



FOR PLANNING COMMISSION USE ONLY
 Rezoning No. BZ-24-001
 Date Filed: 2-8-24

WASHINGTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
 ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENT APPLICATION

Washington County Dept. of Planning & Zoning

Applicant
 747 Northern Avenue
 Hagerstown, MD 21742

Address
 Jill Baker, Director
 Primary Contact

Address

- Property Owner
- Contract Purchaser
- Attorney
- Consultant
- Other: _____

240-313-2430
 Phone Number

jbaker@washco-md.net
 E-mail Address

- Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance
- Forest Conservation Ordinance
- Subdivision Ordinance
- Solid Waste Plan

- Water and Sewer Plan
- Zoning Ordinance
- Other _____

Section No. 23.4

Please provide the proposed text on a separate sheet of paper as follows: strike-through should be used for deletions [~~deletions~~], unchanged wording in regular type, and new wording should be underlined [new wording].


 Applicant's Signature

Subscribed and sworn before me this _____ day of _____, 20____.

My commission expires on _____
 Notary Public

FOR PLANNING COMMISSION USE ONLY

- Application Form
- Fee Worksheet
- Application Fee
- Proposed Text Changes
- 30 copies of complete Application

Proposed amendment:

Section 23.4 Height

(a) Building height limitations shall not apply to ~~high-density warehousing,~~ water tanks, barns, windmills, silos, or other accessory farm structures; or to belfries, steeples, spires, electric or communication poles or towers, electric generating plants, electric transforming or switching equipment, chimneys or smoke stacks, flagpoles, fire towers, cupolas, domes, monuments, penthouses or roof structures for housing stairways; or to tanks, ventilating fans, air conditioning equipment or similar equipment required to operate and maintain the building or to the manufacture, modification, servicing and housing of aircraft. No penthouse or roof structure shall have a total area greater than twenty-five (25) percent of the roof area, nor shall such structure be used for any purpose than a use incidental to the main use of the building.



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & ZONING
PLANNING | ZONING | LAND PRESERVATION | FOREST CONSERVATION | GIS

March 2024

RZ-24-001

**APPLICATION FOR TEXT AMENDMENT
WASHINGTON COUNTY ZONING ORDINANCE
STAFF REPORT AND ANALYSIS**

Proposal: Application is being made to amend Section 23.4 (a) of the Washington County Zoning Ordinance to remove exemptions for height restrictions on high-density warehouse structures.

Staff Report: Because Washington County is geographically located at the intersection of two significant interstates (Interstates 70 & 81) the area has attracted many transportation related uses including warehouses and distribution facilities. Due to their intensity of use and need for access to the interstate system, these uses are currently allowed only in the industrial districts of Industrial Restricted (IR) and Planned Industrial (PI) and the Highway Interchange (HI).

The zoning ordinance has no definition of high-density warehouse so Staff searched for a definition to clarify this type of use. There were several definitions that were found that all varied just slightly. However, the general concept is that high-density warehousing is the concept of condensing stored items into the smallest amount of space and eliminating aisle ways. In today's workplace environment, this definition would likely apply to most, if not all, new warehouses and distribution centers being built.

Analysis: Of particular interest in this text amendment is the height limitations for these types of uses. In each of the districts mentioned, there is a height limitation of 75 feet. However, there is an exemption included within the exemptions and modifications section of the ordinance that allow for several specifically mentioned uses to exceed the zoning district height requirements without limitation. One of the uses listed as having no height limitation is "high-density warehouses". All of the other uses listed under this section are accessory structures that do not have need for occupancy. That makes the warehouse use stand out as an anomaly in this list of uses to be exempt.

This section of the ordinance was reviewed by the local Emergency Services department for the County to evaluate what our current inventory of apparatus could feasibly provide service to structures over 75 feet in height. Currently, the highest ladder truck in the County is 100 feet but when the apparatus is fully set, the maximum height that can be reached is approximately 75 feet.

747 Northern Avenue | Hagerstown, MD 21742 | P: 240.313.2430 | F: 240.313.2431 | TDD: 7-1-1

WWW.WASHCO-MD.NET

Given the proliferation of warehouses and distribution centers in the County, this exemption could easily overwhelm our local fire resources and cause potential life safety issues.

Proposed amendment:

Section 23.4 Height

(a) Building height limitations shall not apply to ~~high density warehousing~~, water tanks, barns, windmills, silos, or other accessory farm structures; or to belfries, steeples, spires, electric or communication poles or towers, electric generating plants, electric transforming or switching equipment, chimneys or smoke stacks, flagpoles, fire towers, cupolas, domes, monuments, penthouses or roof structures for housing stairways; or to tanks, ventilating fans, air conditioning equipment or similar equipment required to operate and maintain the building or to the manufacture, modification, servicing and housing of aircraft. No penthouse or roof structure shall have a total area greater than twenty-five (25) percent of the roof area, nor shall such structure be used for any purpose than a use incidental to the main use of the building.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends approval of the amendment as presented.

Respectfully submitted,



Jill Baker, AICP
Director