



Howard County

Internal Memorandum

Subject: Testimony for Council Bill 7-2013
Historic Property Tax Credit

To: Lonnie R. Robbins
Chief Administrative Officer

From: Marsha S. McLaughlin, Director
Department of Planning and Zoning

Date: February 4, 2013

The Department of Planning and Zoning supports the adoption of Council Bill 7-2013 which proposes to amend Section 20.112 (b) of the Howard County Code to expand both its “eligible property” provision, to include outbuildings in the historic districts, and its “eligible work” provision, to include historic preservation professionals and architects who perform consulting work. The current language limits tax credits to “existing principal structures” located within the historic districts, Section 20.112 (b.3.iii), and only allows for eligible work by licensed contractors, Section 20.112 (b.5.i).

The purpose of the legislation is to incentivize our citizens to preserve and restore Howard County’s historic structures with the proper professional resources available. The intent is to include all historic structures within our historic districts, not just principal structures. Outbuildings are part of the valuable history of Howard County. The Legislation will aid in reducing demolition by neglect of historic outbuildings and encourage historic property owners who may struggle to afford the care a historic property requires.

The Howard County General Plan makes it a goal “to put forth several policies and actions to aid in the preservation of the County’s historic resources”. One goal identified in the Plan is “to investigate expanding the tax credits to further incentivize both investment and maintenance of historic properties”. This Bill is a method of achieving these goals.

DPZ recommends approval of Council Bill 7-2013

Fiscal Impact

This Bill has minimal fiscal impact associated with the proposed changes. The annual average cost from historic preservation tax credits from the past 14 years is \$12,620 and FY03/04 had a record peak year of \$23,000. A substantial increase in the tax credit’s fiscal impact is not expected, but it will increase the opportunity for historic properties in Howard County to survive and thrive.

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cc: Steve Lafferty, Director of Special Projects
Jen Sager, Legislative Coordinator