



# Howard County

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## *Internal Memorandum*

**Subject:** Testimony of Support for Council Bill 67-2016  
Historic Preservation Commission Code Amendment

**To:** Lonnie R. Robbins, Chief Administrative Officer

**Through:** Valdis Lazdins, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning *bb*

**From:** Beth Burgess, Chief, Resource Conservation Division

**Date:** September 28, 2016

The Department of Planning and Zoning supports the adoption of Council Bill 67-2016 (CB-67). The Bill amends Section 16.601, 16.603, 16.604, 16.607 and Section 20.112 of the Howard County Code, which exempts certain minor alterations from the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) Certificate of Approval requirement.

CB-67 supports *PlanHoward 2030* goals “to aid in the preservation of the County’s historic resources” and “to further incentivize both investment and maintenance of historic properties”. The Legislation will streamline the historic review process for all in-kind repairs such as siding, gutters, roofs and doors; tax credit pre-approval; and minor exterior alterations such as painting, light fixtures, sheds, and landscape features. Section 20.112 amendments propose to include masonry walls, fences and engineering work as eligible tax credit work.

As a result of the July 30<sup>th</sup> flood, many citizens and business located in the Historic District of Ellicott City need accelerated historic review to repair and rebuild their damaged properties. Since these properties are in a historic district, approval by the HPC is required for most exterior alterations, a process that can take up to two months to complete. This Bill exempts certain “minor alterations” from the HPC review process and allows for the Executive Secretary of the Commission to issue a determination of compliance with the Design Guidelines. The proposed minor alteration exemptions are the types of items typically approved on consent by the HPC. The Executive Secretary's determination is posted to the County's website. If within 5 days someone objects in writing, the applicant needs to get a Certificate of Approval from the HPC and the application will be heard at the next upcoming HPC meeting.

In-kind repairs do not require HPC approval unless an owner seeks a tax credit. This Bill allows DPZ to pre-approve tax credit requests for in-kind repairs without waiting for the HPC meeting, saving valuable time during this reconstruction of Ellicott City. The HPC will continue to issue final approval of tax credits.

Since the flood, the HPC has been conducting emergency meetings to accommodate the volume of requests. The expedited process proposed in CB-67 is anticipated to reduce the need for continual emergency meetings.

This Bill has minimal fiscal impact associated with its adoption. DPZ appreciates Council’s consideration and recommends approval of Council Bill 67-2016.

Cc: Jennifer Sager, Legislative Coordinator