



Charles County Planning Commission

Meeting of September 18, 2023

Department of Planning and Growth

Management Staff Report

Project Name: ABP Aviation Business Park District
ZTA #23-176
ZMA #23-02

**Type of Project: Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) and Zoning Map
Amendment (ZMA)**

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BACKGROUND

Established in 1943, the Maryland Airport is a privately owned, general aviation airport located in western Charles County that provides charter service. The Maryland Airport is considered an important economic asset for the County. According to the Charles County Economic Development Department (EDD) report entitled, “Current Conditions and Economic Assessment of Bryans Road” (April 2020), the area surrounding the Maryland Airport could support considerable employment supporting development over the next twenty to thirty years, with the potential to provide jobs and increase the County’s commercial tax base. The airport has completed several improvements with the assistance of federal and state funding, including a new runway that was constructed in 2013.

In 2017, approximately 565 acres of land surrounding the Maryland Airport were rezoned from Light Industrial (IG) and Business Park (BP) to Watershed Conservation District (WCD), significantly restricting the potential for economic development in areas of proximity to the airport. Since that time, the Economic Development Department has received inquiries and interest from various investors who are interested in locating near the airport. In 2018 the Maryland Airport property was acquired by a new owner, who has continued to invest in improvements to the airport. There has been an increase in operations at the airport since their purchase.

On October 19, 2021, the County Commissioners adopted Resolution # 2021-26 which officially amended the County’s 2016 Comprehensive Plan to change the land use designation for this area from Watershed Conservation District to Employment and Industrial District. The adoption of this amendment to the 2016 Comprehensive Plan allows the County to proceed with the proposed ABP rezoning now under consideration. Rezoning is required to allow businesses that would be compatible and synergistic with a general aviation airport to locate to the area.

REQUESTED AMENDMENTS

General Description of the Request: Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) #23-176 would revise the Charles County Zoning Ordinance to add provisions and requirements for the new Aviation Business Park (ABP) Zone. Zoning Map Amendment (ZMA) #23-02 would amend the Charles County Zoning Maps to rezone properties surrounding the airport to the new ABP Zone. The amendments are described in more detail below.

Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) #23-176:

Definitions and Interpretations (Article III, Section 297-49): The ZTA adds a definition for a new use, Aircraft Maintenance, which is one of the uses that would be permitted in the ABP Zone. This is one of the targeted uses for this zone that is considered compatible with a general aviation airport.

Table of Permissible Uses (Figure IV-1) and the Uses Corresponding with Table of Permissible Uses (Section 297-212): The ZTA establishes the uses that would be permitted in the ABP Zone in the Table of Permissible Uses (Figure IV-1), which is an Attachment to the Charles County Zoning Ordinance that displays which uses are permitted in the various Zones of the County. The uses

proposed to be permitted in the ABP Zone are those that would be compatible with a general aviation airport, such as research and development, aircraft maintenance and avionics, office and flex space, light industrial uses, and food and beverage uses. The ZTA also amends § 297-212, a section of Article XIII of the Zoning Ordinance, to establish minimum requirements for applicable permitted uses in the ABP Zone. The ZTA further adds a new use code for the Aircraft Maintenance use to the Table of Permissible Uses.

Article VI, Base Zone Regulations, Section 297-91, Commercial Zones. The ZTA establishes the new base zoning district, the ABP Zone, in § 297-91, Commercial Zones. This section of the Ordinance provides the objectives of the ABP Zone in § 297-91.A5., specifies that all development in this new zone must comply with site design and architectural review ("SDAR") in § 297-91.E, and codifies minimum lot, yard, and other standards for development for this zone in Figure VI-5, Schedule of Zone Regulations for Commercial Zones.

The following are additional supporting amendments to other applicable sections of the Zoning Ordinance:

- Establishment of noise standards for the ABP Zone in § 297-32;
- Modifications to prohibit the establishment of Planned Development Zones in the ABP Zone in § 297-102, Figure VII-1, Location of Planned Development Zones;
- Establishment of road buffer and setback requirements for development along roadways in the Highway Corridor portion of properties in the ABP Zone in Figure X-1, Road Corridor Buffer Yard and Building Setback Requirements; and
- Establishment of required bufferyards between the ABP Zone and other zones in Figures XXII-1, XXII-2, and XXII-3, Buffer Yards Between Adjacent Zones.

Zoning Map Amendment (ZMA) #23-02:

ZMA #23-02 would amend the Charles County Zoning Maps to change the base zoning district of approximately 454 acres of land in the vicinity of the Maryland Airport from Watershed Conservation District (WCD) and Business Park (BP) to the new ABP Zone. The ZMA would also amend the Zoning Maps to change the base zoning district of approximately 111 acres of land along Ray Drive from Watershed Conservation District (WCD) to Light Industrial (IG). A map depicting the proposed zoning changes is attached to ZMA #23-02.

It should be noted that the proposed amendments pertain only to those properties as described above. They do not propose to make any changes to the operations or future plans for the airport facilities and property.

STAFF FINDINGS

Staff finds that the proposed amendments support the objectives of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan and the County's economic development policies.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission make a recommendation of approval to the County Commissioners.

APPENDICES:

The following items associated with this proposal are attached and have been uploaded [Online](#) for your review and consideration:

1. Draft ZTA #23-176, ABP Aviation Business Park Zone
2. Draft ZMA #23-02, ABP Aviation Business Park Zone and IG Light Industrial Zone