The Design Review Panel (DRP) is established by Section 32-4-203 of the Baltimore County Code 2003, as amended. The goal of the DRP is to encourage design excellence through the application of design guidelines contained in the Master Plan, the Comprehensive Manual of Development Policies, the Baltimore County Zoning Regulations, and adopted community plans, as applicable. The DRP’s general charge is to assure the overall quality of a project.

The DRP acts in a technical consulting capacity; its recommendations are binding on the Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) and county agencies.

Exceptions – Towson Business Core projects only:

1. Recommendations made by the Design Review Panel for projects in the Towson Business Core that are reviewed under the alternate process of Section 235.B.8 of the Baltimore County Zoning Regulations are final and binding. These projects are not required to go to a community input meeting or the ALJ for review.

2. Recommendations made by the Design Review Panel for projects in the Towson Business Core that are not reviewed under the alternate process of Section 235.B.8 of the Baltimore County Zoning Regulations are not binding on the ALJ or on the agencies under Section 32-4-203(L) of the Baltimore County Code


This packet contains information applicable to the review of commercial (non-residential) projects in designated areas of Arbutus, Catonsville, Essex, Loch Raven, Perry Hall, Pikesville and Towson*.

* Proposed high performance designed buildings (as defined in Article 11, Title 2, of the Baltimore County Code) within the Towson Commercial Revitalization District are not subject to DRP review.
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1. The Department of Permits, Approvals and Inspections (PAI) determines that the project must be reviewed by the Design Review Panel (DRP). DRP review is required for areas in Arbutus, Catonsville, Essex, Loch Raven, Perry Hall, Pikesville, and Towson. PAI notifies the applicant of required review by the DRP, and refers the applicant to the Design Review staff (Jennifer Nugent or Krystle Patchak, Department of Planning, 410-887-3480).

It is recommended that Design Review Panel meetings be completed as early as possible after the plan submittal. Generally, projects are tabled at the Development Review Committee until DRP action is complete. Final approval of the plan will require inclusion of any changes deemed necessary by the DRP. Should a project require a zoning hearing, the DRP will make a recommendation to the ALJ. The Panel’s recommendation is binding on the ALJ. Therefore, if any variances are required for the project, it is recommended that the applicant get DRP approval prior to the zoning hearing (32-4-203(1)).

2. Fee: a three hundred dollar ($300.00) non-refundable, one-time fee must be paid prior to scheduling a DRP meeting. Make checks payable to Baltimore County, Maryland. Inquiries may be directed to PAI at 410-887-3335, Room 123, County Office Building.

3. At least one week before the packet submittal deadline, the applicant shall meet with Department of Planning (DP) staff. This meeting is required for each new project and particularly for first-time applicants. This meeting must be scheduled by the applicant.

(a) Applicant submits completed application and two copies of the project site plan to DP

(b) Applicant and staff discuss appropriate DRP submittals for specific project (see checklist on page 13)

4. DP provides contact list of community/business associations to the applicant.

5. DP schedules the DRP meeting when submittals are ready and fee is paid. DP must receive the packet submittals 15 business days (or 10 business days for resubmittals) prior to the DRP meeting (see page 1 for meeting and submittal dates). The submittals shall include:

(a) Nine copies of the plan and accompanying materials (see checklist on page 13).

(b) A certification letter that a meeting notification letter and a site plan has been sent to all community/business associations, adjacent property owners, the County Council representative, and the press (see pages 6 and 7 for sample letters). The letter must include an address list of all letters mailed.

6. DP sends copies of the review material to the panel members.

7. DP prepares a staff report that is provided to the applicant and panel members prior to the meeting.

8. At the meeting, applicant presents the project to the DRP (see page 7 for presentation suggestions).

9. DP provides written minutes of the DRP meeting within ten business days of the DRP meeting to the panel members and the applicant, and posts approved minutes on the County website. (http://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/DRPmeetings). Projects may be approved, approved with conditions or required to return to the DRP for further review.
10. If a follow-up meeting with DRP is required, applicant sends a meeting notification letter and site plan, if revised, to the following by First Class Mail:

   a) Individuals included in the original mailing
   b) Additional individuals attending the last DRP meeting as recorded from the meeting sign-in sheets, and as requested by attendees.

11. A project may be approved with conditions, requiring DP approval through an administrative review. For this review, the applicant submits three sets of all revised documents to the Department of Planning reflecting the recommendations of the DRP.

12. Upon final approval of the project by the DRP, DP will issue a letter recommending approval either the Director of PAI or the ALJ. For plans being reviewed as a limited exemption, applicant submits a development plan to PAI for review by all agencies reflecting the recommendations of the DRP. In the case of full development plan review, changes reflecting DRP recommendations are made a part of the development plan submittal. For approvals that don’t involve a development plan or Administrative Law Judge Hearing, the Director of PAI will act as the designee to consider the recommendations of the Panel and grant final approval (32-4-203(1)).

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**PROCEDURES FOR LIMITED REVIEW - PIKESVILLE**

A limited design review is required for new facade treatments for existing buildings within the Pikesville Design Review Area. This review will be performed administratively by the Department of Planning staff, with the Director of Planning having the final decision-making authority.

The applicant shall submit the following to the Department of Planning:

A. Completed application  
B. Photograph(s) of the existing building elevations  
C. Elevation drawing of the improvement (two copies)  
D. Samples of building materials and colors  
E. Other items as requested by the Department of Planning as needed for review

Upon final approval of the project, the Department of Planning will issue an approval letter to PAI and the applicant.

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**ALTERNATE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS**

**TOWSON BUSINESS CORE DEVELOPMENT**

*The Towson Business Core refers to the area of Towson bounded by Bosley Avenue on the west, to Joppa Road on the north, to Virginia Avenue on the east, to Towsontown Boulevard on the south, west to York Road, south to Burke Avenue, and west to Bosley Avenue, inclusive of both sides of all streets (See Map on Page 15).*

This alternate process is used to encourage redevelopment in the Towson Business Core, in accordance with the design principles. The design principles will govern the review and approval of a development plan filed for a property located in the Towson Business Core, if the applicant elects the alternate process.

As an alternative to the development review process of Article 32, Title 4 of the County Code, an applicant may elect the alternate process for a development plan filed for a property located in the Towson Business Core.

- A development plan submitted under the alternate process shall be processed as a limited exemption under Section 32-4-106(B)(9) of the Baltimore County Code.
- All other requirements or restrictions, including use restrictions, of the underlying zoning or of these regulations do not apply. However, the requirements of Sections 32-4-222, 32-4-223, and 32-4-224 of the county code shall apply.
Application Review Process:

1. A development plan is submitted to the Department of Permits, Approvals and Inspection (Note any proposed modifications of the design principles on the development plan)
2. The plan shall be reviewed and certified for compliance by the Department of Planning
3. The plan shall be scheduled before the Design Review Panel within 30 working days of receipt of the plan. (If a plan is not accepted for scheduling, the applicant shall be notified, and the reasons stated, within 10 working days)
4. A proposed modification to any of the design principles shall be noted on the development plan and reviewed by the Design Review Panel
5. The Design Review Panel may approve, deny, or modify a proposed development plan and any proposed modification of the plan or any of the design principles. All recommendations made by the Design Review panel, under this process (Section 235 B.8. of the Baltimore County Zoning Regulations) are final and binding. These projects are not required to go to a community input meeting or to the ALJ.

The Panel’s recommendation is NOT binding on the ALJ, or on the agencies under Section 32-4-203(L) of the Baltimore County Code, for a development plan for a property in the Towson Business Core that is not reviewed under the alternate process of Section 235.B.8 of the Baltimore County

### PROJECT REVIEW CRITERIA

Projects will be reviewed for compliance with the following guidelines, standards, plans and other criteria as applicable.

**All Projects:**
- Section 32-4-203(c) of the Baltimore County Code, Objectives for Assessment
- Baltimore County Zoning Regulations

**Catonsville:**
- The Catonsville Plan - Adopted 10/7/91

**Essex:**
- Essex Design Guidelines for Commercial Facade Renovations – Adopted 1983

**Perry Hall:**
- Perry Hall Community Plan - Adopted 2/22/11 (Amendment, Guidelines - Adopted 9/4/12)

**Pikesville:**
- Pikesville, Maryland Revitalization Plan Update - Adopted 1991
- Pikesville Revitalization Plan Update – Adopted 10/7/2003

**Towson:**
- Design Guidelines for Towson – Adopted 2/3/92
- Towson Community Plan – Adopted 2/3/92
- BCZR - Section 235.B.8
OBJECTIVES FOR ASSESSMENT

(i) Demonstrates a satisfactory spatial, visual, and functional relationship to the topographic characteristics, the natural features, and the built features of the site as well as the surrounding features of the site;
(ii) Gives primary design consideration to the visual and functional integration of streetscapes, pedestrian pathways, playgrounds, recreational amenities, and parks;
(iii) Demonstrates that streets and sidewalks are laid out as safe and convenient linkages and that parking becomes a positive design element that contributes to the overall image of the site;
(iv) Demonstrates that buildings, parking garages, and other accessory structures are spatially and visually integrated and suitable to their surroundings in proportion, massing and type, materials and colors, signage, and other elements of urban design; and
(v) Demonstrates that plant materials are selected and sited to define the site, provide a theme or image appropriate to the development, frame views, enhance architecture and street characteristics, develop continuity of adjacent open spaces, improve the micro-climate, provide transition between dissimilar uses, screen the objectionable views and uses, reduce noise level and glare, and provide seasonal colors and other visual amenities.

DESIGN REVIEW ELEMENTS

The Department of Planning and Design Review Panel will evaluate each project to determine how the project elements meet the criteria listed in the Objectives for Assessment, adopted plans, and zoning or development regulations.

CIRCULATION
Road alignment
Pedestrian access
Integration of streets and pedestrians
Parking: mix (garage, grade level, street, deck), location, access

BUILDING
Orientation
Entry (location & design)
Scale, mass, setback, height, fenestration
Building materials
Utilities
Service areas
Trash

SITE PLANNING
Grading
Retention of existing vegetation
Building orientation—what faces the street
Arrangement of buildings—spaces between buildings

LANDSCAPING
Plant materials
Streetscape and hardscape
Site furniture
Relationship to architecture and site
Screening
Lighting
Signage

OPEN SPACE
Type
Accessibility
Location
Amenities
The applicant must send a copy of the proposed site plan and a notification letter stating the location, date, and time of the Design Review Panel meeting by **First Class Mail** at least 15 business days prior (or 10 business days for resubmittals) to the Design Review Panel meeting. A sample notification letter is provided on page 6. The applicant must send the mailing to:

1. All adjacent property owners
2. County Council representative’s office
3. Community and business associations as provided by the Department of Planning
4. Others as identified by the Department of Planning
5. Newspapers (Listed Below) Note--Notification of the meeting only; no site plan is required to be mailed to newspapers. This provides notification to the newspaper of the meeting, should they desire to attend. The applicant is not required to place an advertisement of the meeting in any newspaper.

Jeff Raymond
Daily Record
11 E. Saratoga Street
Baltimore, MD 21202
PH: (410) 752 - 3849

Ed Gunts
Baltimore Sun
501 N. Calvert Street
Baltimore, MD 21278
PH: (410) 332 - 6000

* See page 7 for required certification of mailing *

**COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES**

- **Council District 1 – Tom Quirk**  
  *Arbutus Design Review Area*
  *Catonsville Design Review Area*

- **Council District 2 – Vicki Almond**  
  *Pikesville Design Review Area*

- **Council District 5 – David Marks**  
  *Loch Raven Design Review Area*  
  *Perry Hall Design Review Area*  
  *Towson Design Review Area*

- **Council District 7 – Todd Crandell**  
  *Essex Design Review Area*

**Council Office:**  
400 Washington Ave.  
Towson, MD 21204  
Phone: (410) 887-3196  
Fax: (410) 887-5791
[COMPANY NAME]

[Street Address]

[City, State Zip Code]

[Date]

RE: [Name of Project]

[Recipient Name]

[Address]

[City, State Zip Code]

Dear [Recipient]:

In anticipation of a Design Review Panel meeting on the above referenced project, enclosed is a copy of a site plan which has been developed for [Name of Project]. The Design Review Panel meeting which is scheduled by the Department of Planning will be as follows:

Date: [Date of Meeting]

Time: [Time of Meeting]

Location: The Jefferson Building

Hearing Room 104

105 W. Chesapeake Avenue, Towson, MD 21204

The purpose of this meeting is for the applicant to receive comments regarding design elements of the proposed project. You are invited to attend and participate in this meeting.

Should you have any questions regarding the meeting, please contact Jenifer Nugent or Krystle Patchak, Department of Planning, 410-887-3480. To check for any last minute schedule changes, you may call 410-887-3480 or view the meeting agenda on the county’s website at: www.baltimorecountymd.gov/DRPmeetings.

Sincerely,

[Your name]

[Your position]

[Typist’s initials]

Enclosure: [Number]
CERTIFICATION OF NOTIFICATION
FOR FULL REVIEW PROCESS

Prior to the DRP meeting, the applicant shall provide a letter of certification to the Department of Planning that notice of the Design Review Panel meeting was mailed, along with a list of who the material was mailed to.

The Certification shall read as follows:

“I certify that on (DATE sent by First Class Mail), I sent a copy of the proposed site plan for (PROJECT NAME) located at (PROJECT ADDRESS) and notification that the Design Review Panel meeting will be held (DATE & TIME OF MEETING) at (LOCATION OF MEETING) to the adjacent property owners, community and business associations, County Council representatives, newspapers and others as required.”

______________________________________
Signature of Applicant Date

_____________________________________
(PRINT NAME)

PRESENTATION SUGGESTIONS

It is advised that individuals giving presentations to the Design Review Panel make every effort to present visual materials, i.e. maps, plans, etc., using a digital format such as Power Point or 8 1/2 x 11 drawings that can be displayed on an overhead projector. It is also advised that the architect give the presentation when possible/appropriate in order to explain the intricacies of the design as well as answer any technical questions the panel may have. Please contact Jen Nugent or Krystle Patchak at 410-887-3480 at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting to test digital presentations.

It is strongly recommended that a representative of the architectural design firm for the project be present at the meeting to answer any questions for the panel.
DESIGN REVIEW PANEL AREA - PIKESVILLE
SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS CHECKLIST

Note: Plans and building elevations may be at a reduced, readable scale. Electronic formats may be submitted in addition to the hard copy information.

First Review - Any submittal requirements checked as NO will result in the submittal being returned to the applicant as incomplete.

<table>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>A short paragraph describing the proposed project.</td>
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<td>2. Zoning map and aerial photo showing outline of proposed site and surrounding neighborhood. (DP staff will advise)</td>
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<td>3. Photographs/slides to document existing conditions of site, street character, and surrounding context.</td>
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<td>4. Site plan with existing and proposed grading, and adjacent buildings showing the neighborhood context.</td>
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<td>5. Schematic landscape plan, showing existing &amp; proposed vegetation.</td>
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<td>6. Photomontage, perspective sketches, or model (where necessary, DP staff will advise) to illustrate massing and scale of the proposed building in relationship to its surroundings.</td>
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<td>7. Elevations of all building facades at a scale sufficient to understand the building fenestration, entrances, roof designs, materials and colors. (The proposed building height dimensions and building materials must be labeled on all building elevations).</td>
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<td>8. Cross sections, where necessary (DP staff will advise), to understand the relationship of building to site especially in areas of extensive grading.</td>
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<td>9. Floor plans.</td>
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<td>10. Elevations/details and location of proposed signage and lighting and how it is integrated with architecture and/or landscaping.</td>
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<td>11. Samples of all proposed building materials and the potential color schemes as well as cut sheets of all proposed lighting fixtures for the external site lighting <strong>MUST</strong> be brought to the DRP meeting.</td>
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Subsequent Review - Frequently the Design Review Panel will require a subsequent review requiring additional information to be submitted (DP staff will advise).

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Final versions of the above material</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Additional specifications, materials, and design of any required improvements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Elevations of building and site plan</td>
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</table>
APPLICATION FORM FOR COMMERCIAL PROJECTS
Baltimore County Design Review Panel

Applicant Information
Name: ________________________________
Address: _______________________________________________________________________

Phone: ___________________________ Fax: _______________________________________
Email: ______________________________

Property Owner Information (if Different)
Name: ________________________________
Address: _______________________________________________________________________

Phone: ___________________________ Fax: _______________________________________
Email: ______________________________

Project Information
Design Review Area: (Check One)       Type of Review: (Check One)
Arbutus ____  Catonsville ____  Full Review ____
Essex ____  Loch Raven ____  Pikesville Facade ____
Perry Hall ____  Pikesville ____  Towson Alternate Process
   (Business Core) ____
Towson ____

Planning Staff Comments (For staff use only)
Fee Receipt: ____ (Not required for limited review)
Checklist Complete: ____
Accepted for Scheduling by: _________ Date of Initial DRP Meeting _____________
Incomplete: ____ (State Reasons)
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________