



Zoning Regulation Amendment Petition

Zoning Regulation Amendment Request:

Add Animal Hospitals as a permitted use in the M-1 (Manufacturing: Light) zoning district

Petitioner Information

Name: Neal NeSmith

Trading As: Southern Veterinary Partners

Address: 2204 Lakeshore Dr, Suite 325, Birmingham, AL, 35209

Phone: 2053821140

Email: neal.nesmith@svp.vet

Petitioner's Interest in the Property: Lessee/Tenant

Representative Information

Name: Tom Coale

Address: 54 State Circle, Annapolis, MD, 21401

Phone: 4436300507

Email: tom@perryjacobson.com

Profession: Attorney

Property Information

Property Address: 7185 Columbia Gateway, Columbia, MD, 21046

Total Site Area: 4.33 acres Use Area (if different): Tax Map: 43 Grid: 1 Parcel: 671

County Council District: 2 Zoning District: 6

Subdivision Name: SDP #:

Zoning Regulation Amendment Information

Please provide a brief statement concerning the reason(s) the requested amendment(s) to the Zoning Regulations is (are) being proposed:

The Petitioner is seeking to open a specialty cardiology practice focused on cardiac care for pets in Howard County and currently has a lease for property zoned M-1. Based on the catalogue of uses allowed in M-1, Petitioner presumed that its proposed use would be allowed. However, as noted above, "animal hospital" is a specially defined use that is allowed by right in POR, B-1, B-2, BR, OT, SC, PGCC, CE, CAC, and TNC, and as a conditional use in the RR and RC zones. Animal hospitals are not currently allowed in the M-1 zone either by right or as a conditional use.

As stated above, this use is compatible with the uses allowed in the M-1 zone and has a comparable intensity to existing uses. Once allowed, it is possible, if not likely, that animal hospitals may be incorporated into the other pet-related uses allowed in the M-1 zone. There is no apparent reason to segregate animal hospitals from these other pet related uses and the failure to include the same appears to have been an oversight.

The Legislative Intent of the Zoning Regulations in Section 100.0.A. expresses that the Zoning Regulations have the purpose of “...preserving and promoting the health, safety and welfare of the community.” Please provide a detailed justification statement demonstrating how the proposed amendment(s) will be in harmony with this purpose and the other issues in Section 100.0.A.

The proposed ZRA will increase the health care options for Howard County pet-owners and create new opportunities for businesses focused on pet welfare to open in Howard County. The ZRA proposes this use in districts that already accommodate pet-centric uses and will not have any detrimental effects on the health, safety, or welfare of Howard County communities.

Does the amendment, or do the amendments, have the potential of affecting the development of more than one property, yes or no? If yes, and the number of properties is less than or equal to 12, explain the impact on all properties affected by providing a detailed analysis of all the properties based upon the nature of the changes proposed in the amendment(s). If the number of properties is greater than 12, explain the impact in general terms.

Greater than 12 - this would allow the Animal Hospital Use in all M-1 zoning districts.

Provide the address, Tax Map, and Parcel Number for any parcel of land known to be affected by the amendment(s) that the Petitioner owns or has a legal or equitable interest in.

Only the parcel identified in this petition.

Zoning Regulation Amendment Criteria

The compatibility, including potential adverse impacts and consequences, of the proposed zoning regulation amendment with the existing and potential land uses of the surrounding areas and within the same zoning district.

As stated above, this use is compatible with the uses allowed in the M-1 zone and has a comparable intensity to existing uses. Once allowed, it is possible, if not likely, that animal hospitals may be incorporated into the other pet-related uses allowed in the M-1 zone. There is no apparent reason to segregate animal hospitals from these other pet related uses and the failure to include the same appears to have been an oversight.

The properties to which the zoning regulation amendment could apply and, if feasible, a map of the impacted properties.

This would allow the Animal Hospital Use in all M-1 zoning districts.

Conflicts in the Howard County Zoning Regulations as a result of the zoning regulation amendment.

None.

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.

It will come as no surprise that HoCo By Design does not specifically address the regulation of animal hospitals, but there is general support for reevaluating zoning designations in commercial zones to allow additional flexibility. The EP-7 Policy Statement “Monitor economic disruptors, such as new technologies, autonomous vehicles, teleworking, and e-commerce, and employ adaptive and innovative strategies to meet emerging economic shifts”, includes the following Implementing Action “Assess and adapt the Zoning Regulations to provide greater flexibility under broader use categories and respond to changing industries and technologies.”

Pet medicine has increased in sophistication and complexity since the last comprehensive zoning plan in 2013. In addition to routine veterinary care, Howard County residents also seek out and support businesses that provide specialized medical care for their four-legged loved ones. Animal hospitals and specialty clinics, such as that offered by the Petitioner, should be available throughout the county to meet this need. The M-1 zoning district often has lower commercial rents than B-1 zones focused on retail commercial, which results in more affordable pet care.

If the zoning regulation text amendment would impact eight (8) parcels of land or less:

- (i) A list of those impacted parcels;**
- (ii) The address of each impacted parcel;**
- (iii) The ownership of each impacted parcel; and**
- (iv) The contact information for the owner, if an individual, or resident agent or owner, if a corporate entity, of each impacted parcel.**

N/A.

Signatures

The undersigned hereby affirms that all of the statements and information contained in, or filed with this petition, are true and correct.

Petitioner's Signature Neil Nelson Date 6/18/25

Property Owner's Signature Eron Sodie Date 6/19/2025

Process information and submittal requirements can be found on the [ProjectDox website](#)

**Petitioner's Proposed Text
Animal Hospital ZRA**

Amend Section 122.0.B. – M-1 (Manufacturing: Light) District to add:

B. Uses Permitted as a Matter of Right:

1. ANIMAL HOSPITALS, COMPLETELY ENCLOSED.

Renumber subsequent uses accordingly.