Laurel is located midway between Washington, D.C., and Baltimore in northern Prince George’s County, directly abutting Howard and Anne Arundel Counties.

This central location in the Washington-Baltimore Corridor places Laurel in close proximity to several major transit routes (I-95, I-295, and the Inter County Connector) as well as Baltimore/Washington International Airport.

The Department of Economic and Community Development maintains and oversees the built environment within the City of Laurel.

The Department is responsible for:
- Administration and Interpretation of the Unified Land Development Code
- Implementation of the City’s Master Plan
- Main Street Development Programs
- Arts and Entertainment District
- Zoning Review and Compliance
- Current and Long-Range Planning
- Subdivision and Development Review
- Affordable Housing Program
- Economic Development
- Historic Preservation
- Permit Review

The Department provides staff support to the following Commissions and Boards: the Planning Commission, the Board of Appeals, the Historic District Commission and the Community Redevelopment Authority (CRA).

Meeting Information:
- The Planning Commission meets the second Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers.
- The Board of Appeals meets the fourth Thursday of the month at 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers.
- The Historic District Commission meets the third Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers.
- The Community Redevelopment Authority (CRA) meets the third Wednesday of the Month at 4 p.m. in Meeting Room 2.

For more information or questions please call (301) 725-5300 x2314 or 2301. Office hours are: Monday - Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. or visit www.lauriel.md.us
WHAT IS ZONING?

Zoning is a practice where the use and development of property is regulated to ensure communities are safe, healthy, and have adequate access to public facilities and infrastructure. Zoning places each parcel in a specific category, known as a Zone or Zoning District, which governs the uses which may occur on the property as well as the size and intensity of structures that can be located on a property.

Every property located in the City of Laurel is located in a zoning district. Property is assigned to a specific zoning district by the Mayor and City Council. A map of the zoning districts is maintained by the ECD staff. The specific uses allowed (or prohibited) in each zone are detailed in the Unified Land Development Code. This Code also governs building restrictions such as yard setbacks, building height, lot coverage, and density.

WHAT IS THE MASTER PLAN?

The Master Plan is to set forth a long-range guide, which will shape the form of new development/redevelopment and also provide a framework for providing a cohesive, well-balanced community. This Plan documents a number of goals and objectives that will serve to direct the various aspects of land use and development/redevelopment.

The various segments addressed are the subdivision and zoning of land, provisions for public facilities, transportation issues, housing components, economic analyses, and recommendations for parks and recreation facilities. This Plan documents existing conditions as well as current and future trends, which may affect the City.

HOW CAN I FIND WHAT A PROPERTY IS ZONED?

ECD Staff can provide a property’s zoning designation regulations as outlined in the Unified Land Development Code.

For zoning resources please view the City of Laurel’s website at: www.cityoflaurel.org

WHAT IS THE UNIFIED LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE (ULDC)?

The City of Laurel’s Unified Land Development Code (ULDC) is established in conjunction with the City Master Plan to encourage the most appropriate use of land throughout the City with reasonable consideration of prevailing land uses, growth characteristics and the character of the respective zoning districts and their suitability for particular uses.

The ULDC includes permitted uses, maximum structure height, minimum setbacks, density, parking regulations and other requirements.

WHAT IS THE PLANNING COMMISSION?

The Planning Commission is a volunteer citizen board which holds public hearings on all matters relating to development and zoning. The Commission is empowered to render decisions by resolution on all site plans, subdivisions, sign and parking modifications and forest conservation plans. The Commission also submits recommendations to the Board of Appeals for variances and special exceptions and to the City Council for zoning map amendments, zoning regulation text amendments, and Master Plan changes. The Planning Commission normally meets the second Tuesday of the month in the Council Chambers at 7:00 p.m.

WHAT IS THE BOARD OF APPEALS?

The Board of Appeals is a volunteer citizen body empowered to hold public hearings related to granting variances and special exceptions. The Board also decides appeals for any determination by staff or the Planning Commission where it is alleged an error has been made. The Board of Appeals normally meets the fourth Thursday of the month in the Council Chambers at 7:00 p.m.

WHAT IS A VARIANCE?

A variance is a modification to the requirements of the Zoning Regulations for the dimensional (i.e., height, bulk, yard) requirements. Maximum height of structures, setbacks from public streets or property lines, and minimum lot sizes and widths may be considered for variances.

WHAT IS A SPECIAL EXCEPTION?

A Special Exception is a use which may be authorized by the Board of Appeals that would not normally be permitted generally within a specific zone. Examples include houses of worship, liquor stores, carryout and fast food restaurants.

ECD derives its authority and standards from Article 66B of the Maryland Annotated Code and modified by the Code of the City of Laurel, Maryland, the National Fire Protection Association Code, the International Code Council and others.