

Introduced 02.02.2026
Public Hearing 02.04.2026
Council Action 02.05.2026
Executive Action 02.06.2026
Effective Date 02.06.2026

County Council of Howard County, Maryland

2026 Legislative Session

Legislative Day No. 2

Bill No. 16 -2026

Introduced by: The Chairperson at the request of the County Executive
Co-Sponsored by: Opel Jones, Deb Jung, Christiana Rigby, and Liz Walsh

Short Title: Emergency Act - Amending – Howard County Building Code – I-3 Use group

Title: AN EMERGENCY ACT amending the Howard County Building Code to provide that only a government agency is eligible to make application, obtain or hold a permit for the I-3 Use group; to provide that the building official may suspend or revoke a permit other than one issued to a government agency that has not passed final inspection; generally relating to the regulation of building and construction in Howard County; and declaring this to be an emergency act.

Introduced and read first time Feb 2, 2026. Ordered posted and hearing scheduled.

By order

Michelle Harrod
Michelle Harrod, Administrator

Having been posted and notice of time & place of hearing & title of Bill having been published according to Charter, the Bill was read for a second time at a public hearing on Feb 4, 2026.

By order

Michelle Harrod
Michelle Harrod, Administrator

This Bill was read the third time on Feb 5, 2026 and Passed ☒, Passed with amendments ☐, Failed ☐.

By order

Michelle Harrod
Michelle Harrod, Administrator

Sealed with the County Seal and presented to the County Executive for approval this 6 day of Feb, 2026 at 9⁰⁰ a.m./p.m.

By order

Michelle Harrod
Michelle Harrod, Administrator

Approved/Vetoed by the County Executive Feb 6, 2026

Calvin Ball
Calvin Ball, County Executive

NOTE: [[text in brackets]] indicates deletions from existing law; TEXT IN SMALL CAPITALS indicates additions to existing law; ~~Strike-out~~ indicates material deleted by amendment; Underlining indicates material added by amendment.

Section 1. *Be It Enacted* by the County Council of Howard County, Maryland, that the Howard County Code is amended as follows:

By adding:

Section 3.101. Howard County Building Code; adoption of international codes.
Subsection (b), paragraph (23)

By renumbering:

Section 3.101. Howard County Building Code; adoption of international codes.
Subsection (b), paragraph (22) to be paragraph (23A)

Title 3. Buildings.

Subtitle 1. Building code.

Section 3.101. Amendments to the International Building Code, 2024 Edition.

(b) *Local Amendments.* The following amendments modify certain provisions of the adopted code.

(22) *Subsection 104.8.1 Legal defense.*

In the first sentence of this subsection, delete "legal representation of the jurisdiction until the final termination of the proceedings" and substitute "Howard County in accordance with Maryland Law".

(23) *SECTION 105.1 REQUIRED.*

ADD AN EXCEPTION AS FOLLOWS:

EXCEPTION: NO OWNER OR OWNER'S AUTHORIZED AGENT, OTHER THAN A GOVERNMENT AGENCY, IS ELIGIBLE TO MAKE APPLICATION, OBTAIN, OR HOLD A PERMIT FOR I-3 USE GROUP. THE BUILDING OFFICIAL IS AUTHORIZED TO SUSPEND OR REVOKE A PERMIT FOR ANY OWNER OR OWNER'S AUTHORIZED AGENT, OTHER THAN A GOVERNMENT AGENCY, WHICH HAS BEEN ISSUED A PERMIT BUT WHICH HAS NOT PASSED FINAL INSPECTION AS OF THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS LEGISLATION.

(~~[[22]]~~23A) *Subsection 105.1.1 Annual Permit.*

Delete this subsection and substitute the following:

1 **105.1.1. Master permit.** Instead of an individual permit for each alteration to an
2 already approved building, electrical, fire, gas, mechanical, or plumbing
3 installation, the Building Official may issue a master permit upon application by
4 any person, firm, or corporation regularly employing one or more qualified
5 professional or tradesperson in the building, structure, or on the premises owned
6 or operated by the Applicant.

7
8 **Section 2. And Be It Further Enacted** by the County Council of Howard County,
9 Maryland that subsections 3.101(b)(1) through (21) and (24) through (80), as adopted by
10 Council Bill No. 24-2025, shall remain unchanged and in effect.

11
12 **Section 3. And Be It Further Enacted** by the County Council of Howard County,
13 Maryland that an emergency exists because Institutional Group I-3 are facilities, that are
14 inhabited by more than five persons which require the occupants be under restraint or
15 security and such uses consist of correctional centers, detention centers, jails, prerelease
16 centers, prisons and reformatories and receiving a use and occupancy permit for such
17 uses should remain with and under the oversight of governmental entities and not private
18 entities.

19
20 **Section 4. And Be It Further Enacted** by the County Council of Howard County,
21 Maryland that allowing a private entity to own or operate a detention facility, which
22 typically requires great responsibility and oversight of the government, in Howard
23 County will negatively impact the health, safety, and welfare of our communities.

24
25 **Section 5. And Be it Further Enacted** by the County Council of Howard County,
26 Maryland that this Act is adopted as an emergency measure to address an immediate
27 emergency affecting public health, safety, or welfare and having been passed by two-
28 thirds of its members, this Act shall be effective immediately upon its enactment.



Howard County

Internal Memorandum

Subject: Testimony and Fiscal Impact Statement
Emergency Act Amending the Howard County Building Code

To: Dr. Opel Jones, Chairperson
Howard County Council

From: Calvin Ball, Howard County Executive

Date: February 2, 2026

PURPOSE

Council Bill No. 16-2026, seeks action to amend the Howard County Building Code in order to require that only a government agency may apply for, obtain, or hold a permit for the Institutional (I-3) Use group. Pursuant to Section 209(d) of the Howard County Charter, this legislation is an Emergency Bill that seeks to address an immediate emergency affecting public health, safety or welfare.

BACKGROUND

An inspection was recently conducted of a privately-owned office building in Elkridge that is currently under renovation for use as detention facility. A third-party permitting company known as McKeever Services, located in Fairfax, VA, has applied for and received a permit to renovate 28,614 square feet within an existing building located at 6522 Meadowridge Road in Elkridge. The building is owned by Genesis GSA Strategic One, LLC. The building permit was issued on August 5, 2025, with the following description of work: "General Services Administration/scope of work includes improvement of tenant spaces support areas, detention facility, detainee processing and secured waiting area."

The work performed under the permit appears to be nearing completion. The most recent inspection was passed with conditions on December 29, 2025. However, certain areas remain to be reinspected and approved prior to issuance of a Use & Occupancy certificate.

The retrofit of private office buildings in Howard County for use of a detention facility raises serious concerns about public health, safety, welfare, and oversight of such facilities. As such, this emergency legislation would restrict the use of privately-owned detention facilities in Howard County as the County determines appropriate.

NATURE OF EMERGENCY

Recent reporting indicates that this building, located at 6522 Meadowridge Road in Elkridge, is intended for use as a privately-owned detention facility.

The creation of privately-owned detention facilities anywhere in our county and state raises serious concerns about public health, safety, welfare, and oversight that must be addressed.

Furthermore, the proposed detention center location in Elkridge sits in an existing office park, in close proximity to healthcare providers, schools, parks, and neighborhoods. The proposed facility is located within a one-mile radius of the following community destinations:

- Deep Run Elementary School
- Mayfield Woods Middle School
- Waterloo Park
- Troy Park
- Timbers at Troy Golf Course
- Gateway Overlook Shopping Center
- Ascension Saint Agnes Primary Care Elkridge
- Tarbiyah Academy
- Howard County Bureau of Highways Mayfield Shop

The siting of such a detention facility in close proximity to these important and critical community locations also raises serious concerns about public health, safety, or welfare.

FISCAL IMPACT

This legislation will not require additional staff to administer and will not result in any anticipated fiscal impact.

Amendment 1 to Council Bill No. 16 - 2026

BY: David Yungmann

Legislative Day 3

Date: February 5, 2026

Amendment No. 1

(This Amendment clarifies entities eligible to hold a Use and Occupancy permit for the I-3 Use group and provides restriction on where the I-3 Use group may be located)

- 1 On the Title page, in line 2 of the Title, after “hold a”, insert “Use and Occupancy”.
- 2 On the Title page, in line 3 of the Title, after “revoke a”, insert “Use and Occupancy”.
- 3 On the title page, in line 4 of the Title, after the semicolon, insert “to provide restrictions on
- 4 where the I-3 Use group may be located;”.
- 5 On page 1, in line 24, immediately after “HOLD A”, insert “USE AND OCCUPANCY”.
- 6 On page 1, in line 25, immediately after “GROUP”, insert the following:
- 7 “AND AT NO TIME MAY A USE AND OCCUPANCY PERMIT BE ISSUED FOR AN I-3 USE GROUP WITHIN
- 8 A HALF MILE RADIUS OF ANY EXISTING RESIDENTIAL, SCHOOL, HEALTHCARE, RETAIL, OR GENERAL
- 9 OFFICE USE”.

I certify that this a true copy of

Am 1 CBill- 2026
~~passed~~ on Feb 5, 2026
Michelle J. Jassay
Council Administrator

Not Moved

BY THE COUNCIL

This Bill, having been approved by the Executive and returned to the Council, stands enacted on

February 6, 2026.

Michelle R. Harrod
Michelle R. Harrod, Administrator to the County Council

BY THE COUNCIL

This Bill, having been passed by the yeas and nays of two-thirds of the members of the Council notwithstanding the objections of the Executive, stands enacted on _____, 2026.

Michelle R. Harrod, Administrator to the County Council

BY THE COUNCIL

This Bill, having received neither the approval nor the disapproval of the Executive within ten days of its presentation, stands enacted on _____, 2026.

Michelle R. Harrod, Administrator to the County Council

BY THE COUNCIL

This Bill, not having been considered on final reading within the time required by Charter, stands failed for want of consideration on _____, 2026.

Michelle R. Harrod, Administrator to the County Council

BY THE COUNCIL

This Bill, having been disapproved by the Executive and having failed on passage upon consideration by the Council stands failed on _____, 2026.

Michelle R. Harrod, Administrator to the County Council

BY THE COUNCIL

This Bill, the withdrawal of which received a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the Council, is withdrawn from further consideration on _____, 2026.

Michelle R. Harrod, Administrator to the County Council