PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE REPORT

2026 Legislative Session

Reference No.:	CB-035-2026
Draft No.:	2
Committee:	PLANNING, HOUSING, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Date:	9/17/2026
Action:	FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

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

The Planning, Housing and Economic Development (PHED) Committee met on Thursday, September 17, 2026, and on Thursday, May 12, 2026, to consider CB-035-2026 On Tuesday, April 28, 2026, the County Council presented and referred the bill to the PHED Committee.

Draft#1 is for the purpose of increasing access to childcare facilities by eliminating special exception approval for day care centers for children in all zones; exempting day care centers for children from detailed site plan approval; providing for community notification of proposed day care centers; removing minimum parking requirements in all transit-oriented zones; reducing minimum parking requirements in certain activity zones; and providing for alternative parking compliance in all other zones.

May 12, 2026, PHED Committee Meeting

Ms. Hernandez from the Office of Law reported that the bill is legally sufficient as amended. She concurred with the technical changes made by the Zoning Hearing Examiner, specifically the bracketing of special exception standards on page 5. These amendments clarify the applicable criteria and improve internal consistency within the bill. The Office of Law is awaiting final consent before the bill proceeds.

Principal Counsel David Warner appeared on behalf of the Planning Board to elaborate on its written comments and recommendations.

1. **Detailed Site Plan (DSP) Exemption**
   The Planning Board recommends removing the DSP exemption included in the draft bill. Under existing zoning regulations, any construction under 25,000 square feet is already exempt from DSP requirements. For facilities exceeding 25,000 square feet, a DSP is appropriate and expected. As such, an additional DSP exemption is unnecessary and could create confusion.

2. **Public Notice Requirements**
   Mr. Warner explained that notice provisions serve three key purposes: protecting due process rights, informing property owners of regulations affecting their land, and

allowing the public to prepare for participation in a hearing. Since the bill proposes making the use permitted by right, no hearing or opportunity for public input would exist. Issuing notice for a permitted use would therefore be unnecessary and potentially frustrating for residents, as they would receive notice without any associated right to be heard. The Planning Board recommends removing the notice requirement.

3. **Parking, Drop-Off, and Pick-Up Standards**
   The parking section in the current draft cites provisions related to valet parking and associated exceptions, which do not apply to childcare drop-off and pick-up activities. The Planning Board recommends replacing this reference with citation to the existing section of County code governing use of the public right-of-way. That provision already outlines the process of requesting right-of-way use and entering into an agreement with the County, making it the appropriate standard for this bill.

PHED Committee Vice Chair Oriadha, the bill sponsor, expressed gratitude to the committee for their support in passing a robust childcare package. They are committed to addressing issues related to access to childcare. One of their main focuses is to simplify the process for childcare facilities to begin operating, enabling them to thrive across the county, especially as more childcare centers and home-based facilities are opening.

She also explained there is currently a facility that is facing zoning challenges, which prevents it from opening its doors. This has been an ongoing issue for about two years, and the financial burden is significant. Chair Oriadha believes that the proposed changes will help streamline this process.

However, they have not yet had the chance to review all the amendments from the Planning Department. Therefore, they would like to make a motion to hold off on any decisions for today. This will allow them time to review the amendments and determine which ones can be advanced by the next meeting of the Planning and Development Committee.

Mr. Bradley Farrar testified in support of the legislation. He requested distinguished members of the County Council, my name is Bradley Farrar, and I am here to support CB-35-2026 with one important clarification. I believe the bill moves in the right direction by expanding access to childcare. It permits daycare centers for children in more zones, removes the requirement for special exception approval, exempts these centers from detailed site plan review, and modernizes parking and notification requirements under Prince George's County Codes 27-5101, 27-5102, and 27-6305. These are important changes that reflect sound policy judgment, acknowledging that childcare is a community service use that should be easier to provide.

However, the bill does not yet fully accomplish what its title suggests. CB-35-2026 states that it is intended to increase access to childcare facilities by revising the definition of a daycare center for children to support before and after school care programs. The issue is that the actual definition in Prince George's County Code 27-2500 still excludes recreational programs before and after school. This exclusion is significant because, under the current code, a daycare center for children is defined as a principal community service use, whereas before and after school recreational programs are treated separately.

They are narrowly defined and categorized as supervised recreation for limited periods within a community-oriented facility.

For working families, before care and aftercare are not just recreational activities; they are essential forms of childcare. These services provide parents with the necessary hours to work before school begins and after school ends. From a land use perspective, these programs function like childcare, addressing the same key issues such as licensing, supervision, outdoor play, fencing, lighting, and safe drop-off and pick-up.

My request is straightforward: please amend the definition of a daycare center for children in Prince George's County Code 27-2500 so that it no longer excludes recreational programs before and after school or explicitly state that before school and after school childcare programs are included within that definition. This minor textual change would achieve three things:

1. It would align the law with the bill's stated purpose.
2. It would reduce confusion for applicants, staff, and communities.
3. It would expand access to one of the most needed forms of childcare for families in Prince George's County.

This is not a request to remove safeguards, as the bill already maintains meaningful standards for state licensing, outdoor play areas, fencing, lighting, and drop-off and pick-up operations under Prince George's County Code. The issue is simply whether before care and aftercare are recognized as the childcare uses, they actually are.

Mr. Farrar urged the Council to pass CB-35-2026 with this necessary definition correction to ensure the text aligns with the policy.

Chair Oriadha acknowledged that this is an issue we have been seeing. Which involves two separate concerns: daycare services versus after-school and before-school care, which should not fall under daycare regulations. We are addressing this at the state level and plan to keep these categories distinct.

She also explained she is open to including a specific provision. One of the main challenges that many of our afterschool and before-school care operators are encountering is that they are subject to daycare standards set by the State and desire to be recognized separately, so she explained she did not want to merge these categories in our code. I agree that we can include provisions in their leases to reflect this distinction.

Council Member Dernoga mentioned to PHED Committee Vice Chair Oriadha that Mr. Warner suggested considering an amendment concerning exemptions to the Detailed Site Plan (DSP). Specifically, buildings under 25,000 square feet do not require a DSP; however, buildings over 25,000 square feet may be too large for a residential zone, making a DSP necessary in those cases. Dernoga explained that it would be wise to remove the specific exemption for DSPs since any building smaller than 25,000 square feet would automatically fall under the requirement.

Committee Vice Chair Oriadha requested the committee to vote on holding the bill to allow her time to review the amendments recommended by the Planning Board. The PHED Committee voted 4-0 to hold the bill.

September 17, 2026, PHED Committee Meeting

Vice Chair Oriadha thanked her colleagues and explained that the proposed legislation is part of the universal childcare roadmap. She noted that expanding access to childcare requires a layered approach, beginning with the creation and funding of the County's first-ever childcare scholarship program. In addition to scholarships, she emphasized the need to increase the number of available childcare seats. She explained the bill addresses barriers to opening childcare facilities and will make it easier to expand capacity across Prince George's County.

Reverend Watley, from Kingdom Fellowship AME Church submitted a letter strongly supporting the legislation. In addition, Ms. Heather Dlhopolsky on behalf of the church spoke in support of the legislation.

Mr. John Robinson spoke in support of the legislation but questioned the scope of the legislation. He cautioned against creating a process to allow day care centers to go straight to permit.

PHED Committee Vice Chair Oriadha explained that the bill does not eliminate daycare regulations and standards which are regulated by the State of Maryland.

Mr. Hamlin, Legislative Attorney, explained that the amendments within the bill were discussed and recommended during the May PHED Committee by Mr. David Warner with the Planning Department.

On motion of PHED Committee Vice Chair Oriadha, seconded by PHED Committee Chair Blegay the PHED Committee voted 5-0 in favor of CB-035-2026 (DR-2).