

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE REPORT

2024 Legislative Session

Reference No.: CB-020-2024

Draft No.: 2

Committee: TIEE

Date: 3/26/2024

Action: FAV(A)

REPORT:

Committee Vote: Favorable as Amended, 5-0 (In Favor: Council Members Olson, Harrison, Burroughs, Dernoga, and Fisher).

The Committee convened on March 26, 2024, to discuss CB-20-2024, which is part of a legislative package (along with CB-21-2024 and CB-22-2024) proposing updates to Subtitle 25 (Trees & Vegetation) and Subtitle 24 (Subdivision Ordinance) of the County Code. These changes are needed to implement the required program changes outlined in the Maryland Forest Conservation Act (FCA) of 2023 (SB 526/ HB 723-2023) as approved by the Governor on May 8, 2023. The overarching goals of the changes include no net loss of forest (and even to demonstrate gain), simplifying the clearing replacement calculations, and making the process more transparent to the public.

CB-20-2024 amends Division 2 of Subtitle 25 (Woodland and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Ordinance), establishing new definitions for Development Review Division applications, Green Infrastructure, Historic Tree, Licensed Tree Expert, Selective (tree) Clearing, and Transit-oriented centers to clarify the development process in terms of Tree Conservation Plans (TCPs). Plan Review and Conformance revisions include language that will provide increased protection for specimen, champion, and historic trees. This division also proposes additional notification for clearing of woodlands, including written notice mailed to abutting and adjacent property owners of the affected property. The Division proposal changes also include applications for a Tree Conservation 2 (TCP2- the Plan that comes to fruition after the conceptual or preliminary plan is submitted) that are submitted after July 1st, 2024, will be valid for five years after the date of approval.

Staff proposed technical amendments, as well as substantive amendments, to clarify the definition of Transit-oriented centers, allow conditions of approval of TCPs to be included in Planning Director approvals, and clarify the effective date. The Committee also requested an amendment establishing a fee-in-lieu process for specimen trees. The Committee voted favorably on all amendments.

After discussion, the Committee voted favorably on CB-20-2024 as amended by a vote of 5-0.