

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE REPORT

2025 Legislative Session

Reference No.: CB-065-2025

Draft No.: 2

Committee: PLANNING, HOUSING, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Date: 9/04/2025

Action: FAVORABLE WITH
AMENDMENTS

REPORT: Committee Vote: Favorable with amendments, 4-0 (In favor: Council Members Dernoga, Adams-Stafford, Hawkins, and Olson)

The Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee met on September 4, 2025, to consider CB-065-2025. PHED Committee Director Rana Hightower summarized the purpose of the legislation and informed County Council members of written comments received from the public and referrals sent to Prince George's County agencies.

As presented on Tuesday, July 1, 2025, Draft-1 of the bill is for the purpose of reconciling areas for Cannabis uses consistent with authority set forth in State law; revising use-specific standards for permitted Cannabis uses; establishing parking regulations for permitted Cannabis uses; providing for the prospective application of provisions and amendments adopted herein; providing a severability clause for the provisions related to Cannabis uses in Prince George's County; and generally regarding Cannabis areas and uses in Prince George's County.

Council Member Fisher, the bill sponsor, thanks Council Member Hawkins for working with her on the proposed legislation. Council Member Fisher gave a brief history on State of Maryland and Prince George's County cannabis legislation enacted. The Prince George's County Council enacted zoning legislation on cannabis uses. Following that time the State of Maryland enacted preemptive legislation on cannabis uses. CB-065-2025 was drafted to resolve the conflict between the Prince George's County zoning laws and the State of Maryland enacted cannabis laws.

Council Member Fisher offered an amendment related to signage for the use. It was explained that the proposed language does not exceed what is permitted by the State of Maryland laws for signage. Council Member Fisher also requested that the conversation during the committee session focus on the legislation and the technical work because a State of Maryland referendum passed and legalized cannabis in the Maryland.

Council Member Dernoga asked Council Member Fisher if she support the Planning Board's proposed draft two of the legislation. Council Member Fisher explained she support the Planning Board's proposed draft two with the added signage amendment added.

Council Member Hawkins added that the legislation is a technical fix as a result of the General Assembly passing HB 805 to make adjustments at the local level.

Council Member Dernoga asked is there any language in the proposed bill that exceeds the State of Maryland requirements? Ms. Canning Legislative Attorney explained the legislation brings the County law to comport with the State law. She also explained she worked with the Planning Board's legal counsel.

Council Member Olson asked if the legislation is exactly inline with what the State of Maryland mandates? Director Hull, with the Planning Department explained that CB-065-2025 (DR-1) was voted on by the Planning Board on June 12, 2025, and CB-065-2025 (Proposed DR-2) reflects the Planning Board's vote to support the bill with amendments. Ms. Tallerico, Associate General Counsel for the Planning Board explained that the amendments recommended by the Planning Board were to better align the Zoning Ordinance with State of Maryland law. The recommendations in the Planning Board letter and Planning Department Technical Staff Report are not beyond what State of Maryland law dictates. There are no policy recommendations, the amendments are simply looking at the State of Maryland Code and the Prince George's County Zoning Ordinance and identifying what would be considered an undue burden on cannabis licensees.

Council Member Adams-Stafford explained that the Prince George's County Cannabis Reinvestment and Restoration Board has not met yet, and wanted to make sure the board does meet so that the profits from cannabis dispensaries are reinvested into communities that have been adversely affected in the past.

Council Member Dernoga explained that the proposed legislation covers, cannabis growers, cannabis micro-growers, Cannabis processors, cannabis micro-processors and cannabis dispensaries.

There were numerous speakers that spoke in support of the legislation.

Mr. Eddie Pounds on behalf of several Cannabis Social Equity Program licensees, he thanked Council Members Fisher and Hawkins for the legislation. He testified in support of CB-065-2025 (DR-2). He explained that the use is very regulated at the State of Maryland level, therefore clustering of the use cannot occur because there are caps on the number of dispensaries, growers and processors.

Mr. Derwin Pritchett testified in support of CB-065-2025 (DR-2) as a grower and processor. He explained that it is difficult finding locations for processing and growing in the County because of the current zoning restrictions on the use. There was a mention of an incubation program to assist Cannabis Social Equity licensees to start running which has not happened, so there is a greater burden.

Ms. Kyela Wright testified in support of CB-065-2025 (DR-2) as a micro processing facility owner. She explained the pound limit listed with the bill states 1,000 pounds and the State of Maryland has updated the pound limit to 2,000 pounds. Ms. Wright requested the bill be updated to reflect the correct pound limit to match the State of Maryland.

Mr. Quintin Lathan testified in support of CB-065-2025 (DR-2) as a dispensary owner. He explained he has been searching for a location for over one year under the current Zoning Ordinance. Please support the legislation.

Council Member Fisher asked Mr. Wright how much money, a range that is required to invest to start as a licensee? Mr. Wright said a range is \$10,000 to \$20,000 dollars which is money that does not come back, it is for consultants and realtors.

Mr. Marc Broady, testified in support of the CB-065-2025 (DR-2). He spoke about the unintended consequences of not amending the zoning law. Licensee could be squeezed into pockets there are not many locations. Allowing the dispensaries to spread out allows more growth.

Mr. Damion Dorris, testified in support of CB-065-2025 (DR-2) as a dispensary owner. The signage is important to be successful.

Mr. Jordan Little, testified in support of CB-065-2025 (DR-2) as a micro-grower licensee. He explained that he is spent over \$600,000 dollars already. The ability to co-locate businesses help cut down on expenses and reduces the cost of entry to the business for example the cost of fencing is \$60,000 dollars. Council Member asked the zoning on the property, Mr. Little stated 20 acres.

Ms. Natalie Dorris, testified in support of CB-065-2025 (DR-2) as a REALTOR. She location is everything and that signage is important to show dispensaries that are licensed. Ms. Dorris has been appointed to serve on the Cannabis Reinvestment and Restoration Board and hopes the board will meet soon. Ms. Dorris explained that it will cost almost one million dollars when they complete start up costs.

Ms. Rhontia Thomas Johnson, testified in support of CB-065-2025 (DR-2).

Ms. Sonia Owens, the County Council Liaison from the County Executive's Office, stated that the Administration takes no position on CB-065-2025 at this time, County Executive Braveboy had questions that Ms. Owens was not able to answer when County Executive Braveboy was briefed. Ms. Owens will brief the County Executive Braveboy again answering her questions on this very important legislation

Council Member Dernoga asked if the County Council does not enact the bill what are the legal consequences? Ms. Dinora Hernandez, with the Office of Law, explained that the County would be legally challenged. Ms. Tallerico agreed with Ms. Hernandez and explained that the County law would be out of line with the State of Maryland law and open the County up to legal a challenge.

Council Member Fisher requested that the outdoor sign language be added to CB-065-2025 (DR-2). Ms. Canning explained that amendment complies with the State of Maryland law.

The amendment reads: Outdoor signage may include one (1) freestanding or pylon sign in addition to building-mounted signs, subject to the same height, size, illumination, and placement restrictions applicable to other retail commercial establishments in the same zone.

On motion of Council Member Hawkins, seconded by Council Member Olson the PHED Committee voted 4-0 favorably on the amendment.

On motion of Council Hawkins, seconded by Council Member Adams-Stafford, the PHED Committee voted 4-0 in favor of CB-65-2025 with amendments.

Ms. Canning notified Council Member Dernoga that Ms. McNeil, the Zoning Hearing Examiner (ZHE) had two technical amendments that should be added to the bill.

The amendments read:

Using the bill numbering, page 5, Section (a)(1)(B)(i) ((c) should be revised as follows: “Any pre-existing primary or secondary school in the State, pre-existing licensed childcare center, or registered pre-existing family childcare home....” The same change should be made on page 6 in (a)(1)(D)(i)(cc), on page 7 in (e)(9)(G)(1) (bb), and on page 8 in (H)(i) (bb).

On page 9, since (ii)(aa) is being deleted, paragraph (II) should be revised to state that “Buildings, structures, and parking shall be located at least fifty (5) feet from property lines in the IE Zone.” The same change should be made on Page 9 in (F)(ii).

Council Member Hawkins made a motion for reconsideration of CB-065-2025 (DR-2), Council Member Adams-Stafford seconded the motion. The committee voted 4-0 favorably on the reconsideration.

Ms. Tallerico recommending aligning the ZHE’s amendments with CB-065-2025 (DR-2) because the amendments may already be included and are not necessary.

Council Member Dernoga made a motion to amend the bill further to reflect the ZHE’s recommended amendments consistent with CB-065-2025 (DR-2) and subject to the review by the Planning Department. Council Member Hawkins seconded the motion and the PHED Committee voted 4-0 to include the ZHE’s technical amendments.

On motion of Council Member Dernoga, seconded by Council Member Hawkins the PHED Committee voted 4-0 favorably on of CB-065-2025 (DR-2) as further amended.