

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE REPORT

2025 Legislative Session

Reference No.: CB-035-2025

Draft No.: 2

Committee: PLANNING, HOUSING, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Date: 5/15/2025

Action: FAVORABLE WITH
AMENDMENTS

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

The Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee met on May 15, 2025, to consider CB-035-2025. PHED Committee Chair Dernoga summarized the purpose of the legislation. As presented on Tuesday, April 29, 2025, Draft-1 of the bill for the purpose of removing and re-lettering certain definitions; providing for revisions to certain design elements; providing for a certain clearance for certain exterior door entrances; providing for a certain clearance for certain lead walks; providing for a certain clearance for certain hallways on the accessible level; providing for a certain clearance for certain doorways on the accessible level; providing for a certain clearance for certain interior hallways in townhouse and two-over-two units; providing for a certain clearance for certain interior doorways in townhouse and two-over-two units; and generally regarding Universal Design elements for certain newly constructed residential housing dwelling units.

The PHED Committee discussed CB-035-2025 (Proposed DR-2). In addition, the PHED Committee Director informed the Committee of written comments received from referrals to County agencies.

There were additional proposed amendments, which are as follows:

1. Universal Design - Exterior Entrance; Doorways, Sec. 4-358(b)

On page 4, in line 9, strike the brackets around "be," add brackets around "have," strike the brackets around "wide," and strike "clearance."

2. Universal Design - Exterior Entrance; Lead walks, Sec. 4-358(d)

On page 4, in line 13, strike the brackets around "be," add brackets around "have," strike the brackets around "wide," and strike "clearance."

3. Interior Accessible Route - Hallways, Sec. 4-359(c)

On page 4, in line 20, strike the brackets around "wide," and on line 21, strike the brackets around "width"; and in line 21, strike "clearance."

4. Interior Accessible Route – Doorways, Sec. 4-359(d)

On page 4, in line 22, strike the brackets around "width" and strike "clearance of."

5. Townhouses, Two Over Two's, Interior Doorway, Sec. 4-364

On page 5, in line 8, strike the brackets around "width," and in line 8, strike "clearance."

Council Member Ivey, the bill's sponsor, explained that CB-035-2025 is a minor clean-up bill to assist with building universal design elements during housing development.

The Chief Zoning Hearing Examiner (ZHE), Ms. Maurene McNeil, explained there is a companion zoning bill (CB-041-2025), and because of the change to the zoning bill, changes were needed to CB-035-2025. The amendments included adding a definition for "site plan" and a section prohibiting a building official from waiving any approval conditions imposed by the District Council or ZHE because of reviewing special exceptions, zoning map amendments, or detailed site plan applications. All amendments recommended by Ms. McNeil have been included in the legislation.

Mr. David Warner, Principal Counsel, explained that all amendments have been included in CB-035-2025 (Proposed DR-2).

Ms. Shalene Miller-Whye, Legislative Budget and Policy Analyst with the Prince George's County Council Budget and Policy Division submitted a policy and fiscal note explaining that the Center for Universal Design, Universal Design is a process for accessibility developed to meet and accommodate everyone, regardless of ability or disability. Principles of Universal Design for housing include:

- Equitable Use
- Flexibility in Use
- Low Physical Effort
- Size and Space for Approach and Use

Equitable Use, the focus of this process, demonstrates that the design must be developed in a way accessible to all residents. For flexibility in use, the design will accommodate different types of residents, ranging from several different disabilities. In terms of low physical effort, the design assures that residents suffering from mobility issues can live everyday lives within their homes. With size and space for approach and use, these standards outline the importance of having a strategically sized home to meet the needs of all residents, regardless of reach, mobility, and size.⁹ Specific Universal Design standards include but are not limited to the following:

- No step entry
- Doorways with 32 – 36-inch-wide clearances
- Hallways with 36 – 42-inch-wide clearances
- Light switches and electrical outlets 24 – 58 inches from the floor
- Door handles that are 34 – 48 inches from the floor
- Additional floor space, including ample kitchen space of at least 30 by 48 inches in kitchens
- Slip-resistant floors and surfaces
- Comfortable reach zones,

The enactment of CB-035-2025 does not have a direct fiscal impact because the bill contains design elements. However, the indirect fiscal impact may be favorable because the bill is associated with the economic benefits of increasing residents' ability to age in place.

The Planning Board did not submit comments on the legislation.

Ms. Sakinda Skinner, the County Council Liaison to the County Executive's Office, supports the legislation and thanked Council Member Ivey for taking the lead.

Ms. Dinora Hernandez, with the Office of Law, found the legislation to be in proper legislative form and has no legal impediments to its enactment.

On motion of Council Member Olson, seconded by Council Member Hawkins, the PHED Committee voted 4-0 in favor of CB-035-2025 with amendments.