

CAR ADVOCACY WATCH

Tuesday Newsletter Edition | October 27, 2026

Submitted by: Bernie Flax, CEO

CAR Local Government Meeting Portal: <https://www.coastalrealtors.org/local-government-meeting-portal/>

Government affairs developments through Monday, October 26, 2026 @3 PM

Coastal Association of REALTORS® is tracking proposed and adopted policies affecting property ownership, housing, infrastructure, and real estate throughout the Lower Eastern Shore. Below are the latest developments and items being monitored.



WICOMICO COUNTY

Wicomico County Council notices: <https://www.wicomicocounty.org/676/County-Council-Public-Notices>

Willow Creek subdivision — upcoming public hearing

The Wicomico County Council has posted a public hearing for November 3 at 6:00 p.m. concerning a request by the Willow Creek Homeowners Association to close an unimproved "Future Street" shown on a subdivision plat. The request is pending; a final disposition has not been verified. This matter is relevant to subdivision access and neighboring property interests.

Salisbury — accessory dwelling units

Salisbury City Council has considered changes to its accessory dwelling unit (ADU) regulations, including parking standards. The October 26 Council legislative session and work session were scheduled for 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. respectively. Because this newsletter was prepared before the meetings concluded, the outcome of any action on October 26 remains to be verified.

Water, sewer and public works

The October 20 Council work session scheduled discussion of the water and sewer plan, dredging and tipping fees. No new fee or service-area change has been verified.

County Legislative Breakfast and septic/water planning

County Executive Julie Giordano hosted the annual Legislative Breakfast on October 16, bringing county and state officials together to discuss issues ahead of the 2027 General Assembly session. Published coverage emphasized local-government priorities and local autonomy. CAR is seeking additional details on the septic and water presentation; no specific new septic-policy decision from the breakfast has been independently confirmed.



WORCESTER COUNTY

<https://www.co.worcester.md.us/>

County infrastructure and development issues

At its October 20 meeting, the Worcester County Commissioners had several infrastructure and wastewater matters on the agenda, including capital planning and wastewater projects. The final status of each item remains subject to confirmation from the county action record. Local reporting also says commissioners directed that a written policy on nondisclosure agreements be developed; that is not the same as adoption of a final policy.

Berlin — ADU regulations

Berlin previously considered and reportedly adopted local ADU provisions in September. Members should consult the town's enacted ordinance and permit guidance for property-specific requirements; CAR continues to follow implementation.

Ocean City — ADU and zoning watch

Ocean City's Planning and Zoning Commission considered an ADU zoning text amendment on October 6 and recommended approval with a restriction on short-term rental use of

ADUs, according to published meeting coverage. Final Mayor and Council adoption has not been independently verified. The town has scheduled a Mayor and Council work session for October 27 at 1:00 p.m.

Ocean City listed Mayor and Council on October 19, Planning and Zoning on October 20, a canceled Board of Zoning Appeals meeting October 22, and a Mayor and Council.



SOMERSET COUNTY

<https://www.somersetmd.us/>

Land-use and development monitoring

CAR continues monitoring previously reported discussions involving possible forest-conservation tax incentives and data-center land-use controls. No newly adopted measure on these subjects was independently verified for this update. We will report confirmed ordinance action as official records become available.

MARYLAND STATEWIDE

Accessory dwelling units — local implementation

Maryland legislation requires counties and municipalities with applicable planning and zoning authority to adopt local laws authorizing qualifying ADUs by October 1, 2026. CAR is following how that requirement has been implemented in its three-county service area. Local ordinances, permit procedures and applicable restrictions remain important for property-specific guidance.

New Maryland real estate laws and forms

The Maryland Housing Certainty Act (HB 548/SB 325) took effect October 1, 2026 and addresses the rules applicable to certain complete housing development applications. SB 691 also took effect October 1 and addresses the return of earnest-money deposits following specified residential contract terminations. Members should use current Maryland REALTORS® forms and guidance. The Maryland Real Estate Commission has separately issued an updated residential property disclosure/disclaimer statement.

National — NAR Advocacy

No material new federal policy action or new Advocacy Scoop episode was independently confirmed for this reporting period. Continue monitoring the NAR podcast and official federal advocacy publications and include national coverage only when directly relevant to CAR members. Next week CAR leadership will be attending NXT in New Orleans, there will be a report from NAR at that time. Maryland REALTORS advocacy:
<https://www.mdrealtor.org/AdvocacyPriorities>

NAR Advocacy Scoop: <https://www.coastalrealtors.org/advocacy-scoop-podcast-nar/>