




Howard County

Internal Memorandum

Subject: Testimony for Council Bill XX-2025 Cottage Clusters ARAH

To: Brandee Ganz, County Administrative Officer

From: Lynda Eisenburg, AICP, Director 

Date: April 17, 2026

The Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) supports Council Bill XX-2026. The proposed regulation aims to define “Cottage Clusters”; to provide where Age-Restricted Adult Housing Cottage Clusters will be permitted by right; to add Cottage Cluster parking requirements to Age-Restricted Adult Housing apartments and multiplexes; to provide criteria for Age-Restricted Adult Housing Cottage Clusters within an Optional Design Project.

Key recommendations of the bill are:

- Add and define the term Cottage Cluster
- Edit the definition of Optional Design Project (ODP)
- Add ARAH Cottage Cluster to the PGCC District
- Outline the Cottage Cluster ODP process
- Amend the parking requirements for ARAH Apartments and Mutli-Plexes to add Cottage Cluster

This Zoning Regulation Amendment implements policies from The Housing Opportunities Master Plan and HoCo By Design for Missing Middle Housing types. DPZ hosted a webinar on April 7th reviewing ZRA-224 Cottage Cluster. Over 200 participants registered for the webinar and over 20 questions were answered from those submitted via the chat and prior to the webinar. This information is posted on the DPZ webpage in a new section highlighting Missing Middle Housing. On April 9th, 2026, ZRA-224 was presented to the Howard County Planning Board for its recommendations who voted in favor, 3-0, with the following three (3) recommendations:

1. To reduce the 50-foot setbacks from the project perimeter to 25 feet.
2. To reduce the landscaping requirements for proposed developments determined through the ODP process, DAP review and Planning Board recommendations.
3. To amend the ODP purpose and intent statement that the ODP process would be submitted as an SDP and that the applicant shall schedule a pre-submission meeting with DPZ to ensure that the proposal meets the intent and purpose of the legislation, and that

DAP and the Planning Board would provide guidance to submitted proposals.

There are no fiscal impacts associated with adoption of this Council Bill. Given the reasons stated above, DPZ supports Council Bill XX-2026 and appreciates Council's consideration.

cc:

Jennifer Sager, Legislative Coordinator, Department of Administration

Angela Cabellon, Chief of Staff

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Gary W. Kuc, County Solicitor, Office of Law