

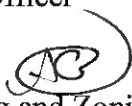


Howard County

Internal Memorandum

Subject: Testimony on CB-XX-2022
A bill requiring the removal of certain signs or posters placed during the development review process and establishing certain fees when the Department removes signs and posters; and generally relating to public notice of projects in the development process.

To: Lonnie R. Robbins
Chief Administrative Officer

From: Amy Gowan, Director 
Department of Planning and Zoning

Date: January 21, 2022

The Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) supports CB-XX-2022, which seeks to reduce the cluttering of properties and roadways with development notice signage posted beyond the relevant notice period. The purpose of such signage is to provide adequate notice to the general public of proposals or development that may impact their neighborhood and for which they may have the opportunity to provide feedback. When signage remains posted for an extended period of time, it may become difficult for the public to discern what is a new proposal or new hearing from one that has previously occurred.

The bill amends various sections of Titles 2 and 16 regarding noticing of meetings, hearings and other development-related activities and establishes removal requirements for signs and posters noticing the same. The bill also creates a new section 16.1613 with standardized removal requirements for all signs or posters required to be placed by Title 16, Title 2, or by rules of procedure of the Department, Planning Board, Design Advisory Panel, Historic Preservation Commission or Cemetery Preservation Board.

Sign/Poster Removal Requirements

The proposed amendments establish removal requirements for signs/posters required for hearing authority cases, presubmission community meetings, , Zoning Board hearings, emergency meetings of the Historic Preservation Commission, or by Rules of Procedure of the Department of Planning and Zoning, Planning Board, Design Advisory Panel, Historic Preservation Commission or Cemetery Preservation Board. Generally, signs/posters must be removed by the 15th day following the conclusion of the meeting or hearing. In the case of presubmission community meetings, current code provisions require the sign/poster remain posted three (3) weeks following the meeting. This bill will require removal by the 15th day following the minimum notice period following the presubmission community meeting – in this case, the 36th day after the meeting.

Sign/Poster Removal Fee

In order to encourage compliance with the sign/poster removal requirements outlined in the bill, this legislation requires the Department to notify the entity that must display the sign or poster of the applicable removal requirements when the sign or poster is obtained from the Department. It further empowers the Department to remove signs or posters displayed beyond the applicable posting period and assess a removal fee of \$250 for each instance of removal. If a property is required to display multiple signs, the removal fee would apply only once to the property for each instance of removal, not \$250 per sign.

Fiscal Analysis

The new sign/poster removal requirements are likely to result in minimal fiscal impacts to the County. We expect the obligations of the bill can be met with current staffing levels. The Department's code enforcement group will field complaints regarding signs posted beyond the applicable removal date through its standard complaint process. If a violation remains unabated, staff will remove signs and impose a fee as applicable.

For purposes of estimating a fiscal impact, we assumed up to 5% of all plans and petitions requiring a sign/poster may result in an enforcement action assessing a removal fee. Based on the average number of plans and petitions requiring a sign/poster annually over the last five years, the removal fee could generate revenues up to \$2,000 annually.

cc: Holly Sun, Budget Administrator
Brook Mamo, Deputy Budget Administrator
Jennifer Sager, Legislative Coordinator, County Administration