



June 17, 2026

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-142-2026
Accessory Dwelling Units

The Prince George's County Planning Department's legislative team has reviewed the proposed legislative amendment to the Zoning Ordinance and presents the following evaluation and findings leading to a recommendation of **SUPPORT** LDR-142-2026 with amendments.

I. BACKGROUND

- A. Purpose:** To add definitions and designate areas for accessory dwelling units consistent with authority set forth in State law; setting forth regulations for permitted accessory dwelling units; providing for the prospective application of provisions and amendments adopted herein; and providing a severability clause for the provisions related to accessory dwelling units in Prince George's County.
- B. Impacted Property:** This bill would impact properties where the principal use is a single-family detached dwelling.

II. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposed legislative amendments to the 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. Accessory Dwelling Units – Requirements and Prohibitions (HB 1466, codified in Md. Code Ann., Land Use § 4-501 *et seq.*)
- C. The *Plan Prince George's 2035 Approved General Plan*;
- D. The current area master plans, sector plans, and functional master plans for Prince George's County;
- E. The Prince George's County Climate Action Plan; and

F. Referral comments.

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

The Department has determined that the proposed bill was drafted in a manner consistent with the legislative style and conventions of the current Zoning Ordinance.

IV. POLICY ANALYSIS

Background: During the 2025 session, the Maryland General Assembly passed HB 1466 (“Accessory Dwelling Units – Requirements and Prohibitions”), which enacts state policy supporting development of Accessory Dwelling Units (“ADUs”), effective October 1, 2025. (HB 1466 has been codified as Md. Code Ann., Land Use § 4-501 *et seq.*, but is referred to herein as HB 1466.) It also requires that counties and municipalities with planning and zoning authority adopt a local law authorizing ADU development on land with a single-family detached dwelling unit by October 1, 2026.

HB 1466 makes it the policy of Maryland to promote and encourage the creation of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) on land with a single-family detached dwelling unit as the primary dwelling unit in order to help solve the state’s housing shortage and meet its housing needs. (See HB 1466 Policy Note) (emphasis added). Relevant to this LDR, the bill also requires adoption of specified local laws authorizing ADUs and provides certain parameters for that law. Md. Code Ann., Land Use § 4-504.

Prior to the enactment of HB 1466, and on the local level, between 2000 and 2016, the County Council adopted several Development District and Transit District Overlay Zones under the prior Zoning Ordinance for the purpose of implementing associated Area Master, Sector, and Transit District Development Plans. Several of these zones expressly permitted accessory dwellings:

- a) Greenbelt Metro Area Development District Overlay Zone (2001-2013)
- b) Gateway Arts District Development District Overlay Zone (2004-2024)
- c) Port Towns District Development District Overlay Zone (2009-2024)

However, with the adoption of the current Zoning Ordinance, these overlay zones no longer exist. The current Zoning Ordinance does not permit ADUs in any zone. Therefore, an LDR is needed to allow ADUs accessory to single-family detached dwellings, as required by State law.

In addition, Staff from the Planning Department have been involved with the Prince George’s County ADU Task Force and accompanying efforts in response to Statewide legislation (HB 1466) and assisting with the drafting of LDR-142-2026.

LDR-142-2025: The proposed bill has the purpose of reconciling the Zoning Ordinance with State Law and setting forth general regulations for permitted accessory dwelling units in the County. First, it amends Part 2 of the Zoning Ordinance (Interpretation and Definitions). Most importantly, the LDR introduces the definition of “Accessory dwelling

unit". The proposed definition is based on HB 1466's definition for ADUs, which is as follows:

- (1) "Accessory dwelling unit" means a secondary dwelling unit that is:
 - (i) on the same lot, parcel, or tract as a primary single-family detached dwelling unit; and
 - (ii) not greater than 75% of the size of and subordinate in use to the primary single-family detached dwelling unit.

- (2) "Accessory dwelling unit" includes a structure that is:
 - (i) separate from the primary single-family detached dwelling unit;
 - or
 - (ii) attached as an addition to the primary single-family detached dwelling unit." Md. Code Ann., Land Use § 4-501(b).

The LDR would amend Section 27-2500 of the Zoning Ordinance to include a near-identical definition of "Accessory Dwelling Unit" with only technical changes that account for terminology utilized elsewhere in the Zoning Ordinance.

In addition to defining Accessory Dwelling Unit, as required by HB 1466, the LDR would amend Zoning Ordinance § 27-2201(e) to exclude ADUs from the calculation of net density. Md. Code Ann., Land Use § 4-504(c). For consistency with the Critical Area Act (Subtitle 18 of the Natural Resources Article of the Maryland Code), the LDR also clarifies in the RCO subzone of the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Overlay (CBCAO) Zone, ADUs exceeding 900 square feet will be included in density calculations.

The proposed bill also amends the accessory use tables in Section 27-5201, Designation of Accessory Use and Structures. It introduces accessory dwelling unit as accessory use and, based on HB1466, permits by right ADUs in all the base zones, planned development zones and overlay zones with the exception of the Clear Zone ("CZ") of the Military Installation Overlay Zone. However, it provides that ADUs are only permitted accessory to a single-family detached dwelling. Lastly, the bill introduces specific development standards to ADUs in Section 27-5203(b)(19) that are analyzed below.

Analysis of Proposed Standards: LDR-142-2026 only permits ADUs where the principal use is a single-family detached dwelling. This provision aligns with HB 1466 statement that "[i]t is the policy of the State to promote and encourage the creation of accessory dwelling units on land with a single-family detached dwelling unit as the primary dwelling unit in order to meet the housing needs of the citizens of Maryland." Md. Code Ann., Land Use § 4-503(a) (emphasis added). Restricting ADUs to lots containing detached dwellings maintains consistency with existing neighborhood development patterns and avoids potential conflicts with multifamily or attached housing forms that may already provide opportunities for additional residential units.

In the same manner, by restricting one ADU per lot, LDR-142-2026, balances the State's housing objectives with community concerns regarding density and infrastructure capacity, and, supports moderate residential intensification rather than whole redevelopment of established neighborhoods – particularly those where single family detached dwelling units are predominant.

Consistent with the State law definition of ADU, LDR-142-2026's proposed maximum size for ADUs is 75 percent of the gross floor area of the principal single-family detached dwelling. This standard not only mirrors the State's definition but also ensures that the accessory unit remains subordinate to the primary residence while allowing sufficient flexibility for functional housing accommodations. The provision discourages construction of secondary units that could effectively exceed the size of the principal dwelling, thereby preserving the accessory nature of the use. However, the Department is open to reviewing other proposals for size limitation if necessary.

LDR-142-2026 would also make the maximum height for an ADU 22 feet, regardless of accessory structure height limits otherwise applicable within the zone. However, the LDR further provides that the ADU may not exceed the height of the principal dwelling. This provision provides flexibility necessary for practical ADU design, including two-story configurations, where appropriate, while ensuring visual compatibility with the principal residence and surrounding neighborhood. The dual limitation helps prevent detached ADUs from becoming dominant site features.

LDR-142-2026 also addresses ADUs accessory to single-family detached dwellings with a nonconforming status. The amendment advances the housing objectives of HB 1466 by allowing for the addition of an ADU on a lot with a nonconforming single-family detached dwelling without special exception review.

Finally, LDR-142-2026 includes additional requirements for ADUs in the RCO zone. The Critical Area Act contains requirements for ADUs within the "resource conservation area," which corresponds to the RCO zone. Md. Code Ann., Nat. Res. § 8-1808.1(e)(2). LDR-142-2026 incorporates these requirements, except for the requirement that an ADU "that is separate from the primary dwelling unit may not be subdivided or conveyed separately from the primary dwelling unit." Md. Code Ann., Nat. Res. § 8-1808.1(e)(2)(iii). This will need to be incorporated into the Subdivision Regulations through a separate bill.

The Department recognizes that the proposed bill may result in several benefits, including an increased housing supply, expanded housing options for seniors, caregivers, and workforce residents, enhanced affordability through smaller dwelling units, and more efficient use of existing infrastructure and public services. At the same time, the Department acknowledges concerns raised by stakeholders regarding potential increases in parking demand, additional strain on on-site utilities, changes to neighborhood character, and increased residential density. Accordingly, the Department remains committed to engaging with stakeholders, listening to their concerns, and collaborating on solutions to address any issues that may arise from the implementation of LDR-142-2026.

Lastly, the Department offers comments to be taken into consideration for future amendments and next steps regarding ADUs including:

- Clarification on setbacks. In response to a potential desire to add setbacks that differ from the standard accessory structure setbacks. Per HB1466, any setbacks established cannot exceed the "existing accessory structure setback requirements from the side and rear lot lines". Md. Code Ann., Land Use §4-504(d). Therefore, one can decrease the applicable accessory structure setbacks but cannot increase them.

- An amendment to the Subdivision Regulations. An amendment to the Subdivision Regulations is needed to import the Critical Area Act requirement that an ADU in the RCO zone “that is separate from the primary dwelling unit may not be subdivided or conveyed separately from the primary dwelling unit.” Md. Code Ann., Nat. Res. § 8-1808.1(e)(2)(iii). Further analysis is needed to determine whether the Subdivision Regulations need to be amended to: 1) exempt ADUs from preliminary plan of subdivision; and/or 2) include provisions detailing how ADUs will be considered for subdivisions with existing trip caps.
- Revising parking requirements for Accessory Dwelling Units. Parking requirements have not been included in LDR-142-2026 because HB1466 makes a “parking study” a pre-requisite to establishing parking requirements for ADUs. Md. Code Ann., Land Use § 4-504(e).

In summary, the proposed bill implements the requirements and policy objectives of Maryland House Bill 1466 by authorizing accessory dwelling units while establishing reasonable local development standards. Also, as further stated in Part V(i) of this staff report, LDR-142-2026 is consistent with the overall planning objectives of Plan 2035 including housing diversity, affordability, aging in place, efficient land use, environmental stewardship, and universal design.

V. COMPLIANCE WITH EVALUATION CRITERIA

Pursuant to Section 27-3501(c)(2)(B), staff finds the following with respect to the proposed amendment:

- (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;**

LDR-142-2026 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”.

Consistency with General Plan

LDR-142-2026 proposes to permit accessory dwelling units by right. 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 2035, p.252). Permitting accessory dwelling units is a prime example of modernizing the County’s regulatory environment to meet 21st century needs.

Permitting accessory dwelling units also directly implements Strategy HN2.5 of Plan 2035:

Revise and update the Zoning Ordinance to encourage a range of housing types and ownership opportunities (Plan 2035, p.186).

It also directly implements Strategy HN5.1 of Plan 2035:

Expand housing options by eliminating regulatory barriers to the construction of elderly accessible housing, accessory apartments, and assisted living facilities. Revise the zoning ordinance to encourage a variety of housing types (Plan 2035, p.190).

LDR-142-2026 also implements several additional Plan 2035 policies and strategies, as shown in Table 1:

Table 1: Relevant Plan 2035 Policies and Strategies

Policy/Strategy	Page	Recommendation
Policy HN2	187	Preserve and expand the range of housing types and ownership opportunities, such as owner/resident of multifamily building and housing cooperatives, at different price points ranging from workforce and affordable units to upper-income housing to reduce housing and transportation cost burdens.
Policy HN4	189	Expand housing options to meet the needs of the County’s seniors who wish to age in place.
Strategy HN4.2	189	Encourage universal design renovations by providing grants and loans to enable residents to modify existing dwelling units by removing architectural barriers, adapting units, installing handicap accessories, and adding accessory apartments...
Policy HN5	190	Increase the supply of housing types that are suitable for, and attractive to, the County’s growing vulnerable populations. These include the elderly, the homeless, and residents with special needs.
Strategy HD11.3	216	Initiate urban design contests to explore innovative products, such as accessory units, eco-communities, co-housing, and modern multifamily units.

Consistency with Area Master and Sector Plans

LDR-142-2026 implements the recommendations of the County’s 38 active Area Master, Sector, and Transit District Development Plans by permitting accessory dwelling units by right. This legislation directly implements the following recommendations:

Table 2: Relevant Recommendations of Area Master, Sector, and Transit District Development Plans

Plan	Page	Policy/Strategy	Recommendation
2007 <i>Approved Westphalia Sector Plan</i>	26	Development Pattern Element, Recommended Development Pattern, Policy 1, Strategy 3, Design Principle 3.6	Allow the use of accessory dwelling units or “granny flats” in appropriate locations.

Plan	Page	Policy/Strategy	Recommendation
	31	Development Pattern Element, Recommended Development Pattern, Policy 5, Design Principle 1.4.2	Allow the use of detached accessory dwelling units.
2018 <i>Approved Greater Cheverly Sector Plan</i>	46	Strategy LU 6.2	Encourage development that provides for residential housing choice, affordability, and diversity with varying housing types, densities, and designs including multifamily, two-family, three-family, and townhouse dwellings; small-lot, single-family detached dwellings; live/work units; and accessory apartments.
2025 <i>Approved West Hyattsville-Queens Chapel Sector Plan</i>	55	Strategy LU 3.1	When evaluating the effectiveness of and potential updates to the Zoning Ordinance, the County Council should consider...[a]llowing accessory dwelling units and/or other forms of “Missing Middle” Housing strategies.
	82	Strategy LU 10.4	Should accessory dwelling units be permitted in the future, this housing typology should be context sensitive throughout the West Hyattsville-Queens Chapel Sector and in accordance with applicable state laws.
	179	Strategy HN 2.12	Should the Zoning Ordinance be amended to permit accessory dwelling units, their use is recommended throughout the West Hyattsville-Queens Chapel sector.

This legislation enables the creation of a diverse range of housing types, implementing recommendations from most of the County’s approved plans. Table 3 contains several examples of plans that this legislation helps to implement:

Table 3: Sample of Recommendations to Diversify Housing Offerings within Area Master, Sector, and Transit District Development Plans

Plan	Page	Policy/Strategy	Recommendation
1989 <i>Approved Master Plan for Langley Park-College Park-Greenbelt and Vicinity</i>	72	Living Areas, Guideline 5	A broad range of housing types and designs should be provided to meet the needs of different household ages, sizes and income levels.
1994 <i>Approved Master Plan for Bladensburg-New Carrollton and Vicinity</i>	55	Living Areas and Housing, Guideline 4	
2006 <i>Approved Sector Plan for the East Glenn Dale Area</i>		The Area Between Prospect Hill Road and Daisy Lane, Policy 1, Strategy 2	Encourage a variety of housing types in the focus area to allow residents to age in place in the community. (This language is contained within a minor amendment to the Sector Plan approved April 3, 2018 (CR-20-2018) to be inserted on or about page 18 of the 2006 publication.)

Plan	Page	Policy/Strategy	Recommendation
2006 <i>Approved Sector Plan for the Henson Creek-South Potomac Planning Areas</i>	97	Community Character: Urban Design, Policy 2, Strategy 3	Provide a variety of housing types, including single-family detached, single-family attached, high-quality multifamily and mixed-income housing, and senior housing opportunities. A mix of housing types provides a diverse population of residents and increases potential foot traffic for local-serving stores and services.
2009 <i>Approved Landover Gateway Sector Plan</i>	115	Community Development Elements, Policy 8, Strategy 1	Provide for a variety of housing types and styles to accommodate households at different life stages and income levels.
2009 <i>Approved Takoma-Langley Crossroads Sector Plan</i>	65	Community Development: Housing: Policy 1	Facilitate a variety of residential densities and housing types throughout the plan area.
2009 <i>Approved Marlboro Pike Sector Plan</i>	43	Community Development, C. Transition Areas, Policy 1, Strategy 1	Rezone the properties to allow for a variety of housing types.
2010 <i>Approved Central US 1 Corridor Sector Plan</i>	171	Community Development and Character, Housing Policies, Policy 1	Provide a variety of housing types with both rental and ownership opportunities to a range of incomes.
2010 <i>Approved Subregion 4 Master Plan</i>	60	Part II: Vision and Recommendations: Development Pattern—Land Use and Urban Design Element: The Land Use Plan: Policy 1	Offer a well-balanced mix of housing options for all age groups in a range of price points.
2013 <i>Approved Greenbelt Metro Area and MD 193 Corridor Sector Plan</i>	148	Chapter V—Where Do We Go From Here? Economic Development, Strategy 5.4	Promote additional opportunities for active adult and senior housing and other housing types to meet identified housing needs.
2016 <i>Approved Prince George's Plaza Transit District Development Plan</i>	100	Policy HN 1	Provide a variety of housing types and unit sizes, and neighborhoods to accommodate and meet the demands of existing and future residents in the Transit District.
		Strategy HN 2.3	Encourage the creation of affordable housing options for seniors and those seeking to age-in-place.
2018 <i>Approved Greater Cheverly Sector Plan</i>	74	Policy HN 1	Preserve and expand the range of housing types and ownership opportunities.

(ii) Addresses a demonstrated community need;

"Identified community need" is not defined by the Zoning Ordinance and is subjective. This proposed legislation addresses a need identified in Plan 2035 and nearly all of the County's approved Area Master, Sector, and Transit District Development Plans: the need for additional housing options.

(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-142-2026 allows for ADUs accessory to a single-family dwelling in all zones, except the CZ of the MIO zone. This is consistent with the purpose and intent of the zones in the Zoning Ordinance as follows:

Rural and Agricultural Base Zones: A purpose of the Rural and Agricultural Base zones is to “[p]rovide and maintain infrastructure at levels of service that are compatible with the character and needs of the Rural and Agricultural zones.” Zoning Ordinance § 27-4201(a)(5). Allowing ADUs in these zones will help to provide adequate housing infrastructure, including housing for farm employees, to support agricultural activities while maintaining the rural and agricultural character of these areas.

Residential Base Zones: A purpose of the Residential Base zones is providing “appropriately located lands for residential development that are consistent with the goals and policies of the General Plan and the applicable Area Master Plan or Sector Plan” and providing “for residential housing choice, affordability, and diversity with varying housing densities, types, and designs”. Zoning Ordinance § 27-4202(a). As discussed above, allows for ADUs advances several recommendations of the General Plan, as well as a master and sector plans. Furthermore, allowing ADUs, where not previously permitted increases housing choice, affordability, and diversity.

Nonresidential Base Zones: LDR-142-2026 also advances the purposes of the nonresidential base zones by accommodating “new infill development and redevelopment that is consistent with the context and the character of the nonresidential zone in which it is located.” Zoning Ordinance § 27-4203(a)(5). Specifically, on properties improved with a single-family detached dwelling, an ADU represents appropriate infill development. Such ADUs will provide additional residents to support businesses within the nonresidential zones. This is consistent with another purpose of the nonresidential zones, which is to “[c]reate suitable environments for various types of mixed-use development, where business, office, retail, and residential development is designed and integrated in compatible ways.” Zoning Ordinance § 27-4203(a)(4).

Transit-Oriented/Activity Center Base Zones: A purpose of the transit-oriented/activity center base zones is concentrating “intense urban development around major transit stations and the principal targets for the County’s future planned growth and mixed-use development.” Zoning Ordinance § 27-4204(a)(3). LDR-142-2026 is consistent with this purpose in that it would allow ADUs accessory to existing single-family detached dwellings. This allows for an appropriate intensification of development within existing single-family detached neighborhoods that are near transit stations.

Planned Development Zones: The purpose of the Planned Development Zones is broadly to provide greater freedom and flexibility in development to achieve “encourage innovative land planning and site design concepts.” See Zoning Ordinance § 27-4301(a). Allowing ADUs accessory to single-family detached dwellings in these zones is consistent with this purpose because allowing ADUs provides additional flexibility to allow for greater innovation.

Overlay Zones: The purpose of the various overlay zones is “supplementing generally applicable development regulations with additional development regulations that address special area-specific conditions, features, or plans while maintaining the character and purposes of the underlying zones.” Zoning Ordinance § 27-4401(a). LDR-142-2026 has been reviewed for consistency with the various Overlay Zones. Based on this review, it contains additional regulations for ADUs in the RCO zone and prohibits ADUS in the CZ of the MIO zone. Staff find that allowing ADUs without additional restrictions is consistent with the remaining Overlay Zones.

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

LDR-142-2026 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

As mentioned above, HB 1466 requires that counties and municipalities with planning and zoning authority adopt a local law authorizing ADU development on land with a single-family detached dwelling unit by October 1, 2026. LDR-142-2026, implements HB 1466 by modifying the Zoning Ordinance to authorize the development of ADUs. As detailed above, LDR-142-2026 is consistent with the requirements of HB 1466. LDR-142-2026 was also drafted to comply with the Critical Area Act requirements for ADUs in the RCO zone. (See Part IV above.) Therefore, the proposed bill 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-142-2026 complies with this criterion by providing additional standards for ADUs within the RCO zone, including prohibiting applications ADUs from requesting variances to CBCA development standards. As a result, the proposed bill ensures that implementation of HB 1466 does not weaken environmental protections established under state and local CBCA regulations for the RCO zone. This provision balances housing policy objectives with the County’s responsibility to protect sensitive environmental resources, including water quality, wildlife habitat, and shoreline ecosystems.

VI. PLANNING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

Section 27-3501(c)(2)(D) 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-142-2026 was sent on June 11, 2026, as required by the Zoning Ordinance. The Planning Board public hearing will be held on July 2, 2026, thus meeting the notice requirement 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.

VII. PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

Following review of LDR-142-2026 the Department offers the following additional amendments:

- Page 2, line 23: Remove “not greater than 75% of the size of and” from the definition of ADUs since it is already mentioned in the standards for specific accessory use and structures in Section 27-5203(b)(19)(C).
- Page 8, line 21: Replace “Critical Area” with “CBCA” for consistency with terminology used elsewhere.

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 Planning Board **SUPPORT** LDR-142-2026 with amendments.