



Frederick County Council News

Mason Carter, District 5

MCarter@FrederickCountyMD.gov • 301-600-1034

August 2025

July in review:

The Frederick County Council held three meetings during the month of July, addressing a range of legislative and community matters. Following our final meeting of the month on July 22nd, the Council entered a summer recess. We will reconvene on Tuesday, August 19th and resume regularly meeting every Tuesday at 5:30pm unless otherwise stated.

Following a press briefing by the County Executive, the County Council began deliberating on a compromise bill associated with siting for Critical Digital Infrastructure (CDI), or more widely accepted, data centers. Previously, the Council debated how to best deal with the placement of CDI, with two options before us: establishing a floating zone OR limiting development to Limited Industrial (LI) and General Industrial (GI) on our use table. The announcement of an overlay bridged the gap between both ideas with all Council Members originally agreeing to co-sponsor the legislation. An overlay district is a zoning tool that is placed on top of existing zones within a determined geographical area to impose additional regulations or limit/control the development of a specific use, such as a data center. The bill currently before the Council does NOT create a CDI overlay zone but would authorize the administration to begin the process of creating a CDI overlay zone. If passed, the Department of Planning and Permitting would draft an overlay map and then forward it to the Planning Commission for a workshop and 60-day review, including a public hearing, before making an official recommendation to the County Council. At that point, the County Council would workshop the map, hold a public hearing, and then decide. All properties situated within the CDI overlay zone that does not already have LI or GI zoning will still need to apply for a rezoning if they desire to have a data center on their property. Earlier this month, the County Executive released a draft overlay map identifying just over 2,500 acres, or 0.60% of the county's total land mass, for potential data center development. Of that total, approximately 2,200 acres are already part of the East Alcoa Data Center Campus site. This means that only about 300 acres represent newly proposed areas that could potentially host future data centers. The Council is set for final consideration on August 19th.

The Board of Health, composed of all seven County Council Members, the County Executive, and the County Health Officer, voted to approve an increase in several environmental health services fees, with some fees doubling. While I did not support the motion—and do not support any fee increases—I recognized that the votes were in place to pass the proposal. In an effort to mitigate the impact on residents, businesses, and non-profits, I proposed a motion with two key amendments: to delay the implementation of the fee increases until January 1, 2026, and to phase in the increases over a two-year period, splitting the cost increase evenly between the two years. Unfortunately, both of my amendments failed, and the Board of Health voted to approve the fee increases as originally presented. These increases are now set to take effect on September 1st.

Since the start of my term on the County Council, I have consistently looked for opportunities to eliminate redundancies and enhance the efficiency of our government. As part of that effort, I have introduced an amendment to the County Code aimed at improving the operations of the Rustic Roads Commission. This amendment is designed to streamline the board's processes and ensure it can more effectively carry out its important mission of preserving and managing Frederick County's network of historic rural roads. I look forward to working with the members of our Council to pass this critical action.

If you have any questions or I can be of service, please do not hesitate to reach out to my office by email at mcarter@frederickcountymd.gov.