



# Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA 25-187) Data Centers Planning Commission Briefing



May 4, 2026

# Original Zoning Text Amendment Summary

- 1) Adds a definition for Data Center
- 2) Would permit Data Centers with conditions in the following zones:
  - Business Park (BP)
  - General Industrial (IG)
  - Heavy Industrial (IH)
  - Planned Unit Development (PUD) Industrial Zones
  - Low Density Residential (RL) with greater restrictions

# Original Zoning Text Amendment

## Conditions of Approval

- Minimum 30% Open Space Requirement
- Setback 200 feet from property lines
- Setback 400 feet from residential buildings
- Architectural Requirements
- Noise and Vibration Study to demonstrate compliance
- Perimeter Landscaping and Hardscaping Requirements
- Lighting standards
- Non-potable water use is prioritized, but not required
- In the RL Zone, additional conditions applied

## Public Process thus far for the Zoning Text Amendment...

Board	Action	Date
County Commissioners	Authorized staff to begin the public process with the Planning Commission	October 7, 2025
Planning Commission	Conducted Public Hearing	November 17, 2025
Planning Commission	Work Session(s)	February 2, 2026 March 2, 2026
County Commissioners	Received Planning Commission Recommendation	April 21, 2026
Planning Commission	Briefing	May 4, 2026

# Planning Commission Recommendation

The Planning Commission recommended denial of the ZTA as written. Factors and reasons considered in reaching their decision and considerations for a revised ZTA are as follows:

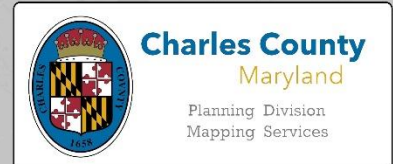
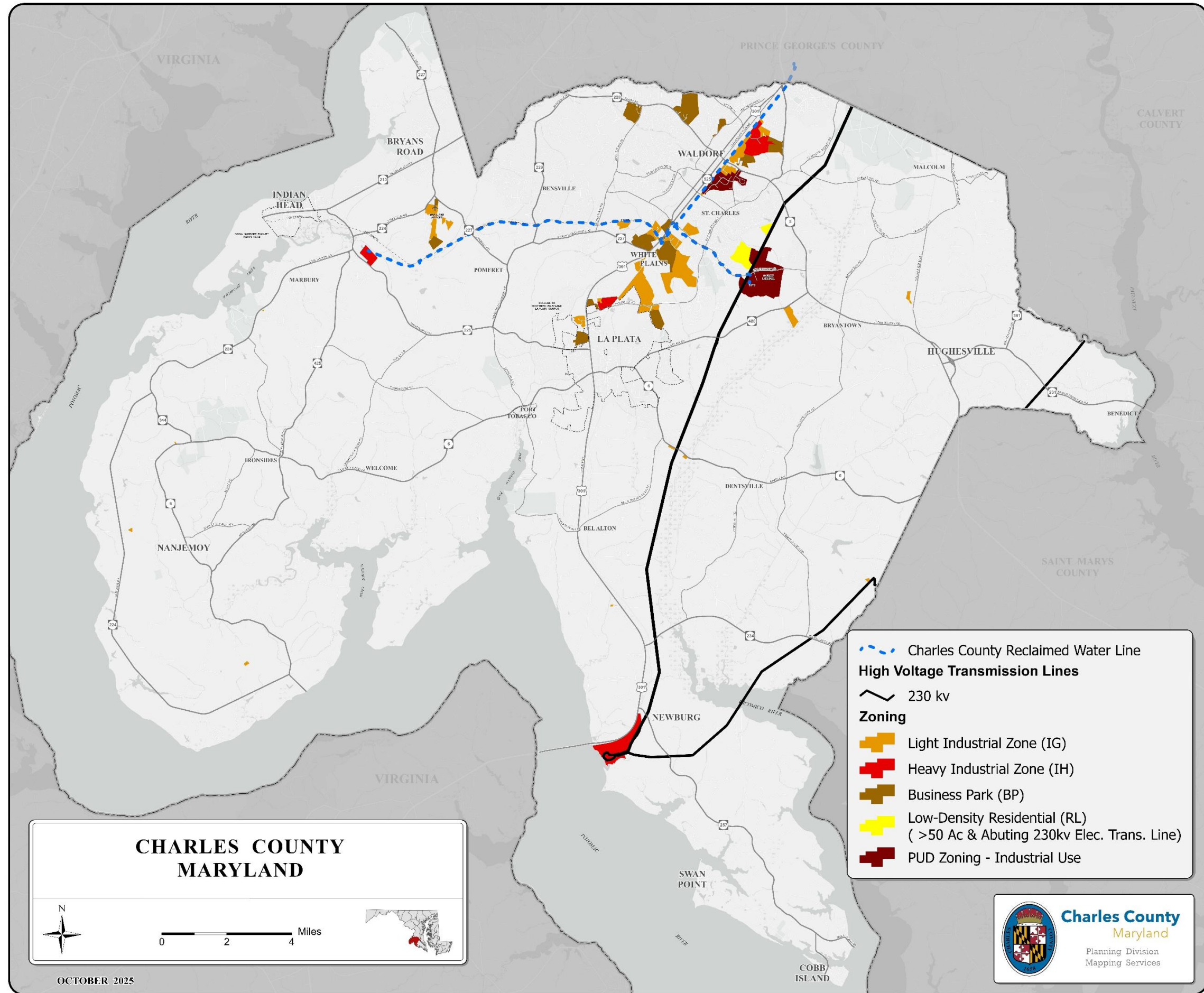
- The Planning Commission recommended limiting Data Centers to the Heavy Industrial (IH) Zone.
- The Planning Commission recommended a requirement that Data Centers not use potable water for cooling.
- The Planning Commission recommended any future draft include a requirement that a Data Center be responsible for generating its own power.
- The Planning Commission recommended that any future draft include provisions for a Data Center /Owner to bear its own costs for infrastructure installation and improvements.
- The Planning Commission encouraged a future draft of the Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) to incorporate elements of the Next Generation Energy Act of 2025.
- The Planning Commission recommended the County Commissioners consider forthcoming state guidance, including a state report related to data center development expected in September 2026.

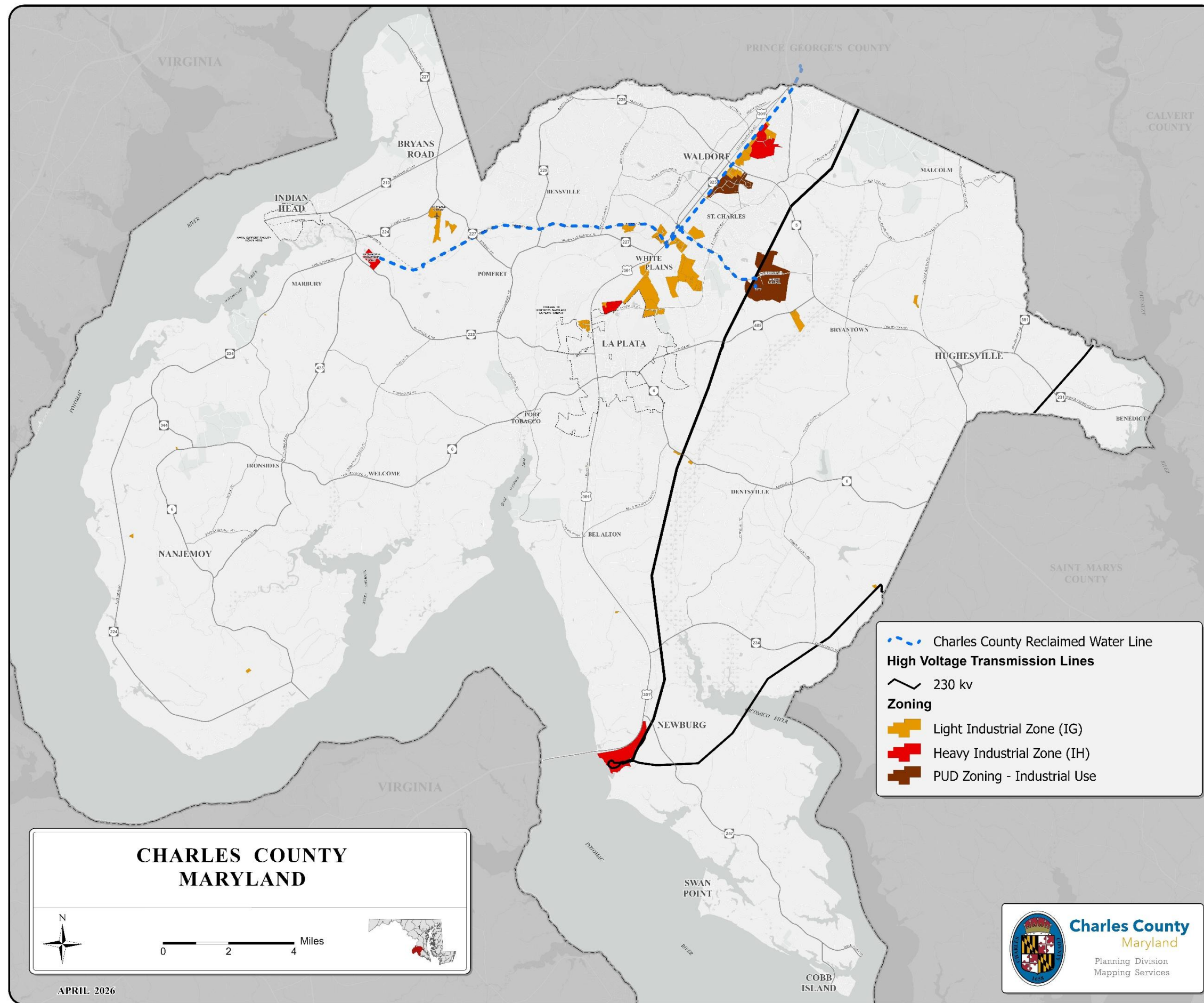
# Revised Draft Zoning Text Amendment Summary of Changes

- 1) Eliminates the Business Park (BP) and Low-Density Residential RL Zones
- 2) Maintains the allowable Zones of:

General Industrial (IG)  
Heavy Industrial (IH)

Note: Planned Unit Development (PUD) Industrial Zone remains eligible because land use within the PUD is governed by the Zoning Indenture (Docket 90) and the Planned Unit Development Board (PDRB)





# Revised Draft Zoning Text Amendment

## Summary of Changes

- 3) Removes the 30% Open-Space Requirement since we are only involving Industrial Zoned Land (Forest Conservation, Stormwater Management, Buffers/Screening still apply)
- 4) Increases the setback from the data center to residential buildings from 400 feet to 500 feet
- 5) Strengthens the text regarding use of water by saying “If a data center is designed to use water for cooling or humidification, only non-potable water shall be used”
- 6) Maintains the Public Engagement (Public Meeting) component and applies to all permitted zones
- 7) Added “iron fencing” as an option for perimeter screening/fencing
- 8) Added language to require the applicant/owner to pay for all public infrastructure improvements
- 9) Added language to require diesel generators to meet emission performance standards

# Key Points

## Revised Zoning Text Amendment...

- Permitted Zones are now limited to Industrial
- Further protects residential uses by removing the RL Zone and increasing the setback to 500 feet
- Only non-potable water SHALL be used for cooling and humidification
- Maintains the public engagement component in all permitted zones
- Requires developer to pay for all public infrastructure improvements

**Next Step:**

**Planning Commission  
Public Hearing**

**June 1, 2026**

PRESENTED BY:



# Charles County Department of Economic Development Department of Planning and Growth Management

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