



October 1, 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-153-2025
Flagship Project Overlay Zone

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 with amendments**, as described in the Recommendation section of this technical staff report.

I. 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. 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) of the Zoning Ordinance, 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 Planning Department have determined that LDR-153-2025 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 create a Flagship Project Overlay Zone (FPO Zone) to facilitate transformative redevelopment of signature sites in Prince George’s County. The FPO Zone aims to provide an alternative process for review and approval of applications seeking to comprehensively redevelop long-standing regional attractions and significant Metrorail station locations. This initiative focuses on developing signature destination projects that attract both regional and national visitors.
- B. Impacted Property:** This bill will impact all properties in Prince George’s County that seek to develop flagship projects and are subject to one or more of the Town Activity Center (TAC) Zone, Legacy Comprehensive Design (LCD) Zone, Agricultural-Residential (AR) Zone, Local Transit-Oriented Core (LTO-C) Zone or Local Transit-Oriented Edge (LTO-E) Zone.
- C. Policy Analysis: Overlay projects:** According to the Zoning Ordinance, overlay zones are superimposed over portions of one or more underlying base zones with the intent of 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.
See Section 27-4401 of the Zoning Ordinance.

While overlay zones superimpose additional regulations, the underlying base zone typically dictates the general framework for the land’s permitted uses and overall character. However, overlay zones may introduce special standards that modify or even override the base zone’s rules, e.g., the Aviation Policy Area Overlay Zone where certain development criteria, such as height restrictions, density limits, or use categories, are adjusted to meet the specific needs of the overlay zone.

Similarly, the FPO Zone addresses the unique aspects of potential redevelopment projects that are not fully covered by the regulations for the TAC, LCD, AR, LTO-C and LTO-E Zones respectively. In addition, where the FPO Zone does not specifically alter the base zone’s regulations, the rules of the underlying zone apply.

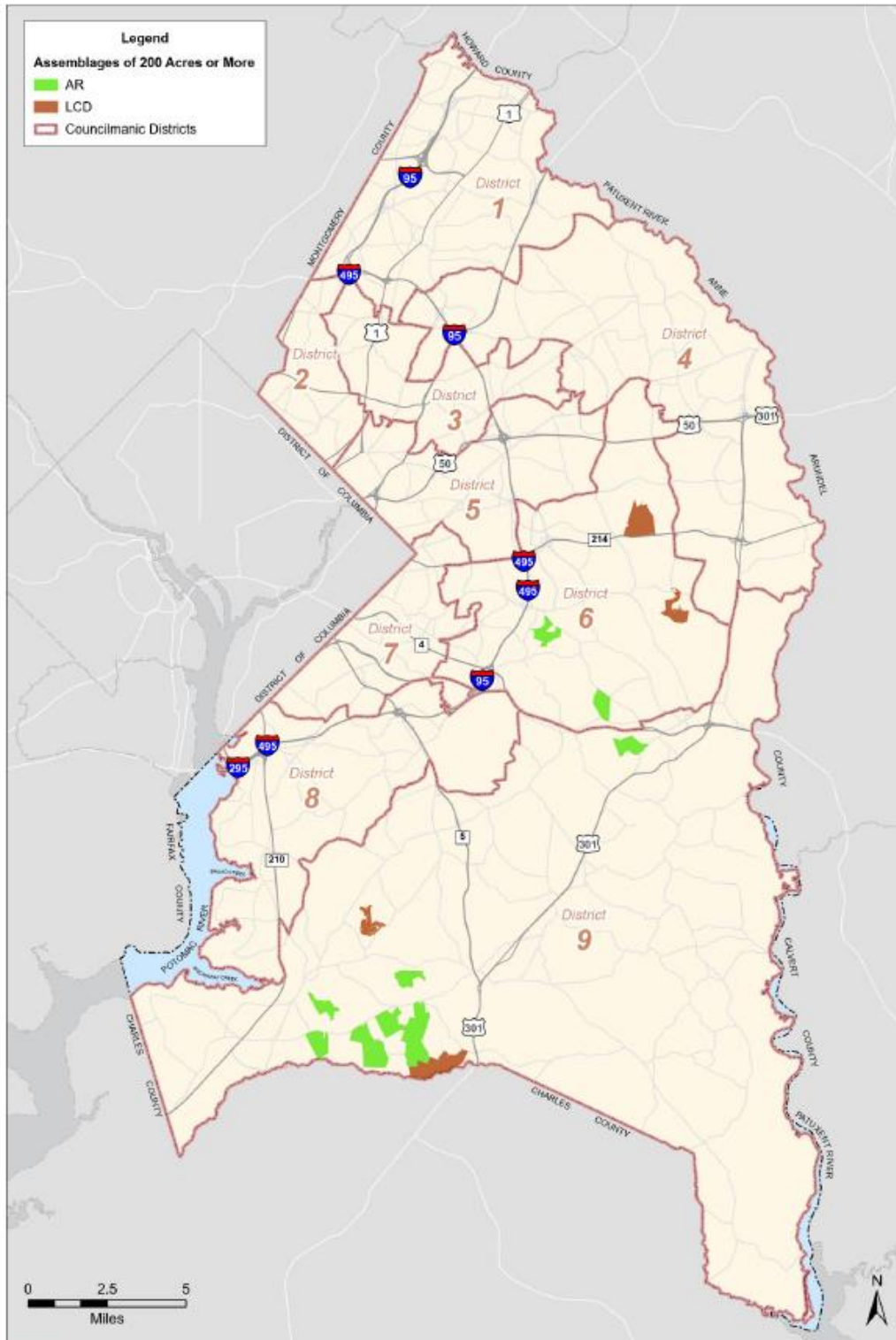
The intent of the proposed bill is to permit the redevelopment of large, unique potential sites of high importance in the County through a streamlined process. The bill aligns with the County Executive’s Elevate Prince George’s Initiative, which aims to reduce regulatory burdens on investment. The streamlined process is not entirely new, as the Zoning Ordinance already includes expedited review procedures for transit-oriented developments, as stated in Section 27-3619(c) of the Zoning Ordinance. Under these

provisions, for example, the Planning Board is required to provide notice, schedule, and conduct an evidentiary hearing on an expedited transit-oriented development site plan application within 60 days of accepting the application, pursuant to Section 27-3619(c)(7).

Moreover, any potential developments in qualified sites should focus on high-quality, environmentally sensitive, sustainable, and regionally beneficial mixed-use projects that include certain uses permitted by right. This approach aligns with the objectives, for example, of Transit-Oriented/Activity Center Base Zones, which aim to concentrate urban development around major transit stations and serve as the primary targets for the County's future planned growth and mixed-use development.

To conduct a spatial analysis and assess the impact of the proposed legislation in the County, the Planning Department aimed to identify potential sites based on the applicability and minimum standards for designating the FPO Zone, as outlined on page 7, lines 17-31. However, several challenges were encountered when interpreting the bill's provisions, including issues related to single ownership when parcels are separated by a right-of-way, the definition of "tract of contiguous land," and whether certain uses should be permitted by right or by special exception. Proposed language to address these interpretation challenges is provided in Section VII of this report. Alternatively, the Council may wish to consider specifically identifying the boundaries of the properties intended to be governed by the FPO Zone.

Lastly, on September 18, 2025, the Planning Board granted permission to print the Draft Central Avenue-Blue/Silver Line Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment (SMA) and transmit the Public Facilities Referral to the County Executive. That SMA proposes to rezone Morgan Boulevard from LTO-C and LTO-E into the Regional Transit-Oriented Low, Core and Regional Transit-Oriented Low, Edge Zones. Considering the potential of this site for a flagship project, the Department recommends that the Regional Transit-Oriented, Low-Intensity Zone (RTO-L) Zones be included in the bill.



Qualifying Sites per LDR-153

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Prince George's County
Planning Department
9/29/2025

Map 1. Qualifying Sites per LDR-153-2025. Source: M-NCPPC

IV. COMPLIANCE WITH EVALUATION CRITERIA

1. Section 27-3501(c)(2)(B) 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;**

LDR-153-2025 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

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). Plan 2035 further recommends establishing "a by-right development approval process and fast track permit process for the Downtowns with clear and consistent regulatory standards and processes and shortened review periods." ²

Most initiatives to reduce the time, costs, and complexity of the development review process to align with the County's competing jurisdictions are generally consistent with these recommendations.

Consistency with Area Master and Sector Plans

Plan	Page	Policy/Strategy	Recommendation
2006 Approved Master Plan for the Henson Creek-South Potomac Planning Areas	94	Community Character: Revitalization: Policy 3	Streamline the development process for projects within designated revitalization overlay areas and other suitable locations.
		Community Character: Revitalization: Policy 3, Strategy 2	Explore innovative new zoning tools and review procedures designed to facilitate development in targeted locations.

		Community Character: Revitalization: Policy 3, Strategy 3	Expedite the development review and permitting process. Encourage developers to meet with both the Prince George's County Planning Department and Department of [Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement] before the design phase begins to ensure projects meet the minimum standards of the Zoning Ordinance and other applicable requirements.
2009 Approved Landover Gateway Sector Plan	114	Chapter 6: Community Development Elements: Market Potential, Policy 6	Streamline the review process and provide incentives for private investment.
2009 Approved Marlboro Pike Sector Plan	96	Chapter VII: Economic Development Strategies: E. Development Regulations, Policy 2, Strategy 1	If necessary, revise and amend development review procedures to expedite approval of projects.
2013 Approved Largo Town Center Sector Plan	92	Chapter 5: Implementation: Public-Private Partnerships	The county has shown a willingness to help facilitate economic development by providing incentives and identifying opportunities for joint development that will leverage and strengthen public-private investment, such as expedited site plan and permit processes and analyzing various innovative financing mechanisms and techniques.

(ii) Addresses a demonstrated community need;

LDR-153-2025 seeks to create redevelopment opportunities for strategically located properties that, due to evolving market conditions, are at risk of remaining vacant and underutilized. These sites, which are currently constrained by the existing Zoning Ordinance, pose a potential threat to the surrounding community by becoming eyesores, contributing to blight, and potentially impacting public safety. The inability to develop these parcels not only hampers economic potential but also diminishes property values in the immediate area. By designating these sites as flagship properties, the proposed legislation will facilitate more efficient redevelopment, leading to an increase in the County's tax base and stimulating broader economic growth in the surrounding region area.

- (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;**

As mentioned above, LDR-153-2025 is consistent with the purposes for which overlay zones are intended and will still allow for compatibility with the underlying TAC and LTO Zones.

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

The 2022 Prince George's County Climate Action Plan (CAP) contains 26 priority recommendations intended for rapid implementation with key near-term actions, and numerous strategies focused on the long-term vision to guide the County's climate mitigation and adaptation efforts over time. The strategies are contained in Chapter VI, Taking Action: Strategies to Achieve a Low-Carbon, Resilient Prince George's County, while the recommendations are described with detailed action steps in Chapter VII, Next Steps.

The FPO Zone's goals align with the CAP's emphasis on ensuring that development is of high quality, environmentally sensitive, and regionally integrated with mixed-use elements. The bill's focus on facilitating redevelopment in strategically located areas can help achieve the CAP's overarching goal of promoting sustainable and vibrant communities that serve a broader regional purpose. Hence, LDR-153-2025 is consistent with recommendation M-7, to increase investment in Activity Centers by concentrating medium- to high-density housing development in Regional Transit Districts and Local Centers with convenient access to jobs, schools, childcare, shopping, recreation, and other services to meet projected demand and changing consumer preferences.

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

LDR-153-2025 imposes an overlay zone on certain properties in the County using a method similar to the Council's approach to imposing the current Aviation Policy Area Overlay Zone. The Council should confirm this approach is consistent with its authority under the Land Use Article to adopt and amend zoning ordinances and accompanying zoning maps, including the processes and procedures required to impose overlay zones.

- (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.**

As mentioned before in this report, one of the goals of LDR-153-2025 is to ensure that development is environmentally sensitive and sustainable. More importantly, any development project in the FPO Zone shall demonstrate that the proposed site modifications do not impact any regulated environmental features or historic and archeological resources before a grading permit can be issued by the designated agency.

- 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.”**

LDR-153-2025 complies with this criterion.

- 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-153-2025 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) 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-153-2025 will be sent on September 27, 2025, as required by the Zoning Ordinance. The Planning Board public hearing will be held on October 16, 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-153-2025 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-153-2025 provides for uniform treatment for each class or kind of development throughout the overlay zone. The establishment of a new overlay zone will introduce disparate standards for a subset of properties within an underlying Euclidean Zone on a Countywide basis as a supplement, rather than to replace, the existing provisions and specific standards applicable to each underlying zone.

In addition, properties located within the FPO Zone will remain subject to the general development standards applicable to the underlying base zone. Therefore, the proposed overlay zone will not alter the uniformity of the development standards applicable in the underlying zones, but instead will work in conjunction with existing regulations to provide additional or specialized requirements where necessary.

Staff recommend the Planning Board find that LDR-153-2025 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-153-2025, the Department has offered the following technical drafting convention edits that are necessary for this proposed bill. 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-153-2025:

Page 7, lines 20-31 and page 8, lines 1-6:

(B) The District Council establishes the FPO Zone on all land in Prince George's County that meets one or more of the following criteria:

(i) A tract of contiguous land , INCLUDING LAND SEPARATED BY ANY RIGHTS-OF-WAY OR EASEMENTS in common ownership at least 200 150 acres in size within one or more of the Town Activity

Center-CORE (TAC-C) Zone, TOWN ACTIVITY CENTER-EDGE (TAC-E) ZONE, Legacy Comprehensive Design (LCD) Zone, AND/or the Agricultural-Residential Zone that permitted IN ACTIVE USE AS one or more of the following uses ON JANUARY 1, 2025: commercial recreational attraction, amusement park, or arena, stadium, or amphitheater, on January 1, 2025; and/or INCLUSIVE OF:

(aa) LAND USED FOR PARKING FOR SAID USE; AND/OR

(bb) UTILITY EASEMENTS AND/OR RIGHTS-OF-WAY ABUTTING SAID USE; AND/OR

(cc) LAND WITHIN THE SAME TAX ACCOUNT AS SAID USE(S) ON SEPTEMBER 1, 2025; AND/OR

(dd) LAND OWNED BY THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION NOT CLASSIFIED IN THE RESERVED OPEN SPACE (ROS) ZONE.

(ii) At least 50 contiguous acres LAND classified in the REGIONAL TRANSIT-ORIENTED, LOW, CORE (RTO-L-C), REGIONAL TRANSIT-ORIENTED, LOW, EDGE (RTO-L-E), Local Transit-Oriented, Core (LTO-C) Zone or Local Transit-Oriented Edge (LTO-E) Zone within one mile of a tract of land that meets the requirements of (i) above.

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 **SUPPORT with amendments** LDR-153-2025.