



October 3, 2025

TECHNICAL STAFF REPORT

TO: Prince George's County Planning Board

FROM: Natalia Gomez Rojas, AICP, Planner IV - Planning Director's Office

SUBJECT: Legislative Drafting Request LDR-149-2025
Streamlining the development review processes

The Prince George's County Planning Department's legislative team has reviewed the proposed legislative amendment to the Prince George's County Zoning Ordinance and presents the following evaluation and findings leading to a recommendation of **NO POSITION**, as described in the Recommendation section of this technical staff report.

I. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposed legislative amendments to the Prince George's County Zoning Ordinance are reviewed under the requirements of Section 27-3501, Legislative Amendment, of the Prince George's County Zoning Ordinance. The Planning Department has considered the following in reviewing this proposed legislative amendment:

- A. The Prince George's County Zoning Ordinance;
- B. The *Plan Prince George's 2035 Approved General Plan*;
- C. The current area master plans, sector plans, and functional master plans for Prince George's County;
- D. The Prince George's County Climate Action Plan; and
- E. Referral comments.

II. COMPLIANCE WITH LAW, ASSESSMENT OF TECHNICAL DRAFTING CONVENTIONS, AND PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

Section 27-3501(c)(2)(A) of the Prince George's County Zoning Ordinance states in part that **"the Council's Legislative Counsel shall prepare the proposed amendment in consultation with the Planning Director,...."** The Prince George's County Planning Department is submitting this memorandum to provide clarifications and any recommendations for consideration.

Pursuant to Section 27-3501(c)(2)(C), this technical staff report “**shall contain an independent, non-substantive assessment of the technical drafting conventions of the proposed legislative amendment, in order to ensure consistency with the legislative style and conventions of the current Zoning Ordinance.**” The Planning Department has determined that LDR-149-2025 was drafted in a manner consistent with the legislative style and conventions of the current Zoning Ordinance.

Analysis of the Legislative Amendment Decision Standards and Proposed Amendments is contained in a separate subsection of this technical staff report below.

III. BACKGROUND

- A. **Purpose:** To authorize concurrent submission of certain development applications regarding the same parcel or development site; and generally streamlining the development review process to foster greater economic growth for Prince George’s County.
- B. **Impacted Property:** This bill will impact all properties in Prince George’s County that seek any of the development applications, in accordance with the requirements of the Prince George’s County Zoning Ordinance.
- C. **Policy Analysis:** The purpose of this bill is to allow simultaneous different types of applications for development of a site, pursuant to Subtitle 27, Subtitle 24, Subtitle 25, or Subtitle 32 of the Prince George’s County Code.

LDR-149-2025 proposes to amend Section 27-3403 of the Zoning Ordinance, which describes the application submittal procedures. However, and as interpreted by the Prince George’s County Planning Department, this proposed legislation appears to be potentially duplicative of existing provisions already codified in the Zoning Ordinance. Specifically, the simultaneous processing of applications is currently authorized and adequately addressed under existing code provisions, including Section 27-3403(e)(2), which determines the submittal requirements for each application type.

“Whenever two or more forms or different types of development applications are required under this Ordinance for the same parcel or development site, the applications for those development approvals or permits may be processed simultaneously, so long as all applicable state and local requirements are satisfied. Simultaneous processing of applications may result in additional fees to the applicant”. (Emphasis added)

The Department considers that introducing language that reiterates existing requirements may create confusion in the already-established procedures. To ensure clarity and avoid redundancy, the bill sponsor should indicate how this proposed legislation materially differs from, or supplements, the current provisions within the Zoning Ordinance.

The Department recommends that the bill specify those applications under

Subtitle 24 and Subtitle 25 that can be filed simultaneously, as the approval of certain applications is often a prerequisite for the initiation of others in the development process. This is particularly important in cases where the review and approval of one application may inform or impact the decisions made in connection with subsequent applications.

For example, the review and approval of the natural resource inventory (NRI) and stormwater management concept plan (SWM) are necessary in order to inform the way development should be laid out and approved before application or approval of a preliminary plan of subdivision (PPS). Allowing the simultaneous submission of all application types under all the listed subtitles may effectively change the submittal requirements for many applications. The NRI and SWM concept plan approval, therefore, is a prerequisite for accepting the PPS. This prerequisite, however, does not prohibit applicants from preparing the NRI/SWM and PPS applications in parallel. Rather, it allows applicants to initiate internal coordination efforts in a more streamlined and efficient manner, with the understanding that any substantive revisions to the NRI by reviewing agencies may necessitate corresponding adjustments to the PPS.

Similarly, while it is important for applicants to bring shovel-ready projects to the application stage, situations may arise where additional permits may be required to address an unanticipated issue identified during the review of a development application. As currently drafted, the proposed language could be interpreted to prevent the conditioning approval of one application on the successful completion of a related permitting or entitlement process. Specifically, the language on Page 2, Line 22—“must be simultaneously applied for”—could be interpreted to require that all related permits and entitlements be submitted at the same time. This interpretation raises the concern that any zoning application could be subject to procedural challenge if not accompanied by simultaneous filings for all associated approvals, regardless of the practical sequencing of the review process.

To address this issue, the Department considers that specifying in the bill the applications that can be reviewed simultaneously will help to avoid unnecessary delays and provide greater clarity for developers, landowners, and stakeholders. It will also ensure that the sequencing of the development review process is efficient and aligned with regulatory requirements.

The Department is willing to assist the bill sponsor in identifying the specific applications that are compatible for simultaneous filing and concurrent review, which will contribute to a more effective and predictable development process. However, it is important to recognize that certain applications governed by the referenced subtitles are subject to review, comment, and enforcement by multiple County agencies, each with distinct statutory responsibilities. Accordingly, the Department recommends that all relevant reviewing and permitting agencies be engaged in the legislative process. Their participation would provide valuable insight into the operational impacts of the proposed bill and help identify opportunities to streamline interagency coordination in a manner consistent with the legislation’s objectives.

Moreover, while the proposed amendment seeks to effect changes to the Zoning Ordinance under Subtitle 27 by requiring the simultaneous submittal of applications, it is important to note that corresponding amendments to Subtitles 24, 25, and the applicable provisions of Subtitle 32 would be necessary to ensure consistency. Since certain provisions within these subtitles fall outside the jurisdiction of the Planning Department and may require coordination with other County agencies to implement the intended legislative changes comprehensively.

Lastly, the Planning Department undertook a comparative peer jurisdiction review to evaluate how other counties and municipalities have approached streamlining their development review processes. For example, in 2023, Montgomery County convened a Development Review Workgroup which, following extensive interagency collaboration and public engagement, produced 22 formal recommendations. These included proposed amendments to state law, enhancements to public notice procedures, improvements to interagency coordination, and measures to expedite review timelines such as the implementation of concurrent agency reviews and acceptance of digital signatures.

Similarly, the City of Baltimore launched the Bmore FAST (Facilitating Approvals and Streamlining Timelines) Initiative. This initiative established a multi-stakeholder advisory group and implemented interagency workflow reforms aimed at identifying and eliminating procedural redundancies that were contributing to unnecessary delays in the permitting and development approval process.

Based on the foregoing, the Planning Department respectfully recommends that the proposed legislation be held to allow for necessary interagency coordination to be established. Specifically, to identify which application types are appropriate for concurrent review, to analyze which portions of the existing process are responsible for the most significant delays, and to collaboratively determine the most effective next steps in advancing a more efficient and equitable development review framework.

IV. COMPLIANCE WITH EVALUATION CRITERIA

1. Section 27-3501(c)(2)(B) of the Zoning Ordinance requires the Planning Director to issue a technical staff report on any proposed legislative amendment to the Zoning Ordinance within 14 calendar days of the transmittal of the proposed amendment by the Clerk of the Council. This Section also requires, at minimum, analysis of the extent to which the proposed legislative amendment complies with six criteria.
 - A. This proposed legislative amendment meets the requirements of Section 27-3501(c)(2)(B) as follows:
 - (i) **Is consistent with the goals, policies, and strategies of Plan Prince George's 2035 (or any successor General Plan), area master plans, sector plans, functional master plans, and any other applicable approved plans;**

Consistency with General Plan

LDR-149-2025 is “consistent with the goals, policies and strategies of Plan Prince George’s 2035 (Plan 2035) or any successor General Plan, area master plans, sector plans, functional master plans, and any other applicable approved plans” pursuant to Section 27-3501(c)(2)(B)(i) of the Zoning Ordinance.”

Plan Prince George's 2035

The first critical initiative identified in Plan 2035 is to “undertake a comprehensive update of the County’s Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances to modernize, streamline, and simplify the County’s regulatory environment.” (Plan 2025, p. 252) Plan 2035 further recommends establishing “a by-right development approval process and fast track permit process for the Downtowns with clear and consistent regulatory standards and processes and shortened review periods.” (Plan 2025, p. 256)

Most initiatives to reduce the time, costs, and complexity of the development review process to align with the County’s competing jurisdictions are generally consistent with these recommendations.

Consistency with Area Master and Sector Plans

Efforts to streamline the application review and approval process have been recommended in several area master, sector, and transit district development plans, including those identified in Table 1:

Plan	Page	Policy/Strategy	Recommendation
2006 <i>Approved Master Plan for the Henson Creek-South Potomac Planning Areas</i>	94	Community Character: Revitalization: Policy 3	Streamline the development process for projects within designated revitalization overlay areas and other suitable locations.
		Community Character: Revitalization: Policy 3, Strategy 2	Explore innovative new zoning tools and review procedures designed to facilitate development in targeted locations.
		Community Character: Revitalization: Policy 3, Strategy 3	Expedite the development review and permitting process. Encourage developers to meet with both the Prince George’s County Planning Department and Department of [Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement] before the design phase begins to ensure projects meet the minimum standards of the Zoning Ordinance and other applicable requirements.

2009 <i>Approved Landover Gateway Sector Plan</i>	114	Chapter 6: Community Development Elements: Market Potential, Policy 6	Streamline the review process and provide incentives for private investment.
2009 <i>Approved Marlboro Pike Sector Plan</i>	96	Chapter VII: Economic Development Strategies: E. Development Regulations, Policy 2	Streamline the development review approval process to ensure a more timely approval by the Planning Board and County Council to help projects move more rapidly toward implementation.
		Chapter VII: Economic Development Strategies: E. Development Regulations, Policy 2, Strategy 1	If necessary, revise and amend development review procedures to expedite approval of projects.
2010 <i>Approved Subregion 4 Master Plan</i>	374	Part V: Plan Implementation: Growth Centers: Financing and Funding Assistance	Streamlined/Fast-Track Development Review: The length of time spent in the review of plans can influence the cost of redevelopment, with speedier time frames for review associated with more cost effective redevelopment. To the extent that jurisdictions can offer “fast track” permitting for growth centers in Subregion 4, such streamlining of review could serve as an indirect incentive for redevelopment.
2013 <i>Approved Largo Town Center Sector Plan</i>	92	Chapter 5: Implementation: Public-Private Partnerships	The county has shown a willingness to help facilitate economic development by providing incentives and identifying opportunities for joint development that will leverage and strengthen public-private investment, such as expedited site plan and permit processes and analyzing various innovative financing mechanisms and techniques.
2013 <i>Approved Greenbelt Metro Area and MD 193 Corridor Sector Plan</i>	195	Table 35: Recommended Implementation Actions: Development Regulations (DR), DR3	Streamline development procedures and approval processes

2015 <i>Approved College Park-Riverdale Park Transit District Development Plan</i>	154	Implementation: Action Table: Development Regulations (DR), DR3	
--	-----	--	--

(ii) Addresses a demonstrated community need;

LDR-149-2025, as a standalone proposal, does not address an identified community need.

(iii) Is consistent with the purpose and intent of the zones in this Ordinance, or would improve compatibility among uses and ensure efficient development within the County;

LDR-149-2025 complies with this criterion.

(iv) Is consistent with the implementation of the strategies and priority recommendations of the Prince George’s County Climate Action Plan;

The proposed legislation is not consistent with the priority recommendations of the Climate Action Plan (CAP), particularly with recommendation CO-5 which calls to strengthen land use regulations to better align individual land use decisions with State and County policies related to smart growth, natural resource conservation, and green infrastructure.

This recommendation emphasizes the need to revise the County’s Planning Board and Council land development review process. It states that all land-use decisions should be evaluated and scored based on their future climate impacts and resilience criteria, resulting in a more transparent and public approval process (CAP, p. 149). Implementing recommendation CO-5 would introduce additional review layers for various land development applications, focusing on future climate impacts.

(v) Is consistent with other related State and local laws and regulations; and

As noted above, LDR-149-2025, as drafted may result in inconsistencies with other local regulations since the proposed amendment would require amendment to Subtitles 24, 25, and 30 respectively. These provisions fall outside the jurisdiction of the Planning Department and may require coordination with other County agencies.

(vi) Would avoid creating significantly adverse impacts on the natural environment, including but not limited to water, air, noise, stormwater management, wildlife, vegetation, wetlands, and the natural functioning of the environment.

Staff cannot identify any adverse impact that LDR-149-2025 would have on the natural environment.

- B. Pursuant to Section 27-3501(c)(2)(C), this technical staff report “**shall contain an independent, non-substantive assessment of the technical drafting conventions of the proposed legislative amendment, in order to ensure consistency with the legislative style and conventions of the current Zoning Ordinance.**”

This analysis was provided above in Section II of this technical staff report.

- C. Finally, Section 27-3501(c)(2)(D) requires the Planning Board to make a recommendation on the proposed amendment, in accordance with the Legislative Amendment Decision Standards that guide the District Council’s final decision on the approval of a proposed legislative amendment.

Analysis of the Legislative Amendment Decision Standards is contained in a separate subsection of this technical staff report below.

2. Referral Comments

Staff referred LDR-149-2025 to colleagues throughout the Planning Department and received referral comments that were reviewed and integrated in this staff report.

V. PLANNING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

Section 27-3501(c)(2)(D) of the Prince George’s County Zoning Ordinance requires the Prince George’s County Planning Board to hold a public hearing and make comments on the proposed legislative amendment within 30 days of the date of the transmittal of the Clerk of the Council. Said public hearing must be noticed by electronic mail at least 21 days prior to the public hearing, sent to every community organization in the County registered pursuant to Section 27-3407(b)(3) of the Zoning Ordinance, and to any person or organization registered pursuant to Section 27-3402(d) of the Zoning Ordinance.

Notice for the public hearing on LDR-149-2025 will be sent on September 29, 2025, as required by the Zoning Ordinance. The Planning Board public hearing will be held on October 16, 2025, thus meeting the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance.

Comments offered by the public prior to and during the Planning Board’s public hearing will be summarized, along with the Planning Board’s comments, in the Board’s recommendation to Clerk of the Council.

VI. ANALYSIS OF LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENT DECISION STANDARDS

LDR-149-2025 has been reviewed for consistency with Section 27-3501(d), Legislative Amendment Decision Standards, of the Zoning Ordinance. Staff find the following:

The advisability of amending the text of this Ordinance is a matter committed to the legislative discretion of the County Council sitting as the District Council and is not controlled by any one factor. Within each zone listed in the Classes of Zones (Section 27-4102), the (D)istrict (C)ouncil may regulate the construction, alteration, and uses of buildings and structures and the uses of land, including surface, subsurface, and air rights. The provisions for each zone shall be uniform for each class or kind of development throughout the zone, and no legislative amendment may create different standards for a subset of properties within a zone, unless such standards are necessary to implement development policies within the applicable Area Master Plan, Sector Plan, development policies of the General Plan, or other approved development district; however, any differentiation of a subset of properties within a zone shall be reasonable and based upon the public policy to be served.

The Department finds that LDR-149-2025 meets the criteria that the provisions for each zone shall be uniform for each class or kind of development throughout the zone because the amendment does not create different standards for a subset of properties Countywide, regardless of zoning.

Staff recommend the Planning Board find that LDR-149-2025 is consistent with the Legislative Amendment Decision Standards specified in Section 27-3501(d) of the Zoning Ordinance.

VII. PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

Following review of LDR-149-2025, the Prince George's County Planning Department does not recommend amendments to the bill, as additional interagency coordination is suggested in Section III.c. of this staff report.

VIII. RECOMMENDATION

Based upon the foregoing evaluation and analysis, the Prince George's County Planning Department's legislative team recommends that the Planning Board adopt the findings of this report and recommend the Planning Board take **NO POSITION** on LDR-149-2025.