix is required, and no single dwelling unit type shall comprise more than sixty (60) percent of the total dwelling units. Dwelling unit mix may include multi-family dwellings.
- (b) For Active Adult Community projects for which multi-family dwellings are proposed as part of the unit mix, the Planning and Zoning Commission shall require, over and above other standards herein, that such uses be so arranged and distributed, and appropriately related to public open space, single-family dwellings, or semi-detached dwellings that higher densities are not unreasonably and disproportionately concentrated in these locations, or so located as to concentrate traffic on minor residential streets.

§ 158.161 Active Adult Community and Active Adult Home

(C) Design Standards (Summarized)

Site Design & Compatibility

- Grading and landscaping shall blend with surrounding neighborhoods
- Context-sensitive site integration required

Garage Standards

- Front-loaded garages limited to ≤12 ft. projection beyond façade

Townhome & Duplex Standards

- Max 6 units/building; 120 ft. max width
- Façade articulation every 40 ft.; varied rooflines required

Building Materials

- Durable, high-quality materials (brick, stone, fiber cement, etc.)
- Vinyl permitted but limited; large expanses discouraged

Building Form & Massing

- Human-scale, pedestrian-oriented design
- Massing breaks every 100 ft.; articulated façades
- Height transitions near lower-density areas

§ 158.161 Active Adult Community and Active Adult Home

(C) Design Standards (Summarized, Cont'd.)

Entrances & Orientation

- Primary entrances face streets or open space
- Covered, well-lit, and clearly defined
- Direct pedestrian connections required

Accessibility (Universal Design)

- Step-free entries, 36" doors, accessible features
- Reinforced bathrooms, non-slip flooring, zero-step access
- Optional: smart tech, adjustable counters, emergency systems

Safety & Security

- Pedestrian-scale lighting (12–16 ft.), shielded and evenly distributed
- Readable wayfinding signage; cobra-head lighting prohibited

§ 158.161 Active Adult Community and Active Adult Home

(D) Parking Design and Connectivity Standards (Summarized)

Parking Requirements

- Must meet minimum standards per §158.063
- ADA-compliant spaces required where applicable

Driveways

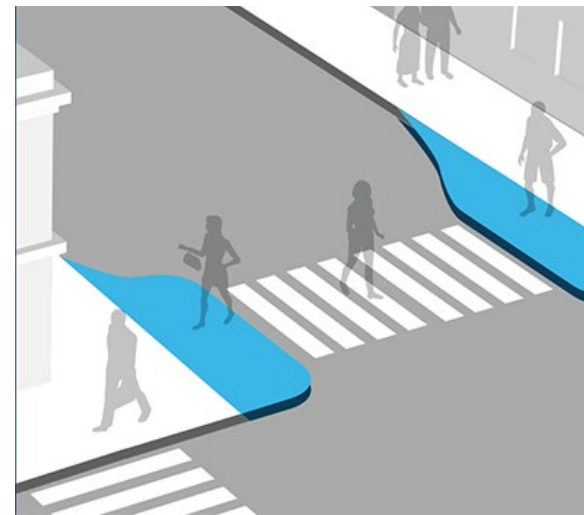
- Min. 20 ft. length (no sidewalk encroachment)
- Min. 12 ft. width (22 ft. for two-car garages)

Guest Parking

- 1 space per 5 units, distributed throughout site
- Located within ¼ mile (1,320 ft.) of all units
- Max. 10 spaces per cluster; on-street or off-street permitted
- Pedestrian connections required to sidewalks

On-Street Parking

- Clearly striped spaces; maintain fire access
- Curb bump-outs required at intersections (traffic calming, shorter crossings)



§ 158.161 Active Adult Community and Active Adult Home

(D) Parking Design and Connectivity Standards (Summarized, Cont'd.)

Pedestrian & Bicycle Connectivity

- Sidewalks: 5 ft. min. width + 4 ft. min grass buffer between curb and sidewalk
- Shared-use paths: 10 ft. min., connected to local trail systems
- Direct, accessible connections to amenities

Pedestrian Pathway Amenities

- Benches every ¼ mile (1,320 ft.) or per 20 units (whichever is greater)
- Accessible, shaded, and durable seating design
- Lighting for all paths/open spaces (warm, downward, glare-reducing)

§ 158.161 Active Adult Community and Active Adult Home

(E) Amenity Requirements (Summarized)

Amenity Report Requirement

- Written and illustrated report required with application
- Must identify type, size, and location of all amenities

Indoor Amenities

- Minimum 20 sq ft./unit (first 99 units) (min. 500 sq ft.)
- 10 sq ft./unit for units over 99

Outdoor Amenities

- Required for all projects to support active lifestyles
- Include both active and passive recreation features

Common Open Space

- Minimum 25% of gross site area (*consistent with current PUD standards*)
- Contiguous and connected via pathways/green corridors
- Max 50% may include environmental constraints (slopes, floodplains, etc.)
- Min 10% usable for active recreation
- Located within 1,000 ft. of all dwelling units

Ownership & Maintenance

- Maintained by owner or legal entity
- Maintenance plan required at site plan stage
- Amenities must be installed before >50% occupancy (unless phased)
- Failure to maintain = zoning violation

Next Steps

- **Schedule:**

- June 24, 2026 – Public meeting at South Carroll Senior Center
- July 8, 2026 – PZC Meeting #3 for continued draft amendment review and discussion with Staff
- July 21, 2026 – PZC Meeting #4 to recommend final draft amendments to BCC for approval
- August 6, 2026 – Presentation to BCC and direction for public hearing
- September 3, 2026 – Public hearing
- September 17, 2026 – Code amendment adoption