PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE REPORT

2026 Legislative Session

Reference No.:	CB-077-2026
Draft No.:	1
Committee:	PLANNING, HOUSING, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Date:	9/17/2026
Action:	FAVORABLE

REPORT: Committee Vote: Favorable 5-0 (In favor: Committee Chair Blegay, Vice Chair Oriadha, Council Members Adams-Stafford, Dernoga and Olson)

The Planning, Housing and Economic Development (PHED) Committee met on Thursday, September 17, 2026, to consider CB-077-2026. As presented on Tuesday, September 1, 2026, the County Council presented and referred Draft-1 of the bill to the PHED Committee. The bill is for the purpose of permitting certain community service and commercial uses by right in Residential, Single-Family-Attached (RSF-A) Zone; and amending use standards for permitted community service and commercial uses to promote the productive reuse of existing buildings and ensure compatibility with surrounding neighborhood in which these uses are proposed.

The PHED Committee Director, Rana Hightower, provided a summary of the proposed legislation and shared public comments and feedback from various agencies within Prince George's County.

The bill sponsor, PHED Committee Vice Chair Oriadha explained that some property owners in the County face unique challenges when trying to redevelop long-standing commercial properties. Redevelopment can be complicated and expensive because current processes and standards are not well-aligned with older commercial sites. The committee is exploring ways to make redevelopment easier for these existing properties.

Council Member Olson asked how many properties would be affected by the proposed legislation. Mr. Williams from the Planning Department said staff had not yet created a map but had requested one to identify all impacted sites.

Council Member Dernoga noted that this legislation is similar to an issue in College Park, where an old corner store with residential units above required redevelopment that could only be addressed through a text amendment. He explained that the current bill is intended to resolve similar situations today, including long-standing commercial uses in residential zones, such as churches and restaurants that struggle to fit within existing zoning standards.

David Warner, Principal Counsel for the Commission, stated that when a permitted use comes in for a recommendation on a permit, staff must determine whether the proposal is compatible with the surrounding properties. This can be difficult when zoning standards are vague. He emphasized that clearer, more specific standards would make permit review easier and more consistent.

He added that a standard allowing proposed uses to proceed if they meet typical commercial requirements could simplify the process. This is especially relevant when repurposing former commercial developments.

Council Member Dernoga suggested that the bill may benefit from additional standards to make permit approvals more straightforward, rather than relying solely on subjective judgments about neighborhood character. The committee discussed whether design, regulatory, or operational standards such as those for restaurants in the Commercial General Office (CGO) Zone could be applied.

Mr. Williams raised a gap in the current code regarding small-scale alcohol production facilities and shared commercial kitchens. Changing these uses from "X" (not permitted) to "P" (permitted) would allow them in the RSF-A Zone. He said he would follow up with the Council Chair to determine whether appropriate restaurant standards exist and report back to the committee.

Mr. Warner stated that the changes being discussed are clarifications, not substantive revisions, and could be addressed after the bill is reported out of committee.

Ms. Cree Ganu, Legislative Liaison for the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, prepared a Policy Analysis and Fiscal Impact Statement noting that the bill

CB-077-2026 does not create new positions or appropriate funding. Implementation may require the Planning Department and other reviewing agencies to revise application materials, update public guidance, establish eligibility and review procedures, train personnel, and coordinate zoning, permitting, health, safety, and licensing reviews.

Allowing qualifying uses by right could reduce the administrative resources associated with processing Special Exception applications. However, these savings may be offset by additional eligibility determinations, permit coordination, inspections, compliance monitoring, and enforcement activity.

The extent of any administrative expenditure would depend on the number of qualifying properties and applications, the complexity of the proposed uses; whether system modifications are necessary, and the frequency of compliance or enforcement issues. No agency cost estimate is presently available.

The legislation does not establish a new fee or dedicated revenue source. Qualifying projects may generate permit, inspection, licensing, and other applicable fees.

The reuse of vacant or underutilized commercial buildings may also support additional business activity and property investment. Any resulting revenue would depend on the number and type of qualifying uses, project, values, business performance, and applicable State and local tax treatment.

Productive reuse of existing buildings may reduce commercial vacancy, support neighborhood investment, create employment opportunities, and provide additional community services and dining options.

Potential indirect costs could arise if qualifying uses increase traffic, parking demand, noise, refuse collection, code-enforcement activity, or demand for public-safety services. The magnitude of these effects would depend on the location, operating characteristics, occupancy, and effectiveness of the applicable compatibility standards

The Planning Board voted to oppose the legislation because it does not meet the criteria that the provisions for each zone shall be uniform for each class or kind of development throughout the zone because the amendment would permit uses by-right use within the Residential, Single-Family Attached (RSF-A) Zone while the same uses would continue to require Special Exception approval in other residential zones that permit a broader range of residential and institutional uses. This approach creates an inconsistency in the treatment of the use across residential zoning districts.

On motion of PHED Committee Vice Chair Oriadha, seconded by PHED Committee Chair Blegay the PHED Committee voted 5-0 favorably on CB-077-2026.