



July 25, 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-112-2025
Pre-application neighborhood meeting requirements

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 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

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 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 Department has determined that LDR-112-2025 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 require the Planning Department to provide online posting of notifications of pre-application neighborhood meetings; and ensuring that online postings comply with web accessibility guidelines.
- B. Impacted Property:** This bill will impact all properties in Prince George’s County that seek any of the following applications: zoning map amendments, Planned Development proposals, Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Overlay applications, special exceptions, detailed site plans, major departures, or any development application for which the applicant chooses to hold a pre-application neighborhood meeting.
- C. Policy Analysis:** LDR-112-2025 will require the Planning Department to publish notices of any upcoming pre-application neighborhood meeting on its website in a searchable online listing. It will also require applicants to ensure that electronic notices comply with ADA web accessibility standards.

Pre-application neighborhood meetings, understood as opportunities for informal communication about a proposed development project, are intended to be organized and run solely by an applicant before the applicant submits one of the applications requiring a public hearing, pursuant to 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 responsible for mailing and posting notifications of meetings. The Department receives two copies of the mailed notice. First, a copy of the notice is mailed to the Planning Director 30 days before the meeting. Second, an electronic version of the mailed notice must be submitted to the Department at least 30 days before the Department accepts the application that was the subject of the meeting.

Pre-application neighborhood meeting notices are currently required to contain the following information on both the mailed notice and the signs posted at the site:

The mailed and posted notifications shall state the time and place of the meeting, the purpose of the meeting, include a current zoning sketch map clearly identifying the land area associated with the development, summarize the general nature of the development proposal, and the type of development approval or permit sought. Additionally, the notice shall include the application number, contact information for the M-NCPPC to obtain more information about the application after it is filed, an applicant telephone number and email address for

persons wishing to meet, an explanation of the procedures and the necessity for becoming a person of record for the proposed application, and a statement that no government agency has reviewed the application. Developer or builder information shall be provided if different than the applicant.

LDR-112-2025 requires applicants ensure the electronic version complies with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidance on web accessibility. <https://www.ada.gov/resources/2024-03-08-web-rule/>. It also requires the Department maintain online postings of the pre-application meeting notifications with each notification posted within one week of receipt of the electronic version

According to the Agenda Summary accompanying the draft LDR, the intent of the Bill is to provide an additional means whereby information about a pre-application neighborhood meeting can be found by interested persons because “posted signs can be difficult to see clearly and contain limited information.”

As noted above, posted notice must contain all of the same information contained in the mailed notice, but because signage is limited to a maximum size due to concerns about traffic safety, it may be difficult for passing motorists to see.

Currently, however, the electronic version of the mailed notice is only provided to the Department 30 days prior to acceptance of the application, not prior to the neighborhood meeting, Section 27-3402(c)(2)(C)(iii). It serves as additional evidence that proper notice was provided of the meeting. As such, LDR-112-2025 will not provide an additional means of notification to supplement posted notice unless applicants are required to provide the Department a copy of the notice at the same time they mail notice.

From a programming perspective, the proposed electronic mailing database would function as an online tool that organizes the information from each listing into searchable fields, enabling users to identify upcoming meetings in their area. While less complex than systems such as DAMS or the Permit Tracking System, it would operate in a similar manner by providing public access to relevant data. The proposed legislation would require programming support for integration into the forthcoming Development Application Review Tracking System (DARTS), including workflow processes, reporting functions, and public display of records. To ensure consistency in terminology, the code currently refers to different posting types. There are typical physical postings (on-site) and then there are online postings. A quick search of other Planning Departments in the region provided an example of how information is posted online that informs about Development Proposals. You will see under the 'How to Find Out About Development Proposals' section, the universal word 'posting' is used under 'written notice', 'online agenda', and the 'development review committee meeting': <https://montgomeryplanning.org/development/development-review-process/get-involved/>

Lastly, the proposed bill would only apply to applications under Subtitle 27 and will have no effect on Subdivision applications which also require pre-application neighborhood meetings.

Staff recommends proposed Section 27-3402(c)(2)(D) be amended to simply require the Planning Department provide online posting of the mailed notice on its website within one week of receipt of the mailing from the applicant, in accordance with ADA requirements, and include the ability to search by street address and Councilmanic District. Staff is also recommending an amendment to Section 27-3402(c)(2)(C)(iii) to meet the sponsor's intent.

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 Prince George's 2035 does not address the standard review process of development applications or the rules of procedures.

Consistency with Area Master and Sector Plans

The Zoning Ordinance's existing requirements for pre-application neighborhood meetings are broadly consistent with area master, sector, and transit district development plans in general, and advance the 10th strategy under "Future Howard University Research and Development Park Campus" on page 81 of the 2010 *Approved Master Plan for Subregion 1* and Strategy 1.9 under Land Use, and Urban Design: Beltway Plaza on page 108 of the 2013 *Approved Greenbelt Metro Area and MD 193 Corridor Sector Plan*, as written. The proposed amendments do not affect the existing consistency.

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

LDR-112-2025 complies with this criterion.

- (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-112-2025 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;

LDR-112-2025 will have minimal impact, if any, on the draft Prince George’s County Climate Action Plan.

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

LDR-112-2025 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.

LDR-112-2025 complies with this criterion.

- 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-112-2025 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 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-112-2025 will be sent on August 14, 2025, as required by the Zoning Ordinance. The Planning Board public hearing will be held on September 4, 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-112-2025 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-112-2025 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-112-2025 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-112-2025, the Department has offered the necessary technical drafting convention edits that are necessary for this proposed bill in Section II, above. As to the substantive aspects of the bill, and based on comments received at the Planning Board public hearing, the Department recommend the Planning Board support the following amendments to LDR-112-2025:

- Page 2, line 12

thirty (30) days before the MEETING [the Planning Department accepts an application].
The applicant may also

- Page 2, lines 17-26 - Consider the proposed language:

(D) Online Posting

The Planning Department shall maintain online posting of the pre-application neighborhood meeting notification as provided by the applicant in accordance with this Subsection (A) above.

- (i) The Planning Department shall post online the applicant's electronic mailing, as specified in (2)(A)(iii) of the Code. The Planning Department shall post within one week of receipt of the electronic mailing by the applicant.
- (ii) The electronic mailing is to meet ADA requirements for posting on the Department's website.
- (iii) The electronic mailing shall include an ability to search by street address and Councilmanic District.

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 **NO POSITION with amendments** LDR-112-2025.