



February 11, 2026

## **TECHNICAL STAFF REPORT**

**TO:** Prince George's County Planning Board

**FROM:** Shaquan Smith, PMP, Planner IV - Planning Director's Office

**SUBJECT:** Legislative Drafting Request LDR-21-2026  
Administration - Pre-Application Neighborhood Meetings - Transparency in Land Use

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 **SUPPORT with amendments**, 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**

The Department has determined that LDR-21-2026 was drafted in a manner consistent with the legislative style and conventions of the current Zoning Ordinance.

### III. BACKGROUND

- A. **Purpose:** To require the Planning Department to provide online posting of notifications of pre-application neighborhood meetings and ensure that online postings comply with web accessibility guidelines.
- B. **Impacted Property:** The proposed legislative amendment would have no impact on properties.
- C. **Policy Analysis:** LDR-21-2026 proposes to amend the Zoning Ordinance's notice procedures for Pre-Application Neighborhood Meetings.

The LDR requires 1) the Planning Department to publish notices of upcoming pre-application neighborhood meetings on its website as part of a searchable online database; and 2) applicants to ensure electronic versions of its informational notices comply with ADA web accessibility standards. The following comments address this intent:

- (i) Pre-application neighborhood meetings are opportunities for informal communication about a proposed development project between an applicant and the public. They are organized and run solely by an applicant before the applicant submits one of the applications listed in Section 27-3402(b)(1) of the Zoning Ordinance. An applicant also has the option to hold a pre-application neighborhood meeting before any other development application.

Applicants are currently required to mail notice of pre-application informational meetings 30 days before the meeting to:

- The Planning Director;
  - All persons to whom mailed notice of a public hearing on the application is required by Section 27-3407, Scheduling of Hearings and Public Notice;
  - Any municipality in which the land subject to the application is located, and every municipality located within one mile of the land subject to the application, and any municipal planning department;
  - All civic associations registered in accordance with Section 27-3402(d), Civic Association or Resident Registration; and
  - All adjacent landowners (including owners whose land lies directly across a street, alley, or stream from the land subject to the application being reviewed).
- (ii) LDR-21-2026 requires the Department to post copies of the informational meeting notices on its website within one week of receiving the electronic version. The notices must also be searchable by street address and Council District.
  - (iii) The Department finds that it will be relatively easy to post these notices on its website and categorize them by Council District so they can be searched for by residents. Creating a program or database that allows the public to search by street address would be much more expensive, as it would require the

Department to add a search function to its website to extract street addresses from notices. However, many development projects lack a street address, so the search would often fail to identify projects and could mislead residents. The Department therefore recommends revising the LDR to remove the requirement that notices be searchable by street address.

- (iv) LDR-21-2026 also requires applicants to ensure the electronic version of the notification complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidance on web accessibility: <https://www.ada.gov/resources/2024-03-08-web-rule/>.
- (v) Finally, the Department notes that the proposed bill would only apply to applications under Subtitle 27 and would have no effect on Subdivision applications, which also require pre-application neighborhood meetings.

#### 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

Plan 2035 does not address the administrative process of zoning applications, except to recommend streamlining the process in the Downtowns and Innovation Corridor (Strategy EP1.4, p. 130).

##### Consistency with Area Master and Sector Plans

The County’s master, sector, and transit district development plans do not address the creation of an informational database of this nature.

- (ii) **Addresses a demonstrated community need;**

The LDR does not contain any information addressing a 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;**

Not Applicable.

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

Not Applicable.

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

LDR-21-2026 complies with this criterion.

- (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.**

Not Applicable.

- 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.”**

The LDR meets applicable drafting conventions.

- 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.

See Section VI below.

## 2. Referral Comments

Staff referred LDR-21-2026 to colleagues throughout the Planning Department and received referral comments that were reviewed and integrated into this staff report.

## V. PLANNING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

Section 27-3501(c)(2)(D) of the 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-21-2026 was sent on February 5, 2026, as required by the Zoning Ordinance. The Planning Board public hearing will be held on February 26, 2026, 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-21-2026 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-21-2026 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 recommends the Planning Board find that LDR-21-2026 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-21-2026, the Department found no technical drafting convention edits are necessary for the LDR. As to the substantive aspects of the LDR, the Department recommends the Planning Board support the following amendments to LDR-21-2026:

- A. Include Subtitle 24:** the LDR should include Subtitle 24 of the Prince George's County Code by revising Section 24-3303 of the Subdivision Regulations to apply the same notice requirements for pre-application neighborhood meetings for subdivision applications.

**Justification:** Subdivision applications also require pre-application neighborhood meetings, which are often the first application submitted for a given location.

- B. Revise Page 2, Lines 9-13:** from “As to residents, an applicant complies with this Section by providing the Planning Department with an electronic version of the informational mailing, which shall comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidance on web accessibility, more than thirty (30) days before the Planning Department accepts an

application.” To “The applicant shall also provide the Planning Department with an electronic version of the informational mailing, which shall comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidance on web accessibility, at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of the pre-application neighborhood meeting. Additionally, the applicant may notify any person or entity registered in accordance with Subsection (d)(2)(B) of this Section.”

**Justification:** Acceptance of a development application may take several weeks following a pre-application neighborhood meeting. Therefore, if the applicant waits to send pre-application neighborhood meeting notices to the Planning Department 30 days before official acceptance, the public might not have online access to those notices before the meeting.

- C. **Revise Page 2, Line 26:** from “street address and Council District.” To “Council District.”

**Justification:** Creating a publicly accessible database of meeting notifications searchable by a development’s street address may pose challenges and increase costs associated with the search functionality. While Council Districts are more readily accessible, the lack of designated street addresses for many developments could complicate extracting this information from notices and increase development costs.

- D. **Revise Page 2, Line 27-28:** from “SECTION 2. BE IT FURTHER ENACTED that this Ordinance shall take effect forty-five (45) calendar days after its adoption.” To “SECTION 2. BE IT FURTHER ENACTED that this Ordinance shall take effect one hundred eighty (180) calendar days after its adoption.”

**Justification:** Department staff will need adequate time to develop, test, and ensure the search function is ready for public use.

## VIII. RECOMMENDATION

Based upon the foregoing evaluation and analysis, the Planning Department’s legislative team recommends that the Planning Board adopt the findings of this report and recommend the Planning Board **SUPPORT with amendments** LDR-21-2026.