



Office of the Chairman  
Prince George's County Planning Board

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July 29, 2021

The Honorable Calvin S. Hawkins, II  
Chairman  
Prince George's County Council  
County Administration Building  
14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive  
Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772

Dear Chairman Hawkins:

Re: CB-55-2021

Thank you for providing the Planning Board an opportunity to review and comment on proposed District Council legislation. During the July 29, 2021 Planning Board meeting, the following positions were adopted in accordance with the planning staff's recommendations on the proposed legislation. **A Planning Board Analysis of the bill is attached for your consideration and a brief excerpt from the report is provided below:**

**CB-55-2021** *A bill to modify certain regulations related to single-family development in the One Family Detached Residential (R-55) Zone on transit-oriented properties.*

**Planning Board Recommendation: Oppose as drafted.**  
(See Attachment 1 for full analysis)

**CB-55-2021 adds a new category of regulations for one-family detached dwellings entitled "Lot included in a subdivision for property located in whole or part, within one-mile of a transit center" in the One-Family Detached Residential (R-55) Zone. The bill reduces the minimums for net lot area, lot width/frontage, and yard depths for one-family detached lots that fit in this category. It also increases the maximum area of the lot that may be covered by a structure. However, it does not include a corresponding increase in the applicable maximum residential density regulation. These provisions acting together would appear to facilitate the construction of more homes, and possibly larger homes, in some infill locations near transit. The provisions would not, however, allow a greater yield of dwelling units when subdividing a vacant parcel because the maximum residential density of 6.7 homes per acre has not been increased.**

**The Planning Board understands this legislation is intended to impact seven properties located on Swann Road in Suitland. However, as drafted, the bill would apply Countywide to any R-55-zoned properties wholly or partially, within one mile of a "transit center". While "transit center" is not defined in the bill or Zoning Ordinance, there are 25,867 tax account records associated with 33,643 properties that are wholly or partially located within one mile of a Metrorail station.**

**In addition, there are 14,142 tax account records associated with 16,336 properties that are wholly or partially located within one mile of a Purple Line station. The bill will create numerous unintended consequences if applied to all these properties.**

**The legislation may increase the housing supply. The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC) forecasts that the County's population will increase by 91,400 to 995,900 people by 2045. The same forecasts show that the number of households will increase by 55,600 to 376,800 by 2045. Therefore, to accommodate future population growth, the County will need to look at ways to expand housing types to meet the needs of all residents. *Plan 2035 Prince George's County Approved General Plan* identifies a disconnect between the types of housing being developed in the County and future housing needs. There will be an oversupply of existing one-family detached dwelling units and an under-supply of multifamily dwelling units. Plan 2035 also emphasizes that the demographic profiles of households experiencing the most growth are interested in multifamily dwelling units in transit-accessible areas.**

**Furthermore, Plan 2035 recognizes the need to provide a range of housing options in walkable transit areas to position the County to attract new talent and employers and ensure the County remains economically competitive in the regional economy. In addition, transit-accessible locations are defined as areas within one half mile of a transit station, with higher densities of residential uses within one fourth mile. The bill's language permitting smaller one-family detached residential lots to be developed one mile from a transit center may advance these goals, although the bill does not allow townhouses or multifamily units.**

**The Planning Board recommends the term "transit center" be defined or revised to indicate a Metrorail station or Purple Line station. Also, language should be added to designate a specific point of measurement for the one-mile radius, such as the center of a platform. The addition of a definition and point of measurement would specify which properties would qualify under the proposed legislation.**

**On page 3, the incorrect table is used within the bill. The correct lot coverage and green area table should be added to the bill. In addition, the new category is listed under "Dwellings (including all accessory uses, home occupations)" within the lot coverage and green area table. It should be listed under "One-family detached, in general" which is the proper section within the table for this category.**

**The bill does not amend the density table and therefore does not alter the number of one-family detached dwelling units that can be built per acre. If the Council's goal is to increase density in R-55 neighborhoods near rail transit, it may wish to alter the maximum density to correspond with the reduced lot sizes within the proposed bill. This would represent a significant policy change for the R-55 Zone.**

**It is believed that the proposed legislation is intended to facilitate the development of one-family detached dwelling units in the Southern Green Line Station Area Sector Plan. If this is the case, the Planning Board would like to suggest the category language in each of the tables be revised to limit the application of the text amendment to the target properties, by amending the category to read: "Lot, included in a subdivision for property located within the Southern Green Line Station D-D-O Zone, but for which there are no applicable development district standards".**

**This proposed language is a suggestion to limit the applicability of the proposed legislation to R-55 zoned properties within the Southern Green Line Station Area D-D-O Zone and avoid unintended consequences in other parts of the County. However, additional review of any amendments to the bill would be required to ensure it sufficiently addresses this issue.**

**If the intention is to allow smaller one-family detached lots Countywide, the Planning Board recommends an additional study of the proposed legislation. As drafted the bill impacts numerous properties in the County.**

**The bill will affect all R-55 zoned properties Countywide that are wholly or in part within one mile of a transit center.**

**The adopted Zoning Ordinance renames the R-55 Zone to the Residential, Single-Family-65 (RSF-65) Zone. It preserves existing dimensional standards. The maximum density for one-family detached dwelling units is 6.7 dwellings per acre. The net lot area is 6,500 square feet. The minimum lot width minimum is 65 feet. The lot frontage at the street line is 52 feet. The maximum lot coverage is 35 percent. The front yard depth is 25 feet, the side yard is eight feet, and the rear yard depth is 20 feet. The principal structure height is 40 feet.**

As always, Planning Department staff members are available to work with the Council and your legislative staff on any pertinent legislative matters. Please let us know if we may be of further assistance.

Should you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Office of the Planning Director at 301-952-3595. Thank you, again, for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth M. Hewlett  
Chairman

Attachments

## **CB-55-2021 – Planning Board Analysis (Attachment 1)**

A bill to modify certain regulations related to single-family development in the One Family Detached Residential (R-55) Zone on transit-oriented properties.

**The Planning Board has the following amendments and comments for consideration by the District Council:**

### **Policy Analysis:**

CB-55-2021 adds a new category of regulations for one-family detached dwellings entitled “Lot included in a subdivision for property located in whole or part, within one-mile of a transit center” in the One-Family Detached Residential (R-55) Zone. The bill reduces the minimums for net lot area, lot width/frontage, and yard depths for one-family detached lots that fit in this category. It also increases the maximum area of the lot that may be covered by a structure. However, it does not include a corresponding increase in the applicable maximum residential density regulation. These provisions acting together would appear to facilitate the construction of more homes, and possibly larger homes, in some infill locations near transit. The provisions would not, however, allow a greater yield of dwelling units when subdividing a vacant parcel because the maximum residential density of 6.7 homes per acre has not been increased.

The Planning Board understands this legislation is intended to impact seven properties located on Swann Road in Suitland. However, as drafted, the bill would apply Countywide to any R-55-zoned properties wholly or partially, within one mile of a "transit center". While “transit center” is not defined in the bill or Zoning Ordinance, there are 25,867 tax account records associated with 33,643 properties that are wholly or partially located within one mile of a Metrorail station. In addition, there are 14,142 tax account records associated with 16,336 properties that are wholly or partially located within one mile of a Purple Line station. The bill will create numerous unintended consequences if applied to all these properties.

The legislation may increase the housing supply. The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) forecasts that the County’s population will increase by 91,400 to 995,900 people by 2045. The same forecasts show that the number of households will increase by 55,600 to 376,800 by 2045. Therefore, to accommodate future population growth, the County will need to look at ways to expand housing types to meet the needs of all residents. *Plan 2035 Prince George’s County Approved General Plan* identifies a disconnect between the types of housing being developed in the County and future housing needs. There will be an oversupply of existing one-family detached dwelling units and an under-supply of multifamily dwelling units. Plan 2035 also emphasizes that the demographic profiles of households experiencing the most growth are interested in multifamily dwelling units in transit-accessible areas.

Furthermore, Plan 2035 recognizes the need to provide a range of housing options in walkable transit areas to position the County to attract new talent and employers and ensure the County remains economically competitive in the regional economy. In addition, transit-accessible locations are defined as areas within one half mile of a transit station, with higher densities of residential uses within one fourth mile. The bill’s language permitting smaller one-family detached residential lots to be developed one mile from a transit center may advance these goals, although the bill does not allow townhouses or multifamily units.

The Planning Board recommends the term "transit center" be defined or revised to indicate a Metrorail station or Purple Line station. Also, language should be added to designate a specific point of measurement for the one-mile radius, such as the center of a platform. The addition of a definition and point of measurement would specify which properties would qualify under the proposed legislation.

**CB-55-2021 – Planning Board Analysis (Attachment 1)**

Page 2

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The bill does not amend the density table and therefore does not alter the number of one-family detached dwelling units that can be built per acre. If the Council’s goal is to increase density in R-55 neighborhoods near rail transit, it may wish to alter the maximum density to correspond with the reduced lot sizes within the proposed bill. This would represent a significant policy change for the R-55 Zone.

It is believed that the proposed legislation is intended to facilitate the development of one-family detached dwelling units in the Southern Green Line Station Area Sector Plan. If this is the case, the Planning Board would like to suggest the category language in each of the tables be revised to limit the application of the text amendment to the target properties, by amending the category to read: “Lot, included in a subdivision for property located within the Southern Green Line Station D-D-O Zone, but for which there are no applicable development district standards”. This proposed language is a suggestion to limit the applicability of the proposed legislation to R-55 zoned properties within the Southern Green Line Station Area D-D-O Zone and avoid unintended consequences in other parts of the County. However, additional review of any amendments to the bill would be required to ensure it sufficiently addresses this issue.

If the intention is to allow smaller one-family detached lots Countywide, the Planning Board recommends an additional study of the proposed legislation. As drafted the bill impacts numerous properties in the County.

**Impacted Property:**

The bill will affect all R-55 zoned properties Countywide that are wholly or in part within one mile of a transit center.

**Adopted Zoning Ordinance:**

The adopted Zoning Ordinance renames the R-55 Zone to the Residential, Single-Family-65 (RSF-65) Zone. It preserves existing dimensional standards. The maximum density for one-family detached dwelling units is 6.7 dwellings per acre. The net lot area is 6,500 square feet. The minimum lot width minimum is 65 feet. The lot frontage at the street line is 52 feet. The maximum lot coverage is 35 percent. The front yard depth is 25 feet, the side yard is eight feet, and the rear yard depth is 20 feet. The principal structure height is 40 feet.

Following discussion, the Planning Board voted to oppose CB-55-2021, as drafted.