

1 within the Route 1 Corridor, including the Property the Petitioner has interest in, 10052 Washington Boulevard.
2 She testified that the County's adopted plans call for expanding the zoning tools to assist in the coordinated
3 redevelopment of Route 1. She asserted that the proposed ZRA will not create any new processes within the
4 Regulations but will help to expand eligibility to an already existing process. Ms. Heidl explained that if a
5 property is not within the CR overlay, it must go through the Comprehensive Zoning process which can be a
6 lengthy and possibly costly process for applicants. She indicated that the proposed ZRA will provide a more
7 practical pathway for properties that meet the defined eligibility criteria. She further explained the eligibility
8 requirements outlined in the proposed amendments. She asserts that the HoCo By Design and the Route 1
9 Corridor Plan recognize that larger parcels along Route 1 are intended to remain as employment hubs and that
10 this ZRA is structured in a way to not disrupt these areas but will instead be focused on smaller, fragmented
11 parcels. Ms. Heidl argued that the Optional Design Process is rarely utilized and that there was only one location
12 where this process was used. Ms. Heidl emphasized that the Route 1 Corridor Plan identifies the subject
13 Property as a site for redevelopment.

14 Following her testimony, Board member, Ms. Mosier asked DPZ about the property that had been
15 developed utilizing the Optional Design Project process. Ms. Eisenberg, Executive Secretary and Planning
16 Director stated that the parcel utilizing the Optional Design Process had been difficult to locate or reference.
17 Ms. Eisenberg further clarified that this process has not been utilized very often and you can only utilize the
18 process if you are within the CR overlay district. Ms. Mosier followed up by inquiring what the overall goal or
19 point of the Optional Design Process. Ms. Eisenberg explained that assuming the criteria have been met, allows
20 a property owner more creative flexibility for the design pattern in the redevelopment of a site. Ms. Mosier
21 asked what kinds of uses or developments could be made possible or would be more difficult if this process did
22 not exist. Ms. Heidl explained that the parcels that are smaller than 1 acre located within the Route 1 Corridor
23 are restricted by uses and bulk regulations that shrink the developable area. She stated that this amendment
24 allows property owners to develop a comprehensive plan to redevelop the sites and allows flexibility on site
25 layout and bulk regulations.

26 Board Chair, Mr. Cecil, expressed his concern with unintended consequences on properties within the
27 Corridor that may be zoned with a different designation such as TOD (Transit Oriented Development) which
28 may have different design requirements, and if they would be able to participate in the Optional Design Process.
29 Ms. Eisenberg stated that if the property owner chose to utilize this section and if their property met the criteria
30 for being along the Route 1 Corridor, they could utilize the Optional Design process; however, if they were
31 zoned TOD they would not be able to utilize the TOD and Optional Design Project process at the same time.
32 Ms. Heidl stated that a Howard County Council member indicated that there should be an acreage cap as to not
33 hinder the larger parcels for employment hubs, thus the reason for the 10-acre eligibility cap criteria for the
34 Optional Design Process. Mr. David Moore, Howard County Office of Law, explained that if a pending map

1 amendment was denied, it could seek to utilize this amendment but only if it met the process criteria. Ms. Heidl
2 stated that any proposal for any project under this criterion would come back to the Planning Board for
3 evaluation. Mr. Cecil also stated that part of the criteria stated to enhance and not overwhelm the surrounding
4 community and wanted clarification on how the Board would interpret this. Ms. Heidl explained that the
5 language came directly from the existing Regulations outlining the process.

6 During the hearing, one member of the public testified. Ms. Laura Wisely spoke on behalf of the
7 Elkridge Community Alliance and stated that they are in support but are hesitant. She indicated that one of the
8 Group’s main concerns was a lack of infrastructure and how this ZRA would reinvent the Route 1 Corridor.
9 She further testified that it is hard to envision the idea without plans.

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11 Board Discussion and Recommendation

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13 Chair Mr. Cecil inquired if there should be clarity on whether this amendment would apply to
14 commercial and industrial sites or only commercial. Ms. Heidl stated that this ZRA would apply to non-
15 residential uses along the Route 1 Corridor. Board Chair, Mr. Cecil, agreed that he interpreted the amendment
16 the same way, in that it would be applied to non-residential sites and that the existing criteria still allow the
17 Board to provide discretion when making determinations. Ms. Eisenberg further reiterated that the Optional
18 Design Project process criteria will continue to allow the Board to provide a formal decision-making authority
19 on the process. No other Board members had any additional questions or concerns with the proposed text
20 amendments.

21 Vice-Chair Mr. Godsey motioned to recommend approval of ZRA-222. Board member Mr. Tilburg
22 seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

23 For the foregoing reasons, the Planning Board of Howard County, Maryland, on this 14th day of March
24 2026, recommends that ZRA-222, as described above, be APPROVED.

25
26 HOWARD COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

27 Signed by:

28 *James Cecil*

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James Cecil, Chair

30 DocuSigned by:

31 *Mason Godsey*

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33 Mason Godsey, Vice-chair
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Signed by:
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