THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
Park and Planning Commission
Prince George's County Planning Board | Office of the Chairman

1616 McCormick Drive, Largo, MD 20774
301-952-3561
pgcpb@ppd.mncppc.org
www.pgplanningboard.org

August 3, 2026

The Honorable Krystal Oriadha
Chair, Prince George's County Council
Wayne K. Curry Administration Building
1301 McCormick Drive
Largo, MD 20774

Re: LDR-153-2026

Dear Chair Oriadha:

As required by the County's legislative amendment process for amendments to the Zoning Ordinance (Section 27-3501), the Planning Board held a public hearing on July 30, 2026, to receive comments on proposed Legislative Drafting Request LDR-153-2026.

Following discussion of LDR-153-2026, and in consideration of public comments on this proposed legislation, the Planning Board approved a motion to oppose LDR-153-2026 and forward the recommendations of the attached technical staff report to the County Council.

The link to the public hearing video and any backup materials may be found under the hearing date at: https://www.mncppc.org/883/Watch-Meetings. The following is a summary of the testimony provided at the hearing:

Hearing Summary:

Prior to the public hearing, the Planning Board was in receipt of 17 letters to oppose LDR-13-2026. Testimony was received from the Greater Capitol Heights Improvement Coalition, Route 202 Neighborhood Coalition; the Indian Head Highway Area Action Council, Inc.; Glenn Dale Citizens' Association, Inc.; Friends of Lower Beaverdam Creek; CCAN Action Fund; Greater Baden Aquasco Citizens Association; Coalition for Smarter Growth; Brandywine TB Southern Region Neighborhood Coalition's ECCB Community Citizens Board; Janet Gingold; Patricia Jackman; Susan McCutchen; Jon Robinson, Ph.D.; Robin Lewis; Pamela Skinner; Leo Shapiro; and Kathy Bartolomeo.

Most of this testimony expressed general support for more efficient development review procedures but all testimony was opposed to LDR-13-2026. Several commenters expressed support of the technical staff report analysis as part of their opposition to the LDR. Most commenters expressed concern pertaining to the shift from approved to proposed Natural Resources Inventories (NRIs) and Stormwater Management (SWM) Concept Plans. Several expressed concerns that the combined application process proposed in LDR-13-2026 would undermine County goals for quality transit-oriented development (TOD) at designated priority locations and put TOD in the same fast-lane as traditional "sprawl" development.

Some comments explicitly took issue with concurrent review replacing sequential review. Several comments expressed concern LDR-153-2026 would minimize community participation in the development review process. Dr. Robinson and the Coalition for Smarter Growth both discussed the Zoning Rewrite; Dr. Robinson discussed the costs of the rewrite and felt community input was politely set aside. Cheryl Cort on behalf of the Coalition for Smarter Growth discussed how the rewrite was intended to bring Prince George's County's development review process into conformance with modern best practices to front-load community input, ensure certainty of outcomes, and remove procedural barriers; and expressed specific concern with the Council's election to review authority and a perception it adds uncertainty to the back-end of development, and recommends either eliminating election to review to bring the County into conformance with peer jurisdictions or consider new parameters as to its use to minimize these concerns.

During the public hearing, 12 speakers were registered and spoke. Many speakers had submitted written testimony and reiterated their testimony and concerns verbally. Ms. Aita Bailey opposed LDR-153-2026 in part due to environmental concerns pertaining to the proposed change to NRIs and SWM concept plans. Ms. Elinora Wixon opposed LDR-153-2026, concurred with other speakers, and felt the detailed site plan process was beneficial to community organizations as a venue to work on improvements to development. Dr. Noah Waters believes LDR-153-2026 may remove the voice of the people. Ms. Taylor Frazier McCollum focused on data centers and urged the Planning Board to consider the future, where development and the environment work in harmony.

Several speakers believe LDR-153-2026 was intended in part to allow qualified data centers to proceed during the current moratorium period. The Planning Department has seen no evidence of any kind that LDR-153-2026 is intended in any way to facilitate data center development. While *future* qualified data centers may use the provisions of LDR-153-2026 should it become law, the Department believes that would occur after the moratorium period ends and comprehensive qualified data center regulation has been established. The Department does not believe there is any attempt whatsoever to facilitate qualified data centers in the immediate- to short-term with LDR-153-2026.

Planning Board Proposed Amendments:

Following review of LDR-153-2026, the Planning Board concurred with staff that no potential amendments could be identified that would make LDR-153-2026 a viable approach. Instead of continuing with the approach proposed in LDR-153-2026, it may make sense, consistent with the policy discussion of Section IV of the Technical Staff Report, to consider other streamlining proposals.

Legislative Amendment Decision Standards:

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 district council 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 Planning Board finds that LDR-153-2026 meets the criteria that the provisions for each zone shall be uniform for each class or kind of development throughout the zone because the provisions of LDR-152-2026 are focused on development application approaches that would apply regardless of the zoning. However, in this instance, the Planning Board would urge the District Council to look beyond the legislative amendment decision standards in light of the numerous concerns identified in the Technical Staff Report and consider that while a proposed bill may meet the decision standards enumerated in Section 27-3501(d), Legislative Amendment Decision Standards, a bill may not meet the purpose and intent of other provisions of Section 27-3501, Legislative Amendment. LDR-153-2026 does not meet any of the five considerations mandated by Section 27-3501(c)(2)(B) for analysis of the extent to which proposed amendments meet identified purposes.

The Planning Board also recommends two immediate steps that could greatly improve collaboration and ensure effective legislation:

1. Once developed, draft recommendations of the County's Streamlining Development Review Work Group should be referred to the Planning Department, DPIE, environmental agencies and organizations, and other major stakeholders for review and comment prior to finalization.

2. The County Council should direct Council staff and the Planning Department to meet and prepare comprehensive draft legislation that will carry out the final recommendations of the County's Streamlining Development Review Work Group, once completed.

As always, Planning Department staff members are available to work with the Council and your legislative staff on any pertinent legislative matters. Should you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Office of the Planning Director at 301-952-3594. Thank you again for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kevin A. Anderson
Chair

Attachments