September 16, 2026

Policy Analysis and Fiscal Impact Statement

TO: Planning, Housing and Economic Development Committee (PHED)

THRU: Rana Hightower, Director
Planning, Housing and Economic Development Committee (PHED)

FROM: Credelphia Ganu
Legislative Liaison to M-NCPPC

RE: **CB-082-2026 –** Cannabis Dispensaries - Use Regulations

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CB-082-2026 (*proposed by*: Council Chair Krystal Oriadha)

Assigned to the Planning, Housing and Economic Development Committee (PHED)

AN ORDINANCE CONCERNING CANNABIS DISPENSARIES - USE REGULATIONS, for the purpose of making the use regulations for Cannabis dispensaries and Cannabis micro-dispensaries consistent with provisions of State law; and generally regarding Cannabis uses in Prince George's County.

Fiscal Summary

Direct Impact:

Expenditures: Minimal; administrative implementation is expected to be absorbed within existing agency resources.

Revenues: No direct revenue impact is anticipated; any change in fee timing or collections cannot presently be quantified.

Indirect Impact:

Potentially mixed; but limited; the geographic availability of eligible dispensary sites may change.

Legislative Summary:

CB-082-2026 amends Section 27-5102(e)(9) of the Prince George's County Zoning Ordinance, which contains use-specific standards for Cannabis dispensaries and Cannabis micro-dispensaries.

The bill would require the property boundaries for both cannabis dispensaries and micro cannabis dispensaries to be at least 500 feet from a pre-existing playground and public park or place of worship.

The existing 100-foot separation from residentially zoned property and the 1,000-foot separation between dispensaries and micro-dispensaries would remain unchanged. The Zoning Ordinance would take effect 45 calendar days after enactment.

Implementation Summary:

Implementation would primarily require the Planning Department and other reviewing agencies to apply the revised separation standards to new Cannabis dispensary and Cannabis micro-dispensary applications. The amendment does not create a new approval process or change the State licensing structure.

The affected agencies may need to:

- Update application instructions, zoning checklists, maps, and public guidance to include pre-existing places of worship;
- Confirm the date and legal status of protected uses when measuring required separation distances;
- Coordinate zoning determinations with the Maryland Cannabis Administration and County permit and licensing reviews;
- Evaluate pending applications consistently during the transition to the revised standards;
- Train intake and review staff and update electronic records or geographic-information-system layers, if necessary.

The Planning Department recommended support, offered no amendments, and found that the proposal satisfies the legislative-amendment criteria in Section 27-3501. Following its public hearing, the Planning Board accepted the Department's findings and supported LDR-151-2026.

Current Law/Background:

Maryland's Cannabis Reform Act became effective July 1, 2023, and authorizes standard and micro cannabis grower, processor, and dispensary licenses. Prince George's County enacted CB-

013-2024, effective May 28, 2024, to establish zoning regulations corresponding to those State license types. CB-065-2025 later revised the County's cannabis-use regulations to address provisions that could unduly burden licensees.

Section 36-410 of the Alcoholic Beverages and Cannabis Article generally prohibits a licensed dispensary from locating within 500 feet of a pre-existing primary or secondary school, licensed child-care center, registered family child-care home, playground, recreation center, library, public park, or place of worship, or within 1,000 feet of another dispensary. State law permits political subdivision to reduce, but not increase, the 500-foot distances and permits an increase in the dispensary-to-dispensary distance up to one-half mile.

The current County ordinance requires dispensaries and micro-dispensaries to remain at least 500 feet from specified schools, child-care uses, playgrounds, recreation centers, libraries, and public parks, but does not expressly include places of worship or consistently describe the protected uses as pre-existing. The County also requires 100 feet from residentially zoned property and 1,000 feet from another dispensary or micro-dispensary.

Planning staff explained that adding the term “pre-existing” would clarify that the separation requirement applies when the protected use existed before the dispensary. This would prevent a school, park, place of worship, or other protected use established later from causing an existing, lawfully established dispensary to become nonconforming.

Staff also explained that establishing a 500-foot separation from places of worship is permitted, but not strictly required, by State law. Although State law establishes a 500-foot standard, counties may reduce that distance. Retaining the full 500-foot separation is therefore a County police decision.

Proposed Legislation:

CB-082-2026 would:

1. Add places of worship to the uses protected by a 500-foot separation from Cannabis dispensaries and Cannabis micro-dispensaries;

2. Clarify that the schools, child-care uses, playgrounds, recreation centers, libraries, public parks, and places of worship subject to the separation requirement are pre-existing uses;

3. Retain the existing 100-foot residential-zone separation and 1,000-foot separation between dispensary uses;

4. Take effect 45 calendar days after adoption.

Resource Personnel:

- **Legislative Attorney:** Josh Hamlin
- **Council Office:** Tre'von Sawyers, Chief of Staff, Council District 7
- **Agency Contact:** Natalia Gomez Rojas, M-NCPPC Planning Department
- **Other Reviewing Agencies**: Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement; Maryland Cannabis Administration; and other County licensing or enforcement agencies, as applicable

Discussion/Policy Analysis:

The bill would align the wording of the County's protected-use list more closely with State law. The most significant substantive change is the addition of a 500-foot separation from pre-existing places of worship. The addition of 'pre-existing' clarifies the point in time at which protected uses affect site eligibility.

The amendment may reduce uncertainty for existing dispensaries because a school, child-care use, park, place of worship, or other protected use established after the dispensary would not create a new separation conflict under the amended text. Conversely, adding places of worship to the 500-foot buffer may remove some otherwise eligible sites from consideration for a new dispensary or micro-dispensary.

Planning staff found no identified community need specific to the amendment but concluded that it is consistent with Plan 2035's goal of a modern, streamlined regulatory environment, the purposes of the zones where cannabis dispensaries are permitted, State law, and environmental-review criteria. The Planning Board supported the proposal without amendments.

Implementation should focus on consistent measurement, documentation of which protected use existed first, treatment of pending applications, and coordination between local zoning approval and State cannabis licensing. These administrative details affect predictability but do not appear to require a new County program.

Fiscal Impact:

- ***Direct Impact***

Expenditures: Minimal; administrative implementation is expected to be absorbed within existing agency resources.

The bill does not create positions or appropriate funding. The Planning Department and related agencies may incur limited one-time costs to revise application materials, mapping or screening

practices, staff guidance, and electronic systems. Ongoing review would occur through existing zoning, permitting, and licensing processes. No agency cost estimate is presently available.

Revenues: No direct revenue impact is anticipated; any change cannot presently be quantified.

The bill creates no fee, tax, or dedicated revenue source. Adding the place-of-worship buffer may reduce the number of eligible sites, while the pre-existing-use clarification may improve certainty for some properties. Any resulting change in application, permit, or licensing-fee collections would depend on future siting decisions and cannot be estimated.

- ***Indirect Impact***

Potentially mixed; any impact cannot presently be quantified.

The proposal may improve regulatory clarity and land-use compatibility near places of worship. It may also constrain site availability for new dispensaries and affect travel distance, market access, competition, or property-use options. The magnitude would depend on the location of protected uses and future license applications.

- *Appropriated in the Current Fiscal Year Budget*

No. CB-082-2026 does not appropriate funding. Any initial administrative work is expected to be absorbed within existing agency appropriations.

Policy Implementation Resources/Project Timeline:

Milestone 1 – Upon Enactment

- The Office of Law, Planning Department, and affected agencies may review the enacted language and identify pending applications affected by the change.
- Staff may confirm a consistent method for documenting whether a protected use is pre-existing and measuring required distances.

Milestone 2 – Administrative Updates

- Application materials, checklists, mapping practices, staff guidance, and public information may be updated.
- Review staff may receive guidance concerning the new place-of-worship separation requirement.

Milestone 3 – Implementation

- New and applicable pending dispensary and micro-dispensary applications may be reviewed under the amended standards.

- County zoning, permitting, and licensing reviews may be coordinated with State cannabis licensing.

Milestone 4- Ongoing Administration

- Agencies may monitor recurring interpretation, mapping, enforcement, or site-availability issues and revise procedures as necessary.

Resources and Critical Path

Implementation resources may include Planning Department zoning-review staff, GIS and information-technology support, legal counsel, DPIE permitting and enforcement staff, and staff responsible for County and State cannabis licensing coordination.

The critical path is updating screening materials and establishing a consistent method for identifying pre-existing protected uses before the amended standards are applied to applications.

Disclaimer: This is a preliminary implementation timeline based on the legislation and information available at this time. Agency fiscal and implementation estimates were not available when this draft was prepared. Staffing needs, procedures, system requirements, and costs remain subject to confirmation.

Effective Date of Proposed Legislation:

The proposed Ordinance will take effect 45 calendar days after its adoption.

If you require additional information or have questions about this fiscal impact statement, please reach out to me via phone or email.