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Dr. Billy Okoye
Vice Chair
Prince George's County Planning Board
M-NCPPC
1616 McCormick Drive
Largo, Maryland 20774

Re: Comments on LDR-13-2026, LDR-30-2026, LDR-149-2026, LDR-153-2026, and LDR-155-2026

Dear Vice Chair Okoye and Members of the Planning Board:

Greater Capitol Heights Improvement Corporation (GCHIC) submits these omnibus comments concerning five zoning bills scheduled for Planning Board consideration on July 23 and July 30, 2026. We respectfully request that this letter be entered into the separate record for each bill listed above.

GCHIC supports predictable, plan-led development; substantial transit-oriented investment in the County's designated centers; meaningful public participation; and efficient, standards-based, and non-politicized review of development applications. Those principles lead us to support expedited review for quality transit-oriented development, while opposing ad hoc, property-specific, or technically incomplete zoning amendments.

With those principles in mind, GCHIC expresses the following views on the above-referenced legislative draft amendments to the zoning ordinance: In several instances, GCHIC's conclusions closely align with the Planning Department's technical staff reports, which provide a strong and thoughtful foundation for the Board's review.

LDR-149-2026 — Sustainable Inclusive Mixed-Use Community

GCHIC position: OPPOSE

LDR-149 bears the hallmarks of property-specific zoning. It creates an unusually specific bundle of residential, institutional, agricultural, commercial, and energy uses and expressly requires a patented “dry hydroponics” technology. Zoning legislation should regulate land-use impacts and performance outcomes, not privilege a proprietary system or a known development concept.

The proposed use is also incompatible with the low-density purpose of the Residential Estate Zone and the County's growth policy. It would create a mixed-use development pathway in an estate-residential zone outside the planning framework ordinarily used for such intensity, risking a backdoor for outer-Beltway sprawl.

GCHIC supports sustainable agriculture, renewable energy, and mixed-use development in appropriate locations. Sustainable mixed-use growth should be directed to designated centers and inner-Beltway locations near transit. If a developer believes a particular RE-zoned site presents unique opportunities consistent with County plans, the applicant should pursue an existing Planned Development rezoning or other established property-specific process. We urge the Board to recommend opposition. GCHIC agrees with Planning Department staff that this proposal is incompatible with the purpose of the RE Zone and should not proceed through a special exception text amendment.

LDR-13-2026 — Commercial Reinvestment and Innovation Projects Act

GCHIC position: SUPPORT EXPEDITED TOD REVIEW; OPPOSE A SEPARATE CRIP CATEGORY

GCHIC strongly supports expedited review for substantial, mixed-use transit-oriented development near constructed rail stations. The County needs more quality development at and around its Metro stations. LDR-13, however, creates a new “Commercial Reinvestment and Innovation Project” category that substantially overlaps with the existing Expedited Transit-Oriented Development process. Existing ETOD eligibility generally reaches projects within one-half mile of a constructed rail station. If the Council wishes to prioritize closer-in projects within one-quarter mile, it can establish that priority within the

existing ETOD framework rather than create a second category and separate appeal procedure.

The record does not identify a practical failure in the existing ETOD process that requires a duplicative pathway—particularly when that process currently sees limited use. A second framework would add complexity, invite inconsistent administration, and create avoidable questions under the Regional District Act.

We recommend that the Board support the objective of expedited TOD review but recommend against adoption of LDR-13 as a separate CRIP framework. Any useful eligibility or timing provisions should be incorporated into one ETOD process tied to constructed rail transit stations, with fair notice, meaningful public participation, prompt electronic access to the record, and procedures consistent with the Regional District Act.

LDR-30-2026 — Community Service and Commercial Uses in the RSF-A Zone

GCHIC position: OPPOSE

GCHIC supports productive reuse of existing neighborhood buildings as a general policy objective. LDR-30 nevertheless appears to use a countywide text amendment to address a particular property or circumstance. The proposed by-right treatment is inconsistent with the regulation of similar uses in residential zones, while the bill's subjective suitability and compatibility standards are not administrable as true by-right standards.

The appropriate answer is not to create another new administrative approval mechanism around this proposal. An applicant may use the existing special-exception process, which allows compatibility findings and conditions, or seek an appropriate Planned Development rezoning if a broader mixed-use concept is proposed. We urge the Board to recommend opposition. We agree with staff that the adaptive-reuse objective does not justify a countywide text amendment that appears tailored to a particular property or circumstance.

LDR-153-2026 — Streamlining Site Plan Review Act

GCHIC position: OPPOSE

GCHIC supports efficient development review and generally agrees with staff's reasons for opposing LDR-153. Detailed site plans and preliminary plans of major subdivision serve different legal purposes, require different findings, and follow separate review and approval timelines under the Subdivision and Zoning Ordinances. Combining them into one application and timetable would blur those functions and weaken the sequencing needed for sound decisions.

The authorization to proceed with merely submitted or proposed Natural Resource Inventories and stormwater drainage concept plans is especially concerning. An approved NRI and approved stormwater drainage concept plan should establish a project's environmental and engineering parameters before a DSP is filed. Outside the existing ETOD process, the applicable preliminary subdivision plan likewise should be approved before DSP filing. ETOD applications may be filed concurrently, but their separate findings, reviews, and approval timelines should remain intact.

LDR-153 would also erode the rationale for a distinct ETOD process. If every project may use the same broadly "streamlined" procedure, the County loses a meaningful way to prioritize transit-oriented development over ordinary suburban or greenfield development. Streamlining should advance adopted growth priorities, not put qualifying TOD and conventional sprawl projects in the same priority lane.

GCHIC agrees with staff's recommendation to oppose the bill and with staff's broader conclusion that meaningful streamlining should focus on clearer zoning standards, higher DSP thresholds where appropriate, and staff-level review of genuinely conforming applications—not on collapsing distinct statutory review processes. That approach, however, requires clear and objective zoning standards that staff can administer uniformly. Whether the current Ordinance provides an adequate foundation for broader administrative review cannot be resolved here, but it warrants deliberate, comprehensive study rather than LDR-153's universal combined procedure.

LDR-155-2026 — Qualified Data Centers

GCHIC position: OPPOSE

LDR-155 conflicts with the purpose of the County's current qualified-data-center moratorium. The Council paused approvals to develop comprehensive legislation informed by the Qualified Data Center Task Force; it should not simultaneously create a new by-right pathway in Agricultural-Residential and Residential Estate zones. GCHIC agrees with Planning Department staff that LDR-155 is inconsistent with the current moratorium, the recommendations of the Qualified Data Center Task Force, and the purposes of the AR and RE Zones.

The bill opens rural and estate-residential land to an industrial-scale, continuously operating use based largely on acreage, transmission infrastructure, and prior disturbance. Its undefined "brownfield" criterion could become an open-ended gateway. A 500-foot residential setback is unsupported by a demonstrated impact analysis, and the bill inexplicably preserves the detailed-site-plan exemption for campuses over 200 acres—the projects likely to create the greatest impacts.

The proposed Community Benefits Agreement provision is also structurally deficient. It supplies no required parties, affected-community role, minimum benefits, transparency, enforceability, monitoring, or remedies, yet assigns approval to the district councilmember and County Executive. That arrangement may also constitute an unlawful delegation of zoning authority under the Regional District Act and warrants focused legal review.

GCHIC supports appropriately scaled, sustainable digital infrastructure in suitable locations. Our *Smart Digital Growth* framework calls for a comprehensive County approach that distinguishes data centers by scale, electrical load, water demand, operating model, and impacts; directs them to compatible sites with adequate infrastructure; requires full site review; and imposes measurable standards for energy, water, noise, emissions, stormwater, decommissioning, and community benefits. The framework is available at https://links.gchic.org/smart_dg. We urge the Board to recommend opposition to LDR-155 and completion of the moratorium and task-force process before any new siting pathway is adopted.

Conclusion

For the reasons above, GCHIC respectfully asks the Planning Board to recommend opposition to LDR-149, LDR-30, LDR-153, and LDR-155. For LDR-13,

the Board should support expedited review for quality transit-oriented development but recommend that any useful provisions be folded into a single, improved ETOD process rather than enacted as a separate CRIP category.

Thank you for considering GCHIC's comments and for entering this letter into the record for each of the five referenced bills. GCHIC appreciates the careful technical analysis reflected in the staff reports and urges the Board to give substantial weight to those recommendations.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Bradley E. Heard

Bradley E. Heard