



COMMUNITY QUESTIONS & RESPONSES

Aston Pointe Subdivision

Prepared for the July 8, 2026 Community Meeting

Introduction

This document consolidates recurring questions received from residents following the June 8, 2026 public meeting and provides factual responses regarding the current status of Aston Pointe Phase 3 and the County's subdivision review process.

The questions included in this document were compiled from emails submitted by residents prior to the meeting, and other recurring topics raised by the community. Many questions addressed similar issues and have been consolidated into common topic areas to avoid repetition.

The responses are intended to provide factual information regarding the current status of the Aston Pointe project, explain the County's development review process, and clarify the roles and responsibilities of the various agencies involved in the review.

Topic Area 1 – Project History & Approval Process

Q1. Why is Aston Pointe still moving forward after nearly 20 years? Didn't the approvals expire?

This has been one of the most common questions received from the public. The answer is that Aston Pointe is not proceeding under a single permit issued nearly twenty years ago.

Major subdivisions require numerous approvals throughout their life, including concept plan review, preliminary plat review, final plat approval, engineering approvals, environmental approvals, grading permits, road construction permits, building permits, and inspections. Each approval serves a different purpose and has its own legal requirements.

Under Cecil County's Subdivision Regulations, Concept and Preliminary Plat approvals are temporary approvals and expire if the project does not advance within the required timeframes. Final Plat approval is different. It is the culmination of the subdivision approval process and establishes the lots, roads, easements, and open space. Under the current Subdivision Regulations, approved Final Plats do not expire.

Although portions of Aston Pointe received Final Plat approval years ago, current construction is not occurring under twenty-year-old engineering standards. Before grading permits, stormwater approvals, road plans, and other construction permits are issued, the developer must satisfy current applicable engineering and environmental regulations.

Q2. Has Phase 3 already been approved?

No.

Phase 3 is currently in the early stages of the subdivision review process and has not been approved.

At this time:

- One Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting has been completed.
- Stormwater management review has begun.
- The Traffic Impact Study has not yet been completed.
- Phase 3 has not been reviewed by the Planning Commission.

Before any subdivision approval could occur, Phase 3 must complete all required technical reviews, satisfy applicable County regulations, and proceed through the public Planning Commission process.

Q3. Why wasn't the public notified before the County began reviewing Phase 3?

The County's regulations establish different procedures for different stages of the development review process.

Technical reviews, engineering reviews, and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings are staff-level reviews intended to evaluate compliance with engineering, environmental, and planning requirements. These are not public hearings and therefore are not subject to the same public notice requirements as Planning Commission hearings.

With respect to the Phase 3 TAC meeting, the public notification requirements established by the Cecil County Subdivision Regulations were satisfied. We recognize that some members of the public may have preferred broader or additional notification; however, the County followed the notification procedures required by the adopted regulations.

Public participation occurs during the Planning Commission process. Prior to Planning Commission consideration of Phase 3, notice will be provided in accordance with the Subdivision Regulations, and members of the public will have the opportunity to provide testimony that becomes part of the official record.

In addition to the required public hearing process, the County has held public informational meetings, accepted questions from the community, and prepared this Question & Answer document to help explain the current status of the project and the development review process.

Q4. Who makes the decisions on a project like Aston Pointe?

No single person approves a major subdivision.

Major subdivision applications are reviewed by multiple County departments, outside agencies, and, where required, the Planning Commission. The review process includes planning, engineering, stormwater management, environmental review, public works, emergency services, health, transportation, and other agencies depending on the nature of the project.

County Council establishes the laws through the Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and Subdivision Regulations. County staff administers those laws by reviewing applications for compliance. The Planning Commission considers subdivision applications at the stages required by the regulations.

Q5. Why can't the County simply stop the project if residents oppose it?

The County is required to administer the laws adopted by County Council fairly and consistently.

Property owners have the legal right to submit development applications that are permitted under the zoning applicable to their property. The County's responsibility is to determine whether those applications comply with the adopted regulations.

County staff cannot deny an application simply because it is controversial or unpopular. Likewise, staff cannot approve an application that does not comply with the applicable regulations. The review process is intended to ensure that every application is evaluated using the same legal standards, regardless of the applicant or the level of public support or opposition.

Topic Area 2 – Traffic & Transportation

Q6. Has an updated Traffic Impact Study (TIS) been completed for Aston Pointe?

No.

An updated Traffic Impact Study has not yet been completed for Phase 3. The Traffic Impact Study is required as part of the Phase 3 review process and must evaluate the transportation impacts associated with the proposed development in accordance with Cecil County's current Traffic Impact Study Policy and Guidelines.

Q7. What is the purpose of the Traffic Impact Study?

The purpose of the Traffic Impact Study is to evaluate how the proposed development will affect the surrounding transportation network and determine whether roadway or intersection improvements are necessary to accommodate the development.

The study evaluates existing traffic conditions, projected future traffic, background traffic growth, traffic generated by the proposed development, roadway operations, crash history, and other transportation factors. If improvements are determined to be necessary to mitigate impacts created by the development, those improvements may become conditions of approval.

The purpose of the study is not to justify the development, but to identify transportation impacts and determine what mitigation, if any, is required.

Q8. Will the Traffic Impact Study consider more than just traffic volumes?

Yes.

The study evaluates numerous transportation factors, including:

- Existing and projected traffic volumes.
- Intersection operations (Level of Service).
- Queue lengths and delays.
- Crash history and roadway safety.
- Site access.
- Pedestrian and bicycle considerations where applicable.
- Background traffic growth.
- Other approved developments identified during the scoping process.

The study is intended to evaluate both traffic operations and roadway safety.

Q9. Has the County already identified what roadway improvements will be required?

No.

Because the Traffic Impact Study has not yet been completed, the County has not identified what roadway or intersection improvements, if any, will ultimately be required.

The purpose of the study is to answer that question based upon accepted engineering standards and current traffic data.

Q10. Who pays for transportation improvements?

If the Traffic Impact Study determines that improvements are necessary to mitigate impacts created by the development, those improvements are typically the responsibility of the developer as a condition of approval.

Some transportation improvements may also involve State or County roadways or be part of larger regional transportation projects. Responsibility for those improvements depends upon the nature of the improvement, the roadway involved, and applicable agreements among the parties.

Q11. Has the Traffic Impact Study Scoping Meeting occurred?

No.

The required Traffic Impact Study Scoping Meeting has not yet been held.

The applicant has requested the meeting, and County staff are coordinating schedules with the participating agencies before the study begins.

Q12. Will DelDOT and other agencies participate in the Traffic Impact Study?

The agencies participating in the Traffic Impact Study are determined during the scoping process based on the study area, roadway jurisdiction, and the nature of the anticipated impacts.

Because Aston Pointe is located near the Maryland–Delaware state line, the County has been coordinating with agencies that may have an interest in the study. At this time, both the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) and the City of Newark have expressed an interest in participating in the Traffic Impact Study Scoping Meeting and are included in the scheduling coordination.

Additional agencies may also participate as appropriate based on the final study area and the transportation issues identified during the scoping process.

Q13. Why isn't the Traffic Impact Study Scoping Meeting open to the public?

The Traffic Impact Study Scoping Meeting is a technical coordination meeting between reviewing agencies and the applicant.

Its purpose is to establish the engineering scope of the study, including the study area, intersections to be analyzed, traffic count locations, assumptions, and methodology. It is not a public hearing and no approval decisions are made during the meeting.

Public participation occurs later in the review process through the Planning Commission, where residents have the opportunity to review the application, ask questions, and provide testimony before decisions are made.

Q14. Will the Traffic Impact Study consider school traffic, existing congestion, and other nearby developments?

Yes.

The Traffic Impact Study evaluates existing traffic conditions and future projected conditions within the study area established during the scoping process. This includes existing traffic, background growth, and other developments identified for analysis under the County's Traffic Impact Study Guidelines.

If school traffic or other recurring traffic patterns occur during the study periods, they become part of the existing conditions being evaluated.

Q15. Why are Phases 1 and 2 allowed to continue before the new Traffic Impact Study is complete?

Phases 1 and 2 and Phase 3 are in different legal positions under the County's Subdivision Regulations.

Phases 1 and 2 previously received Final Plat approval. Phase 3 is a new subdivision application that requires a new Traffic Impact Study under the County's current requirements.

Although the County could not require Phases 1 and 2 to obtain new subdivision approvals, the developer voluntarily entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the County to evaluate the cumulative traffic impacts associated with the overall Aston Pointe development as part of the Phase 3 Traffic Impact Study.

The MOU **does not approve Phase 3**, waive the Traffic Impact Study requirement, or eliminate the County's authority to require transportation improvements identified through the study. Rather, it provides a framework for evaluating cumulative traffic impacts while recognizing the different legal status of the previously approved phases and the new Phase 3 application.

Topic Area 3 – Water, Sewer & Stormwater

Q16. Is there enough drinking water to serve Aston Pointe without affecting existing residents?

The availability of public water is reviewed through multiple regulatory processes before development proceeds.

For Aston Pointe, public water service is proposed to be provided by the designated public water utility. Before service can be extended, the utility provider must demonstrate compliance with applicable regulatory requirements administered by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) and, where applicable, the Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC).

Under the Cecil County Subdivision Regulations, certification that adequate public water service is available is required before Preliminary Plat approval. In addition, public water allocations must be obtained before Final Plat approval for lots proposed to be served by public water.

The County does not independently certify regional water supply capacity. Rather, the County relies on the public water utility and the State agencies with jurisdiction over public water systems to verify that adequate capacity is available before the required subdivision approvals are granted.

Q17. Has the County evaluated the cumulative impact of Aston Pointe and other developments on the area's water supply?

Planning for public water systems occurs through the utility provider and applicable State regulatory agencies.

The County's role is to review the subdivision application for compliance with applicable County regulations and to ensure that public water service is available before development proceeds. Long-term water supply planning, water appropriations, and source capacity are regulated through agencies with jurisdiction over public water systems.

Q18. Will Aston Pointe affect existing private wells?

Because Aston Pointe is proposed to be served by a public water system, potable water will not be supplied by individual wells within the development.

Questions regarding groundwater withdrawals, aquifer capacity, and potential impacts to existing private wells are evaluated through the regulatory processes administered by the Maryland Department of the Environment and the public water utility as part of their permitting responsibilities.

Q19. Will my water or electric rates increase because of this development?

Utility rates are established by the utility providers and, where applicable, regulated by the Maryland Public Service Commission or other appropriate regulatory agencies.

Neither the subdivision approval process nor the Department of Land Use and Development Services establishes utility rates. The County cannot speculate regarding future rate decisions made by utility providers or regulatory agencies.

Q20. Is there enough sewer capacity to serve Aston Pointe?

The availability of public sewer service is reviewed through multiple regulatory processes before development proceeds.

For Aston Pointe, public sewer service is proposed to be provided through Cecil County's public sewer system. Before service can be extended, the County and the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) must ensure that adequate treatment and conveyance capacity is available in accordance with applicable regulations.

Under the Cecil County Subdivision Regulations, certification that adequate public sewer service is available is required before Preliminary Plat approval. In addition, public sewer allocations must be obtained before Final Plat approval for lots proposed to be served by public sewer.

The County does not assume that sewer capacity is available. Rather, capacity must be documented and the required approvals obtained before the applicable subdivision approvals may be granted.

Q21. Has stormwater management taken into account the site's soils and existing drainage conditions?

Yes.

Stormwater management design must account for site-specific conditions, including soils, topography, drainage patterns, and applicable State stormwater management requirements.

As part of the review process, detailed engineering plans are evaluated to ensure compliance with current stormwater management regulations before approvals are granted.

Q22. Will the development increase flooding in the surrounding area?

Preventing adverse impacts to adjacent properties is one of the primary objectives of the stormwater management review process.

Before stormwater management plans can be approved, the applicant must demonstrate that the proposed system complies with the current requirements of the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) and Cecil County. The plans are reviewed by County engineering staff to verify that runoff from the development is managed in accordance with applicable regulations and engineering standards.

The County's responsibility is to ensure that the proposed stormwater management system complies with those adopted State and County requirements. If the submitted plans do not satisfy those requirements, revisions are required before approval can be granted.

Topic Area 4 – Public Services & Community Infrastructure

Q23. How will Aston Pointe affect public schools?

Planning for school capacity is the responsibility of the Cecil County Public Schools (Board of Education).

As part of the subdivision review process, the Board of Education is provided the opportunity to review major subdivision applications and comment on anticipated school impacts. Decisions regarding school construction, additions, attendance boundaries, staffing, and capital improvements are made by the Board of Education through its Capital Improvement Program and annual budget process.

Q24. Are there plans to build or expand schools to accommodate additional students?

Questions regarding future school construction, classroom additions, staffing, and student-to-teacher ratios are determined by the Board of Education and are outside the authority of the Department of Land Use and Development Services.

The County's role is to provide the Board of Education with the opportunity to review subdivision applications and consider potential enrollment impacts as part of its long-range planning.

Q25. How will Aston Pointe affect Fire, EMS, and Police services?

Emergency services and public safety agencies, including local volunteer fire companies, participate in the development review process through the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).

Their review includes items such as roadway layout, emergency vehicle access, hydrant locations, turning radii, and other public safety considerations. As engineering plans become more detailed, those reviews likewise become more detailed.

Q26. Have Fire and EMS agencies been consulted regarding this development?

Yes.

The Department of Emergency Services participates in the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) review process for major subdivision applications and has the opportunity to review plans and provide comments within its area of expertise.

Comments from reviewing agencies are addressed as part of the normal development review process before approvals are granted.

Q27. Has the County completed a comprehensive study of Fire, EMS, Police, schools, and other public services for this development?

Different public services are planned and evaluated by different agencies using different regulatory processes.

For example:

- Transportation is evaluated through the Traffic Impact Study.
- Public water and sewer are evaluated through the utility providers and applicable State regulatory agencies.
- Schools are planned by the Board of Education.
- EMS operational planning is the responsibility of the Department of Emergency Services., and volunteer firefighters association.
- Law enforcement staffing is planned by the Cecil County Sheriff's Office.

Accordingly, there is not a single comprehensive study that evaluates every public service simultaneously. Each agency evaluates the aspects of the project that fall within its respective jurisdiction and responsibilities.

Q28. Who pays for additional public services needed as the County grows?

Funding for schools, public safety, transportation, utilities, and other public infrastructure comes from a variety of sources, including County revenues, State and Federal funding, grants, developer-funded improvements where required, and other funding mechanisms authorized by law.

The responsibility for funding specific improvements depends on the type of infrastructure involved and the applicable legal requirements. Some improvements may be required as conditions of development approval, while others are planned and funded through the County's Capital Improvement Program or other governmental funding sources.

Topic Area 5 – Environmental Review & Natural Resources

Q29. How are environmental impacts evaluated as part of the Aston Pointe review?

Environmental review is conducted throughout the subdivision and engineering review process. Rather than relying on a single environmental study, the project is reviewed under multiple local, State, and Federal regulatory programs.

Depending on the characteristics of the site, these reviews may include stormwater management, erosion and sediment control, forest conservation, wetlands and streams, floodplain management, threatened and endangered species, water and sewer availability, and other environmental requirements.

Each reviewing agency is responsible for evaluating the aspects of the project within its jurisdiction before approvals may be granted.

Q30. Will protected wildlife, including Bald Eagles, be considered during the review process?

Yes.

Protected wildlife and environmentally sensitive resources are reviewed through the applicable State and Federal environmental regulatory processes. If protected species, nesting areas, wetlands, streams, or other regulated natural resources are present, the applicant must comply with all applicable environmental laws and permit requirements.

The County coordinates with the agencies that have jurisdiction over those resources during the review process.

Q31. Has the County conducted an independent environmental study?

The County does not typically prepare independent environmental studies for individual subdivision applications.

Instead, applicants are responsible for preparing the technical studies required by applicable regulations. Those studies are then reviewed by County staff and, where appropriate, State and Federal agencies with jurisdiction over the specific environmental resource being evaluated.

If the submitted information does not demonstrate compliance with applicable regulations, additional information or plan revisions may be required before approval.

Q32. Has the County evaluated the impact of Aston Pointe on Fair Hill, the Nature Center, tourism, or the rural character of the area?

Questions regarding tourism, economic impacts, or the broader character of the community are understandable and important to many residents. However, those topics are not approval criteria under the Cecil County Subdivision Regulations.

The County's review is based on compliance with the Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations, and other applicable State and local laws. The County must evaluate the application using the standards established in those regulations.

Broader policy questions regarding future growth, land preservation, and development patterns are matters for the County's Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and legislative process.

Q33. Does the County regulate outdoor lighting for new developments?

The Cecil County Zoning Ordinance does not establish general outdoor lighting standards for residential subdivisions.

Q34. Have the site's soils and drainage characteristics been considered in the stormwater design?

Yes.

Stormwater management design is based on detailed engineering analysis of the site, including soils, topography, drainage patterns, and applicable State stormwater management requirements.

The applicant must demonstrate that the proposed stormwater management system complies with current State and County regulations before approval can be granted. If the plans do not satisfy those requirements, revisions are required before approval.

Topic Area 6 – Growth Policy, Public Process & Next Steps

Q35. How does Aston Pointe align with the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance?

The Aston Pointe property is located within a designated Growth Area identified by the Cecil County Comprehensive Plan and is zoned to allow residential development.

The Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and Subdivision Regulations adopted by County Council establish where growth may occur and the standards that apply to development. The County's responsibility during the review process is to determine whether an application complies with those adopted policies and regulations.

Q36. Why doesn't Cecil County follow Harford County's approach to limiting growth?

Each county in Maryland adopts its own Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and development regulations based on its individual goals, priorities, and planning policies.

While neighboring counties may choose different approaches to growth management, the Department of Land Use and Development Services administers the regulations adopted by Cecil County. Questions regarding future growth policies or changes to those regulations are legislative matters to be considered through the County's planning and legislative processes.

Q37. Why doesn't Cecil County have development impact fees?

Cecil County does not currently impose a residential development impact fee.

Whether to establish impact fees is a policy decision that would require legislative action by County government. County staff cannot impose impact fees through the subdivision review process.

Q38. Can the County change the rules now because this project has been delayed for many years?

The County must apply the laws and regulations that are legally applicable to each stage of the development process.

Some approvals are governed by the regulations in effect at the time they were granted, while current engineering permits and technical reviews must comply with today's applicable requirements. The County cannot retroactively apply new regulations in a manner that is inconsistent with applicable law.

If County Council wishes to amend the Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance, or Subdivision Regulations for future development, it has the authority to do so through the legislative process.

Q39. What opportunities remain for public participation?

Phase 3 remains in the early stages of the subdivision review process.

Before the Planning Commission considers the project, the applicant must complete numerous technical reviews, including the Traffic Impact Study and engineering reviews. When the project is scheduled for Planning Commission consideration, public notice will be provided in accordance with the Cecil County Subdivision Regulations.

At the Planning Commission hearing, members of the public will have the opportunity to provide testimony that becomes part of the official record before any decision is made.

Closing

Cecil County recognizes that Aston Pointe is a project of significant interest to the community. The purpose of this document is to provide factual information regarding the current status of the project and the development review process. As the review continues, additional information will become available through the Planning Commission process and other public meetings as required by County regulations.

