

**Office of the County Auditor**  
**Auditor's Analysis**

**Council Bill No. 21-2021 (ZRA 196)**

Introduced: March 1, 2021

Auditor: Lisa Geerman

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Fiscal Impact:

The fiscal impact of this legislation cannot be determined at this time because it will depend on the type and amount of changes in development that result. The legislation may result in increased tax revenues as new development occurs or if construction occurs on existing structures. There may be annual revenues from property taxes, income taxes, and admission and amusement taxes. One-time sources of revenue may also be collected in the form of transfer taxes and recordation taxes. Additional non-general fund revenues such as fire taxes and ad valorem charges may also increase.

Purpose:

This legislation amends the Howard County Zoning Regulations to add certain uses permitted as a matter or right in HO (Historic: Office) zoning districts. It specifically proposes to add Country Inn, Personal Service Establishments, and Specialty Stores to the uses allowable by right under the zoning regulations for properties in the HO zoning district. This would extend these uses currently allowed in the connected and adjacent Historic Commercial (HC) district to the HO district.

Other Comments:

In November 2020, the Department of Planning and Zoning recommended that the proposed additions included in ZRA-196 be approved. The Planning Board recommended approval by a vote of 3-1 on December 8, 2020. A presubmission community meeting is scheduled for March 31, 2021.

On March 8, 2021, the County Executive announced that the County is seeking to rezone the historic Ellicott City Courthouse Complex and is issuing a Request for Information (RFI) for creative reuse concepts for the four associated properties. The County will vacate its current Circuit Courthouse this summer.

According to the Department of Planning and Zoning, rezoning of the property from HO to HC is consistent with the concepts described in the Ellicott City Watershed Master Plan and provides more flexible reuse opportunities. It will not know how this legislation impacts the future use of

the courthouse until a decision has been made on the rezoning. At this time there are no plans to include anything in the FY 2022 budget related to this legislation.