

CHARLES COUNTY GOVERNMENT

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

Equal Opportunity Employer



TO:	Charles County Commissioners
THRU:	Jason R. Groth, AICP, Acting Director <i>Department of Planning and Growth Management</i>
FROM:	Charles R. Rice, AICP, Planning Director <i>Department of Planning and Growth Management</i>
SUBJECT:	Bill 2024-16 (Zoning Text Amendment 24-182) Required Widths of Aisles and Driveways for Agritourism
DATE:	March 6, 2025

On January 28, 2025, the County Commissioners held a Work Session to discuss comments received from the public regarding the above referenced Bill. The Commissioners deferred acting on the Bill to provide staff the opportunity to work with the Charles County Farm Bureau to address concerns they raised and to explore potential revisions to the Bill. Staff met with representatives of the Farm Bureau and worked through their concerns and recommended changes. As a result, staff is proposing a revised Bill. In summary, the revised Bill would:

1. Include both Agritourism and Ecotourism as land uses that are subject to the provisions of the Bill.
2. Refer directly to the terms Agritourism and Ecotourism, as defined, and delete the word “projects”.
3. Exempt Agritourism and Ecotourism, that provide 50 or fewer parking spaces, from both the Parking Standard Table and the driveway width standards (Article XX, § 297-337 A. and B.).
4. Clarify that a sketch plan is required for Agritourism and Ecotourism, regardless of the number of parking spaces provided.
5. Remove the proposed standard criteria in Article XX, § 297-339 regarding parking area surfaces for smooth surfaces free of holes and dips, brush, long grass.

The proposed changes to the Bill are substantive and will require the Planning Commission to conduct a new public hearing and to make a recommendation to the Commissioners. The Commissioners will subsequently conduct another public hearing.

Staff will be asking the County Commissioners to reopen the record for Bill 2024-16 and to send the revised Bill back to the Planning Commission for a public hearing and recommendation.

Attachment: Proposed Amended Bill 2024-16

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF CHARLES COUNTY, MARYLAND

2024 Legislative Session

Bill No. 2024-16 (ZTA #24-182)

Chapter. No. 297

Introduced by

Date of Introduction October 22, 2024

BILL

AN ACT concerning

REQUIRED WIDTHS OF AISLES AND DRIVEWAYS FOR AGRITOURISM AND ECOTOURISM

FOR the purpose of

Amending certain provisions of the Charles County Zoning Ordinance to provide regulations specific to Agritourism and Ecotourism.

BY Amending:

Chapter 297 – ZONING ORDINANCE

Article XX, § 337 – Required Widths of Aisles and Driveways

Code of Charles County, Maryland

**SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF
CHARLES COUNTY, MARYLAND, that the Laws of Charles County, Maryland read as
follows:**

Article XX, § 297-337. Required widths of aisles and driveways.

A. **AT A MINIMUM**, parking area aisle widths shall conform to the following table, which varies the width requirement according to the angle of parking.

Type of Traffic	Parking Angle				
	0° Aisle Width (feet)	30° Aisle Width (feet)	45° Aisle Width (feet)	60° Aisle Width (feet)	90° Aisle Width (feet)
One-way	12	11	13	18	24
Two-way	20	20	21	23	24

1 B. Excluding curb offset, driveways shall be not less than 10 feet nor exceed 12 feet in
2 width for one-way traffic and not less than 18 feet nor exceed 24 feet in width for
3 two-way traffic, except that ten-foot-wide driveways are permissible for two-way
4 traffic when: [Amended 5-7-2008 by Bill No. 2008-01]

5 (1) The driveway is not longer than 50 feet;
6 (2) It provides access to not more than six spaces; and
7 (3) Sufficient turning space is provided so that vehicles need not back into a public
8 street.

9 C. Driveways through Resource Protection Zone (RPZ), wetland or other conservation
10 areas should be designed as narrow and as close to grade as feasible, with minimal or
11 no shoulder or curbing, and with canopy closure to allow for continuous wildlife
12 migratory corridor. Protective bollards and signage shall be provided to alert drivers
13 to the wildlife crossing area. Stormwater runoff shall be treated prior to entering the
14 conservation area. [Added 5-7-2008 by Bill No. 2008-01]

15 D. AGRITOURISM AND ECOTOURISM, AS DEFINED IN §297-49, ARE EXEMPT
16 FROM THE REQUIREMENTS OF CRITERIA A. AND B. ABOVE WHEN
17 PROVIDING FIFTY (50) OR FEWER PARKING SPACES. CRITERIA A. AND B.
18 ABOVE APPLY TO AGRITOURISM AND ECOTOURISM WHEN PROVIDING
19 FIFTY-ONE (51) OR MORE PARKING SPACES.

20
21 AT A MINIMUM, AGRITOURISM AND ECOTOURISM, REGARDLESS OF
22 THE NUMBER OF PARKING SPACES PROVIDED, SHALL ILLUSTRATE ON
23 A SKETCH PLAN, ADEQUATE AREA FOR PARKING SPACES AND DRIVE
24 AISLES AND APPROPRIATE VEHICULAR INGRESS AND EGRESS TO A
25 PUBLIC ROAD.

26
27 E. AGRITOURISM AND ECOTOURISM, REGARDLESS OF THE NUMBER OF
28 PARKING SPACES PROVIDED, MUST MEET THE CRITERIA LISTED IN
29 §297-212 (14.1).

1
2 **SECTION 2. BE IT FURTHER ENACTED**, that this act shall take effect forty-five (45)
3 calendar days after it becomes law.

4
5 ADOPTED this ____ day of _____ 2025.
6

7 COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
8 CHARLES COUNTY, MARYLAND
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11 Reuben B. Collins II, Esq., President
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15 Ralph E. Patterson II, M.A., Vice President
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19 Thomasina O. Coates, M.S.
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24 Amanda M. Stewart, Ed.D
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28 Gilbert O. Bowling, III
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30 ATTEST:
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34 Carol A. DeSoto, CAP, OM, Clerk