

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

**Council Bill No. 78-2021**

Introduced: October 4, 2021

Auditor: Michael A. Martin

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Fiscal Impact:

The proposed changes to Section 16.1204(c)(2) and Section 16.1204(d)(3) of the Howard County Code will require additional work to be performed by the applicant's consultant. According to the Director of the Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ), this will require additional hours of work performed by DPZ staff to review the evidence provided by the consultant; however, the extent of the additional work required by DPZ cannot be determined at this time.

Purpose:

The purpose of this legislation is to:

- Add new definitions to the Forest Conservation Ordinance,
- Establish a "look-back" provision for the disturbance of certain trees,
- Reduce the forest threshold diameter from 30 inches to 24 inches, and
- Change the on-site forest retention priorities to include the Green Cultural Trail, Targeted Ecological Areas, and trees within cemeteries or historic districts that are at least 12 inches in diameter at 4.5 feet above ground.
  - Currently, only specimen trees with a diameter of at least 30 inches are protected by a Forest Conservation Plan.

Other Comments:

The Director of DPZ anticipates that the below plan statuses will be exempted from the changes in the proposed legislation:

- Signed preliminary or preliminary equivalent sketch plans
- Approval letters for a final plan (minor subdivision or re-subdivision)
- Signed site development plans

Submitted plans that do not meet the above criteria when this bill goes into effect will be subject to the parameters of the new legislation.