



HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING

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TECHNICAL STAFF REPORT

Planning Board Meeting of November 20, 2025

Case No./Petitioner: ZRA-216; Southern Veterinary Partners

Request: To amend the M-1 (Manufacturing: Light) district to allow “Animal Hospitals, completely enclosed” as a use permitted by right.

I. BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF EXISTING ZONING REGULATIONS

The M-1 zoning district was created with the 1954 Zoning Regulations. In these regulations the district permitted commercial and manufacturing uses and thirty-six uses permitted by right. These uses included several manufacturing operations, such as jewelry manufacturing, glass product manufacturing, silverware manufacturing, etc. and other uses such as warehouses and distribution centers. The adoption of the 1961 Zoning Regulations created the purpose of the M-1 district as being “designed to permit fairly heavy industrial uses but exclude the so-called nuisance uses.” The adoption of the 1985 Zoning Regulations amended the purpose of the district to what it is currently to “permit a mix of manufacturing, warehousing and business uses with provisions for limited retail sales.” During the adoption of 1961 and 1985 Zoning Regulations, the number of uses permitted in the district remained steady overall. With the adoption of the 1993 Zoning Regulations the M-1 district saw a large increase in the number of uses permitted by right, going from thirty-six to sixty-eight. Since 1993, the M-1 district has largely remained unchanged.

The Animal Hospital use was first introduced in the 1954 zoning regulations in the R and R-R districts. The 1977 regulations defined “Animal Hospital” and expanded the districts the use was permitted by right to the B-1, B-2, and SC districts and by special exception in the R and R-20 districts. The 1985 regulations also expanded the use to additional districts, the BR district by right and the RC and RR district as a special exception. The 1993 regulations established the criteria for animal hospitals as a conditional use as well as permitting the use in the PGCC district. The 2004 regulations added the use permitted by right in the OT, CAC, and TNC districts.

In the current zoning regulations, Animal Hospitals are permitted by right or as a Conditional Use in the below zoning districts:

- Permitted by right: POR, BR, OT, B-1, B-2, SC CE, CAC, TNC, and PGCC with the provision that the use be completely enclosed.
- Permitted as a Conditional Use: RC, RR.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

This section contains a summary of the Petitioner's proposed amendment. The Petitioner's proposed amendment text is attached as Exhibit A.

The Petitioner is proposing to amend the M-1 Zoning District to:

- Add "Animal Hospitals, completely enclosed" as the 69th permitted use by right for the district.

The Petitioner states they are "seeking to open a specialty cardiology practice focused on cardiac care for pets in Howard County."

Sec. 122.0.B

This section contains the uses permitted as a matter of right in the M-1 zoning district. The Petitioner is proposing to add "Animal Hospitals, completely enclosed" as the 69th use permitted as a matter of right. Alphabetically, "Animal Hospitals, completely enclosed" would be listed as the first use and require the other 68 uses to be renumbered accordingly.

III. EVALUATION OF PROPOSAL

This section contains the Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) technical evaluation of ZRA-216 in accordance with Section 16.208.(d) of the Howard County Code.

1. The compatibility, including potential adverse impacts and consequences, of the proposed Zoning Regulation Amendment with the existing and potential uses of the surrounding areas and within the same zoning district.

This amendment would add "Animal Hospitals, fully enclosed" as a permitted use by right in the M-1 zoning district. Staff does not foresee any potential adverse impacts of the proposed amendment as the Petitioner is adding the provision must be "fully enclosed."

2. The properties to which the Zoning Regulation Amendment could apply and, if feasible, a map of the impacted properties.

The applicant has a particular interest in 7185 Columbia Gateway (zoned M-1) as they are leasing the space in the shopping center located at this Property (Attachment A). This property is located inside Columbia Gateway, which is a designated Activity Center from the County's General Plan, *HoCo By Design*.

The proposed ZRA has a general impact on the M-1 district as the Petitioner is requesting to add animal hospitals as a permitted use in the district. The proposed ZRA would also generally impact the M-2 (Manufacturing: Heavy) district because the M-2 district allows all uses that are permitted as a matter of right in the M-1 district (Attachment B).

In total, there are approximately 816 parcels totaling around 5,800 acres zoned M-1 or M-2 that could potentially be impacted by the proposed ZRA.

3. Conflicts in the Howard County Zoning Regulations as a result of the Zoning Regulation Amendment.

Staff do not see any conflicts with the proposed amendment and the current Zoning Regulations. The Petitioner is adding the provision that an animal hospital in the M-1 district must be fully enclosed which is consistent with the other zoning districts which permit animal hospitals as a matter of right.

4. The compatibility of the proposed Zoning Regulation Amendment with the Policies and objectives, specifically including the environmental policies and objectives, of the Howard County General Plan.

The General Plan's policies do not specifically make recommendations on Animal Hospitals, but the General Plan's Economic Prosperity chapter is generally supportive of continuing to grow opportunities for commercial and employment uses within the County.

Policy Statement EP-2 (page EP-33) states that the County should "Retain and expand the use of industrial land to support employment opportunities that pay a living wage."

Policy Statement EP-5 (page EP-36) states the County should "Create job opportunities through new mixed-use activity centers that serve as destinations and include a mix of uses that compliment and support one another and improve the jobs housing balance."

Vision for Gateway: "Transform Gateway into a major hub for employment, entertainment, and innovation in Howard County while emphasizing housing, open space, transportation mobility, environmental stewardship, and civic principals that make the activity center a 'complete community.'"

Conclusion

Overall, DPZ finds that amending the M-1 Zoning District to permit "Animal Hospitals, completely enclosed" as a permitted use by right, is generally supported by the Policy Statements and Implementing Actions in the General Plan.

Environmental Policies and Objectives

The proposed ZRA-216 is not in conflict with the environmental policies and objectives in HoCo By Design, the County's General Plan. The proposed ZRA-216 would not change any development requirements for sensitive resource protection, stormwater management or forest conservation.

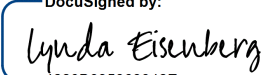
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4220B635863942E 10/28/2025
Lynda D. Eisenberg, AICP, Director Date

Exhibit A

Petitioner's Proposed Text

(**CAPITALS/BOLD** indicate text to be added; text in [[brackets]] indicates text to be deleted.)

Section 122.0: - M-1 (Manufacturing: Light) District

B. Uses Permitted as a Matter of Right

1. ANIMAL HOSPITALS, COMPLETELY ENCLOSED.

*Renumber subsequent uses

Example of how the proposed text would look in Section 122.0.B. if adopted:

1. Animal Hospitals, completely enclosed.
2. Ambulance services.
3. Ambulatory health care facilities.
4. Athletic facilities, commercial.
5. Banks, savings and loan associations, investment companies, credit unions, brokers and similar financial institutions.
6. Biodiesel fuel manufacturing from vegetable-based oils.
7. Biomedical laboratories.
8. Blueprinting, printing, duplicating or engraving services.
9. Breweries that manufacture 22,500 barrels or less of fermented malt beverages per year.
10. Bus terminals.
11. Carpet and floor covering stores.
12. Car wash facilities.
13. Carnivals and fairs sponsored by and operated on a nonprofit basis for the benefit of charitable, social, civic or educational organizations, subject to the requirements of Section 128.0.D.
14. Carpet and rug cleaning.
15. Catering establishments and banquet facilities.
16. Child day care centers and nursery schools.
17. Concert halls.
18. Conservation areas, including wildlife and forest preserves, environmental management areas, reforestation areas, and similar uses.
19. Contractor's office and outdoor or indoor storage facility, including carpentry, cleaning, construction, electrical, excavation, exterminating, heating/air conditioning, home improvement, landscaping, masonry, painting, paving, plumbing, roofing, septic system, snow removal, well drilling, and other contractors.
20. Data processing and telecommunication centers.
21. Day treatment or care facilities.

22. Farming, provided that on a residential lot or parcel of less than 40,000 square feet no livestock shall be permitted. However, residential chicken keeping is allowed as noted in Section 128.0.
23. Flex-space.
24. Funeral homes and mortuaries.
25. Furniture, appliance and business machine repair, furniture upholstery, and similar services.
26. Furniture stores.
27. Government structures, facilities and uses, including public schools and colleges.
28. Hotels, motels, conference centers and country inns.
29. Kennels.
30. Laundry or dry-cleaning establishments or plants.
31. Light Industrial Uses.
32. Material recovery facilities—source separated.
33. Mobile home and modular home sales and rentals, but not including occupancy.
34. Motor vehicle, construction equipment and farm equipment maintenance, repair and painting facilities, including full body repair and incidental sale of parts.
35. Motor vehicle, construction equipment and farm equipment sales and rentals.
36. Motor vehicle inspections station.
37. Motor vehicle towing and storage facility.
38. Mulch manufacture.
39. Nonprofit clubs, lodges, community halls.
40. Offices, professional and business.
41. Pawn Shops.
42. Pet grooming establishments and daycare, completely enclosed.
43. Photographic processing plants.
44. Pizza delivery services and other services for off-site delivery of prepared food.
45. Printing, lithography, bookbinding or publishing.
46. Public utility uses, limited to the following:
 - a. Utility substations, provided that all uses are set back at least 50 feet from lot lines.
 - b. Above ground pipelines.
 - c. Pumping stations and compression stations.
 - d. Telecommunication equipment facilities.
 - e. Commercial communications antennas.
 - f. Commercial communication towers, subject to the requirements of Section 128.0.E.2. and 128.0.E.3.
47. Recreation facilities, commercial
48. Recycling collection facilities.
49. Religious facilities, structures and land used primarily for religious activities.
50. Research and development establishments.
51. Restaurants, carryout.
52. Restaurants, standard, and beverage establishments, including those serving beer, wine and liquor for consumption on premises only.

53. Retail centers. Retail centers to serve the employees and users of projects within this zoning district are permitted within projects of at least 200 acres when such centers conform to the requirements set forth below.

- a. Purpose: The purpose of such retail centers is to provide employees and users of development in this zoning district with conveniently located commercial, retail and personal services; to reduce the need for vehicle trips off and onto the site to obtain such services; to provide employees and users with the useable open space and amenities associated with such services (e.g., outdoor eating areas); and to make more efficient use of the site by clustering together related retail, commercial and service activities in retail centers which typically would not exceed 40,000 square feet of gross floor area.
- b. Uses permitted by right in such retail centers include any combination of the retail, commercial or service uses permitted by right in this district plus the following uses:
 - (1) Newsstand.
 - (2) Convenience store.
 - (3) Personal service establishments.
 - (4) Specialty stores.
 - (5) Telegraph offices, express mail, and messenger services.
 - (6) Travel bureaus.
 - (7) Drug and cosmetic stores.
- c. Minimum requirements and conditions: Retail centers incorporating the uses cited in paragraph b. above shall be permitted within this zoning district when they meet the following conditions:
 - (1) Minimum project size shall be 200 gross acres and such projects shall have a continuous internal road system.
 - (2) The retail center(s) lot shall not occupy, in the aggregate, more than 2% of the gross acreage of the project.
 - (3) Development of the retail center(s) shall be phased in with the development of permitted uses within the project so that at no time shall the aggregate floor area of the improvements in the retail center(s) exceed 10% of the total aggregate floor area of improvements for permitted uses either constructed or being constructed pursuant to approved Site Development Plans.
 - (4) Retail center(s) may not be located on a lot that fronts on or abuts any street or highway unless such street or highway is internal to the project. All access to the retail center(s) shall be from interior streets within the project. The distance from any lot line of the retail center lot to the nearest street or highway right-of-way external to the project shall be no less than 500 feet and signage for the center shall not be oriented to such external streets.

54. Retail, limited:

For any manufacturing plant or warehouse permitted in the M-1 District, retail sales may be permitted, provided that:

- a. The products sold are either manufactured on the site, sold as parts or accessories to products manufactured on the site, or stored or distributed on the site;

- b. Not more than 30% of the floor space of the first floor of the main structure may be devoted to the retail sales of articles made, stored or distributed on the premises; and
- c. Any service facilities are limited to the repair and/or service of products manufactured, stored or distributed by the owner or lessee of the site.

Nothing herein contained shall be construed to permit the operation of general retail sales businesses.

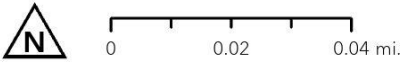
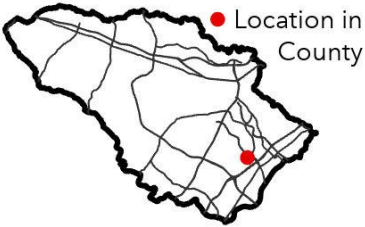
- 55. Rooftop solar collectors and ground-mount solar collectors.
- 56. Seasonal sales of Christmas trees or other decorative plant materials, subject to the requirements of Section 128.0.D.
- 57. Sawmills.
- 58. School bus, boat and recreational vehicle storage facilities.
- 59. Schools, commercial.
- 60. Schools, private academic, including colleges and universities.
- 61. Self storage facilities.
- 62. Sign making shops.
- 63. Special Hospitals—Psychiatric.
- 64. Taxicab businesses, including facilities for dispatch and maintenance of related vehicles.
- 65. Taxidermies.
- 66. Underground pipelines; electric transmission and distribution lines; telephone, telegraph and CATV lines; mobile transformer units, telephone equipment boxes; and other similar public utility uses not requiring a Conditional Use.
- 67. Volunteer fire departments.
- 68. Warehouses, truck terminals, and moving and storage establishments.
- 69. Wholesale sale and storage of building materials and supplies, including storage yards for lumber, bricks, masonry blocks, construction equipment, plumbing and electrical supplies.

Attachment A



Zoning & Vicinity
ZRA-216

- Zoning
- M-1
 - 7185 Columbia Gateway



Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Attachment B

ZRA-216

