

Office of the County Auditor
Auditor's Analysis

Council Bill No. 63-2024 (ZRA-209)

Introduced: November 4, 2024

Auditor: Rebecca Gold

Fiscal Impact:

Our office is unable to determine the future fiscal impact of this legislation because we cannot estimate the demand for indoor self-storage facilities in the Corridor Activity Center (CAC) zoning district.

According to the Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ), this indoor self-storage facility is the only one proposed for the CAC zoning district. The property is located at 7540 Washington Boulevard in Elkridge.

Purpose:

The purpose of this legislation is to amend Section 127.5 of the Howard County Zoning Regulations to allow (CAC) zoning districts to:

- Allow indoor self-storage as a permitted use,
- Reduce the 50% requirement for first floor retail and services uses to 20%; and
- Remove the prohibition of residential uses on the first floor of buildings adjacent to the Route 1 right-of-way.

Other Comments:

The Planning Board unanimously recommended approval of Zoning Regulation Amendment (ZRA)-209 with the following amendments:

- Amend 127.5.B. to permit self-storage facilities as a matter of right but as part of a mixed-use development that includes commercial, retail, and residential uses within an activity center. In addition, to include the word “*Indoor*” as part of the use category for self-storage facilities.
- Amend 127.5.E.2.a. to state that at the discretion of the DPZ, the 50% requirement for first floor service use space may be reduced to no less than 20%.

- Amend Section 127.5.E.3.b. to allow residential uses on the first floor by striking the prohibition on residential “uses” and replacing this term with “units”.

According to the DPZ’s Technical Staff Report, the 30% reduction of first floor retail and service uses for structures adjacent to the Route 1 right-of-way may cause adverse impacts. Specifically, a reduction of activated pedestrian-oriented frontage associated with retail or service uses is incompatible with the purpose statement for establishing the CAC zoning district and may change the streetscape of the Route 1 area. A total of 49 parcels would be impacted by this ZRA.