

CLIMATE ASSESSMENT FOR ZTA 26-04, MIXED-INCOME HOUSING COMMUNITY - ELIGIBILITY

PURPOSE OF CLIMATE ASSESSMENTS

The purpose of Climate Assessments is to evaluate the anticipated impact of master plans and zoning text amendments (ZTAs) on the county's contribution to addressing climate change. These assessments are required pursuant to Section 2-81D of the County Code for ZTAs and Section 33A-14 for master plans. They are intended to provide the County Council with a better understanding of the potential climate impacts and implications of proposed master plans and ZTAs, at the county level. Each climate assessment includes: i) the potential positive or negative impact upon climate change; ii) quantitative or qualitative evaluations of identified effects upon greenhouse gas emissions, sequestration and carbon drawdown; and iii) quantitative or qualitative evaluations of identified effects on community resilience and adaptive capacity. Accordingly, the scope of Climate Assessments is limited to addressing climate change, specifically the effect of land use recommendations in master plans and ZTAs on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and sequestration, and how actions proposed by master plans and ZTAs could improve the county's adaptive capacity to climate change and increase community resilience.

While co-benefits such as health and cost savings may be discussed, the focus is on how proposed master plans and ZTAs may impact GHG emissions and community resilience.

SUMMARY

The Montgomery County Planning Board anticipates that ZTA 26-04 will have no direct impact on GHG emissions and carbon sequestration and positive impact on community resilience and adaptive capacity.

This climate assessment is prepared in accordance with the County-adopted climate assessment methodology (*Final Report: Climate Assessment Recommendations for Master Plans and Zoning Text Amendments in Montgomery County, December 1, 2022*, the "Final Report"). The assessment includes an applicability review and directional impact assessment using Tables 1 and 8 of the Final Report (Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sequestration Checklist, and Community Resilience and Adaptive Capacity Checklist, revised June 2025). This assessment is not a full environmental assessment, rather, it evaluates whether the ZTA will influence activities that may result in changes in GHG emissions, sequestration, and community resilience and adaptive capacity.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF ZTA 26-04

ZTA 26-04 was introduced on January 27, 2026 by Councilmembers Friedson and Sayles, co-sponsored by Council President Fani-González and Councilmembers Luedtke, Balcombe, and Evans. The ZTA proposes amendments to the definition and eligibility thresholds for a Mixed-Income Housing Community (MIHC) by eliminating the 150,000 square foot minimum requirement, increasing the minimum number of dwelling units from 30 units to 50 units, and including projects that receive an award of 4% Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) from the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. The intent of the ZTA is to allow more projects to go through the Expedited Approval Plan process.

VARIABLES THAT COULD AFFECT THE ASSESSMENT

Climate-related variables considered in this assessment include the various GHG reduction, sequestration, resilience, and adaptive capacity activities in the climate assessment checklists (see Tables 1 and 8 of the Final Report). The following climate-related variables were identified as activities that may be directly or indirectly influenced by ZTA 26-04.

CLIMATE-RELATED VARIABLES

Community Resilience and Adaptive Capacity

- Adaptive Capacity Factors – Change in Access to Affordable Housing

ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

Overall, ZTA 26-04 is anticipated to have no direct impact on GHG emissions and carbon sequestration and positive impact on community resilience and adaptive capacity, as described in more detail below.

ZTA 26-04 is not expected to increase the overall amount or distribution of housing development in the County. The ZTA modifies the eligibility criteria for MIHC to incentivize projects anticipated under existing zoning to provide long-term affordability and utilize the expedited plan process. Residential construction would likely occur on the same sites that would otherwise be developed regardless of the ZTA. As a result, the ZTA is not anticipated to impact GHG emissions and carbon sequestration relative to the baseline condition in which housing development would proceed under current regulations. Accordingly, the impacts of the ZTA on building-related embodied emissions, energy use, and land cover are considered indeterminate.

ZTA 26-04 is anticipated to have a positive impact on community resilience and adaptive capacity, particularly with respect to housing stability, equity, and economic resilience. By expanding eligibility for MIHC, the ZTA supports the production of long-term affordable housing in the County.

Housing affordability and stability are critical components of climate resilience. Households experiencing housing insecurity or cost burden are more vulnerable to climate-related stressors, including extreme weather events, heat, and flooding. By increasing the likelihood that new housing development includes affordable units with long-term affordability restrictions, the ZTA helps reduce displacement risk and supports residents' ability to remain in their communities over time.

While ZTA 26-04 does not modify land cover or hazard mitigation requirements, its role in strengthening community resilience and adaptive capacity is an important component of the County's overall climate resilience strategy.

RELATIONSHIP TO GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION AND SEQUESTRATION ACTIONS CONTAINED IN THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY CLIMATE ACTION PLAN (CAP)

ZTA 26-04 does not relate directly to any GHG reduction or sequestration actions contained in the CAP.

RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

The Climate Assessment Act requires the Planning Board to offer appropriate recommendations such as amendments to the proposed ZTA 26-04, or other mitigating measures that could help counter any identified negative impacts through this Climate Assessment. Given that no negative climate impacts are identified, there are no recommended amendments or mitigation measures associated with ZTA 26-04.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION, ASSUMPTIONS, AND METHODOLOGIES USED

The climate assessment for ZTA 26-04 was prepared using the methodology for ZTAs contained within the *Climate Assessment Recommendations for Master Plans and Zoning Text Amendments in Montgomery County, December 1, 2022*. The assessment is not a full environmental review and does not quantify project-specific impacts. Instead, it evaluates whether ZTA 26-04 may influence activities that are known to affect GHG emissions, carbon sequestration, and community resilience and adaptive capacity.