

ZRA-218

The Department of Planning and Zoning, Petitioner

Howard County Planning Board
October 16, 2025



Purpose of the Proposed ZRA

To implement the State Law (HB-1466) regarding Accessory Dwelling Units and align them with the broader goals of Howard County's General Plan, HoCo By Design, and the County's Housing Opportunities Master Plan

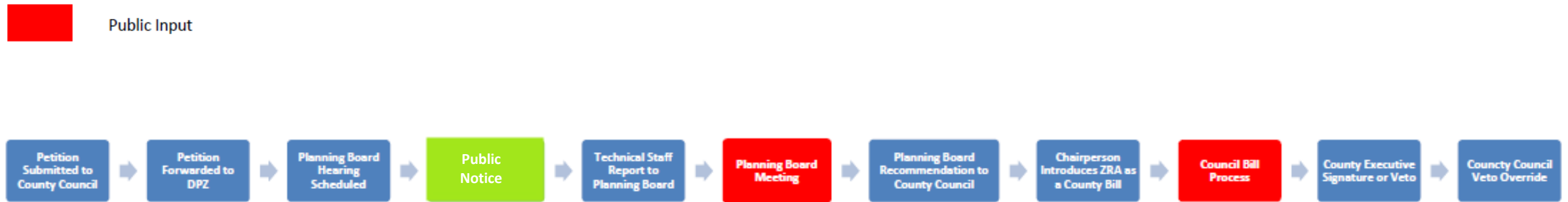
Summary of Proposed Changes

Use	Currently Allowed	What's Changing?	Reg. Section
Accessory Apartments	- Accessory use within the RC & RR – no lot size restriction - Accessory use within the R-ED, R-20, R-12*, R-SC*, R-SA-8 and PGCC – 12,000sf min lot size - Cannot exceed 1,500sf or 1/3 of the net floor area of a dwelling - Must be an owner-occupied dwelling - If within an addition, a 50% common wall overlap is required - Operates via a permit issued from DPZ 1 parking space per Apartment - Needs a Conditional Use if the lot size is below 12,000sf - Must be within or attached to the principal dwelling - Limited to a maximum of 2 bedrooms *NT follows R-SC accessory uses, unless the FDP specifies otherwise. MXD follows R-12 accessory uses, unless the PDP specifies otherwise.	- Renaming to “Accessory Dwelling Unit” - Revised the definition - Add as an Accessory Use to the R-H-ED, R-A-15, R-APT, R-MH, R-VH, HO, HC, TOD, CAC & TNC - Accessory Dwelling units are not calculated for lot coverage - Only 1 ADU per lot developed with a Single-Family Detached, Attached, Semi-Detached or Two-Family Dwelling - Max size limit of 75% of the size of the principal dwelling - Can be within, attached, or detached to the principal dwelling - Removed the Conditional Use for an Accessory Apartment - Must comply with accessory use side and rear setbacks, if detached - Removed the minimum lot size - No maximum number of bedrooms	103.0 104.0.C 105.0.C 106.1.C 107.0.C 107.0.D 108.0.C 109.0.C 109.0.D 110.0.C 111.0.C 111.1.C 112.0.C 112.1.C 113.1.C 114.1.C 114.2.C 114.3.C 126.0.C 127.4.D 127.5.C 127.6.D 128.0.A.12 128.0.A.13 128.0.G.3 131.0.N 133.0.D

Summary of Proposed Changes

Use	Currently Allowed	What's Changing	Reg. Section
Two-Family Dwellings	- Conditional Use within the RC, RR & R-20 – no lot size restriction - Conditional Use within the R-ED & R-12 – 16,000sf min lot size - Only 1 permitted per lot - Must be located on its own individual lot	- Removed the Conditional Use category - Permitted as a matter of right within the RC, RR, R-ED, R-20 and R-12. R-ED & R-12 keep 16,000sf min lot size	103.0 104.0.B 105.0.B. 107.0.B 107.0.D 108.0.B 109.0.B 109.0.D 131.0.N
Temporary Accessory Family Dwelling	- Conditional Use in RC, RR, R-ED, R-20 or R-12 2-acre minimum lot size - Either a removable modular building or alteration to existing accessory structure - Max size of 1,000sf - Only 1 permitted per lot - Must be 62 years or older; or 18 and older with physical, mental or developmental impairment	Removed from Regulations. Will be permitted as an Accessory Dwelling Unit	103.0 131.0.N

ZRA Process



- Non-property owner petition: No public hearing sign

Proposal

To amend the Zoning Regulations as follows:

To implement new relevant State Laws regarding Accessory Dwelling Units, and reduce conflicts in the current Regulations:

- Amend the permitted as a matter of right uses within the RC, RR, R-ED, R-20 and R-12 districts to permit Two-Family Dwellings as a matter of right
- Amend the Accessory Uses within the RC, RR, R-ED, R-20, R-12, R-SC, R-SA-8, R-H-ED, R-A-15, R-APT, R-MH, R-VH, HO, HC, NT*, PGCC, TOD, CAC and TNC districts to add Accessory Dwelling Units (any district that permits SFD, SFA, SFSD, and TFD)
- Amend Supplemental Regulations that govern Accessory Apartments (ADU's)
- Amend the Conditional Use Regulations to remove uses of Two-Family Dwellings and Accessory Apartments, and Temporary Accessory Family Dwellings.

*NT follows the accessory uses from the R-SC district

Proposal

To amend the Zoning Regulations as follows:

Definitions

- Accessory Dwelling Unit: A second dwelling unit subordinate to the principal dwelling, located on a lot developed with a single-family detached, single-family attached, single-family semi-detached and two-family dwelling unit which complies with the requirements for such uses within section 128.0.A
- Density: The number of principal dwelling units per unit of land area. Accessory dwelling units such as farm tenant houses, caretaker dwellings and *Accessory Dwelling Units* are not included when calculating density.
- Dwelling Unit: A single unit providing complete living facilities for at least one individual, including, at a minimum, provisions for sanitation, cooking, eating, and sleeping

Proposal

To amend the Zoning Regulations as follows:

Definitions

- Dwelling, Two-family: A building which contains two dwelling units, of which neither is an *Accessory Dwelling Unit*, and which is arranged, designed or used for occupancy by two families. The dwelling units in a two-family dwelling are not separated by an attached garage or by an open or enclosed breezeway
- Kitchen: Any room designed to principally be used for cooking and food preparation purposes. A room which includes a range or oven, shall be considered as the establishment of a kitchen.
- Remove the definition of Dwelling, Accessory Apartment
- Remove the definition of Temporary Accessory Family Dwelling

Proposal

To amend the Zoning Regulations as follows:

Uses Permitted as a Matter of Right

- Two-Family Dwellings are now permitted as a matter of right in the following districts:
 - RC, RR, R-ED, R-20, R-12.
 - Within the R-ED and R-12 districts, the minimum lot size for a Two-Family dwelling shall be 16,000 sq. ft.

Proposal

To amend the Zoning Regulations as follows:

Supplemental Regs.

- Accessory Dwelling Units will now be permitted as accessory uses within any zoning district that permits Single-Family Detached, Single-Family Attached, Single-Family Semi-Detached and Two-Family dwelling units
- Only 1 accessory dwelling unit is permitted per lot, tract or parcel that is developed with a Single-Family Detached, Single-Family Attached, Single-Family Semi-Detached and Two-Family dwelling units.
- Accessory Dwelling Units can be detached, attached or within an existing principal Single-Family Detached, Single-Family Attached, Single-Family Semi-Detached and Two-Family dwelling units.
 - If an accessory dwelling unit is detached from the principal dwelling, it shall comply with the accessory structure side and rear setbacks of the underlying zoning district.

Examples of ADUs



Source: <https://futureofhousing.aarp.org/>



GARAGE-CONVERSION ADU

Source: <https://www.aarp.org/>



Source: <https://accessorydwellings.org/>



Stacked Duplex, Two Story, One Unit per Floor,
Entrance on Front and Side of Building



Side-by-Side Duplex, Two Story, One Unit per Side,
Two Entrances on Front of Building



Side-by-Side Duplex, One Story, One Unit per Side,
Two Entrances on Front of Building

Proposal

To amend the Zoning Regulations as follows:

Supplemental Regs.

- Accessory Dwelling Units shall have a maximum size limitation equal to 75% of the size of the principal Dwelling Units. For the purpose of this regulation, size shall be calculated based on the lot coverage of the principal dwelling. There is no maximum number of bedrooms.
- Accessory Dwelling Units shall be exempt from lot coverage restrictions if on a lot developed with a Single-Family Detached dwelling unit.
- An Accessory Dwelling Unit shall operate only upon approval of a permit issued by the department of planning and zoning based on compliance with the requirements section 128.0.A.13 and those of the applicable zoning district with the permit application

Proposal

To amend the Zoning Regulations as follows:

Conditional Uses:

- Remove the C.U. category for Temporary Accessory Family Dwellings
- Remove the C.U. category for Two-Family Dwellings and Accessory Apartments

Evaluation of Criteria

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.

- The proposed changes are not anticipated to produce adverse impacts on the uses of the surrounding area.
- This amendment would generally have an impact on all parcels developed with Single-Family Detached, Single Family Attached, Single-Family Semi-Detached and Two-Family dwelling units that are zoned RC, RR, R-ED, R-20, R-12, R-SC, R-SA-8, R-H-ED, R-A-15, R-APT, R-MH, R-VH, HO, HC, NT, PGCC, TOD, CAC and TNC

Proposal

ADU Examples



Interior Attached ADUs



Attached ADU (via Addition)



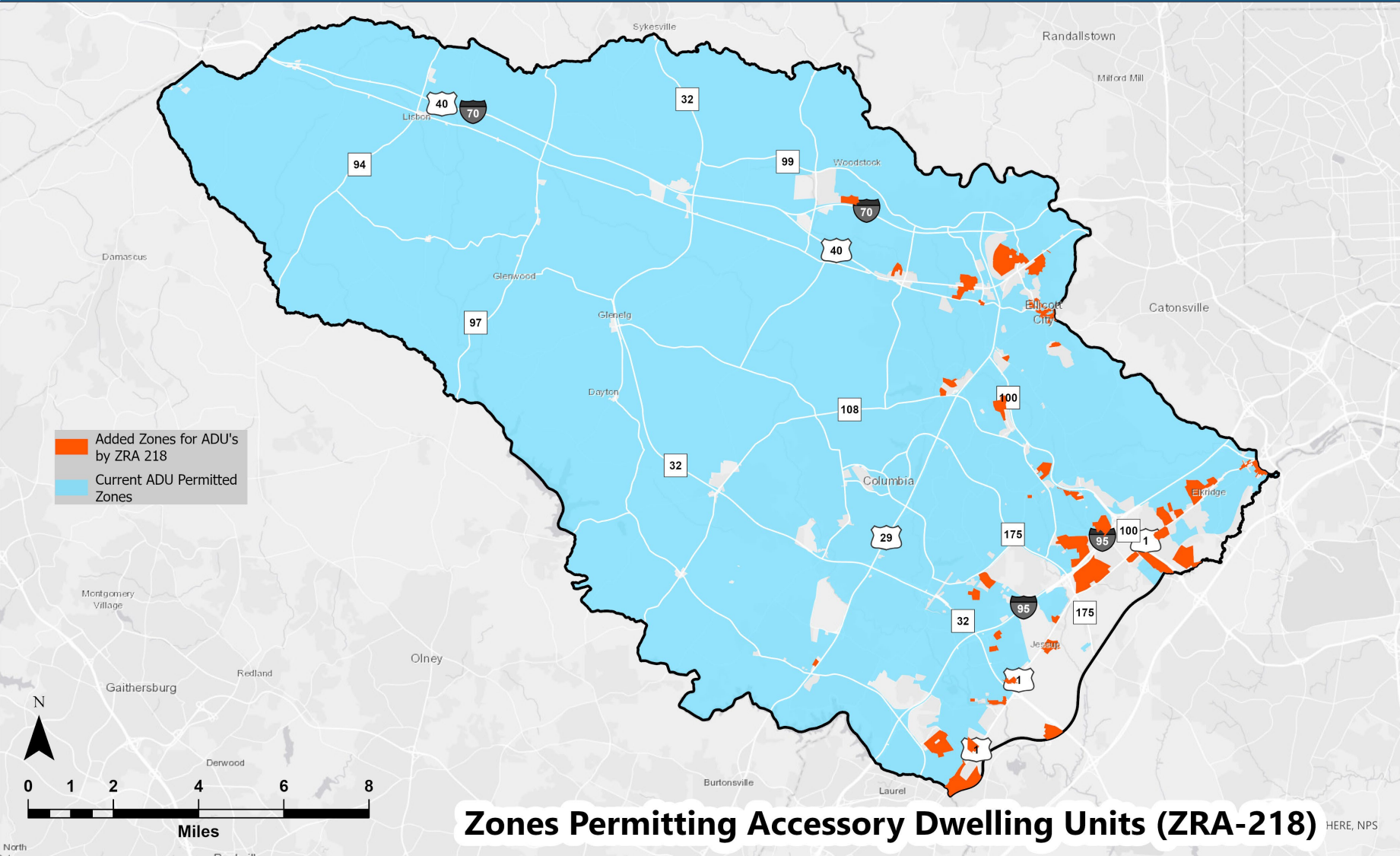
Detached ADU

Evaluation of Criteria

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

Attached and detached ADU's would be permitted in the following zones:

- Prior Zoning Districts:
RC, RR, R-20, R-12, R-ED, R-SC, NT, R-SA-8, PGCC
- Added Zoning Districts:
R-H-ED, R-A-15, R-APT, R-MH, R-VH, TOD, CAC, PGCC, HO, HC, TNC
- Acreage of impacted parcels:
120,215 acres



Evaluation of Criteria

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

- If adopted, this amendment would not create any conflicts in the Howard County Zoning Regulations. The purpose of the proposed legislation is to resolve existing conflicts that the Department of Planning and Zoning have encountered while administering the Zoning Regulations to permit Accessory Dwelling Units.

Evaluation of Criteria

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.

- Policy DN-2 found in Chapter 6: Dynamic Neighborhoods
 - Allow attached and detached accessory dwelling units (ADUs) on a variety of single-family attached and single-family detached lots that meet specific site development criteria in residential zoning districts.
- Policy DN-5 found in Chapter 6: Dynamic Neighborhoods
 - Allow the development of small-scale missing middle housing and accessory dwelling units (ADUs) that are consistent with the character and integrity of their surroundings, meet specific site conditions in single-family neighborhoods, and comply with all applicable APFO and parking requirements.
- Policy DN-9 found in Chapter 6: Dynamic Neighborhoods
 - Create opportunities to increase the diversity of home choices in the Rural West, especially missing middle housing types, that preserve the character of the Rural West.

Evaluation of Criteria

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.

- Policy DN-12 found in Chapter 6: Dynamic Neighborhoods
 - Provide a range of affordable, accessible, and adaptable housing options for older adults and persons with disabilities

Evaluation of Criteria

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.

- Environmental Policies
 - Does not conflict with any environmental policies and would not change any development requirements for sensitive resource protection, stormwater management or forest conservation.

Evaluation of Criteria

5. If the zoning regulation text amendment would impact eight parcels of land or less.

- ZRA-218 impacts more than eight (8) parcels; therefore, this criterion does not apply.

Planning Board Recommendation

Planning Board Action:

- Advisory – Make a motion on the proposed Zoning Regulation Amendment to the County Council
 - Favorable recommendation of the text as proposed
 - Favorable recommendation with suggested amendments to the proposed text
 - Non-favorable recommendation

Next Steps

