



March 18, 2025

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Thomas E. Dernoga, Chair
Planning, Housing and Economic Development (PHED) Committee

FROM: Josh Hamlin *[Signature]*
Director of Budget and Policy Analysis

RE: People's Zoning Counsel –
Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Review

Budget Overview

- Under Zoning Ordinance Section 27-3309, the People's Zoning Counsel is charged with protecting the public interest and promoting a full and fair presentation of relevant issues in administrative proceedings in order to achieve balanced records upon which sound land use decisions can be made.
- The People's Zoning Counsel appears at hearings on zoning matters and is empowered to summon and cross-examine witnesses, introduce documentary evidence, file exemptions, and present arguments at these hearings, as the evidence and law may warrant.
- The County's FY 2026 Proposed General Fund Budget includes funding in the amount of \$250,000 for the People's Zoning Counsel, the same level of funding as the FY 2025 Approved Budget. The proposed funding supports one (1) contract attorney.
- Expenses for the People's Zoning Counsel are recovered from the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) as a project charge. The project charge is included in M-NCPPC's Administration Fund in the Planning Department's budget.
- The Office's workload consists of reviewing Planning Board cases, Zoning Hearing Examiner cases, District Council cases, and responding to zoning issues from residents.