



Anne Arundel County, Maryland
**Office of the
County Auditor**

To: Councilmembers, Anne Arundel County Council
From: Office of the County Auditor
Date: March 13, 2026
Subject: County Auditor's Review of Legislation for the March 16, 2026 Council Meeting

CB 98-25 Public Works – Traffic – Zoning – Signs

Summary of Legislation

This bill repeals and adds new language to Title 3 of Article 18 (Planning and Zoning) and amends Article 13 (Public Works) to comprehensively update the County's regulations regarding permanent and temporary signs. The legislation aims to modernize the County Code to address new sign types, accommodate zoning changes, and ensure constitutionality following Supreme Court rulings that require content-neutral regulation of signage. Key provisions include revised definitions for different types of signs, new methods for measuring sign area, updated allowances for sign size and location, and specific regulations for temporary signs.

Review of Fiscal Impact

We concur with the Administration's fiscal note that this bill has no anticipated effect on the County's operating budget.

This legislation was also included in the Auditor's Review of Legislation for the March 2, 2026 Council Meeting.

CB 1-26 General Development Plan – Region 6 Plan & CB 2-26 Comprehensive Zoning – Region 6

Summary of Legislation

Bills 1-26 and 2-26 adopt the Region Plan and comprehensive zoning of Region Planning Area No. 6, covering Crownsville and portions of Millersville. Both bills require the Zoning Officer and County Council Administrative Officer to keep the adopted plan and digital zoning layer on file and authorize the Office of Planning and Zoning to amend text, maps, and related material to reflect Council amendments, correct obvious errors, and improve readability.

Review of Fiscal Impact

We agree with the Administration's fiscal note that these bills have no direct fiscal impact, but that implementation of the Plan and development pursuant to zoning changes could affect future County revenues and expenditures.

This legislation was also included in the Auditor's Review of Legislation for the March 2, 2026 Council Meeting.

CB 3-26 General Development Plan – Region 8 Plan & CB 4-26 Comprehensive Zoning – Region 8

Summary of Legislation

Bills 3-26 and 4-26 adopt the Region Plan and comprehensive zoning of Region Planning Area No. 8, covering all or portions of eight communities in the southern portion of the County. Both bills require the Zoning Officer and County Council Administrative Office to keep the adopted plan and digital zoning layer on file and authorize the Office of Planning and Zoning to amend text, maps, and related material to reflect Council amendments, correct obvious errors, and improve readability.

Review of Fiscal Impact

We agree with the Administration’s fiscal note that these bills have no direct fiscal impact, but that implementation of the Plan and development pursuant to zoning changes could affect future County revenues and expenditures.

This legislation was also included in the Auditor’s Review of Legislation for the March 2, 2026 Council Meeting.

CB 11-26 – Recreation and Parks – Article 14 Code Revision

Summary of Legislation

This bill amends Article 14 of the Anne Arundel County code relating to the Department of Recreation and Parks (Department). Modifications include but are not limited to the addition of new and/or updated terminology; expanding the authority of the Director of the Department to permit or prohibit certain activities on property overseen by the Department; clarifying provisions related to the aforementioned activities; and updating requirements pertaining to pest management plans in accordance with federal law changes.

Review of Fiscal Impact

We cannot independently verify the Administration’s Fiscal Note, which states that this bill would have no fiscal impact. While the legislation may ultimately have minimal impact on County operating costs and revenues, the Administration did not provide sufficient information to verify that this legislation will have “no effect.”

This legislation was also included in the Auditor’s Review of Legislation for the March 2, 2026 Council Meeting.

CB 12-26 – Capital Budget and Program – Board of Education Security Related Upgrades and Upgrade Various Schools capital projects – Supplementary Appropriations

Summary of Legislation

This legislation modifies the FY26 Approved Capital Budget ending June 30, 2026 by appropriating \$990,727 in Other State Grants to the Security Related Upgrades (E538100) capital project and \$238,873 in miscellaneous funding to the Upgrade Various Schools (E539100) capital project. At least five affirmative votes from the Council are required to amend the Capital Budget.

Review of Fiscal Impact

We agree with the Administration's Fiscal Note. This bill recognizes additional revenue for FY26 totaling \$1,229,600. FY26 capital authorizations increase by the same amount through appropriations to the following capital projects:

- \$990,727 to the Board of Education Security Related Upgrades capital project (E538100)
- \$238,873 in miscellaneous funds to the Upgrade Various Schools capital project (E539100)

While this bill addresses immediate capital needs, that the completion of these upgrades may necessitate additional, currently unquantified, maintenance funding in future operating budget requests.

CB 13-26 – Construction and Property Maintenance Codes Supplement – Fire Prevention Code Amendments

Summary of Legislation

This legislation adopts the Anne Arundel County Fire Prevention Code with additions, insertions, omissions, and changes to Article 15, Title 3 and the Supplement. The County's Fire Prevention Code utilizes the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1, Fire Safety Code (2024 ed.) and the NFPA 101 Life Safety Code (2024 ed.).

Review of Fiscal Impact

We concur with the Administration's Fiscal Note, which states that this bill will have no direct fiscal impact on the County's operating or capital budgets. While the transition from the 2018 to the 2024 National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) code requires staff training and software updates, the Administration confirmed that these costs will be covered by existing appropriations.

Additionally, this bill removes the requirement for the Fire Marshal to conduct fire flow tests, allowing the Office of Inspections and Permits (I&P) to accept certified ("stamped") tests from third-party engineers. This shift is expected to reduce the administrative workload for County staff by transferring the primary testing burden to the applicant. The updates are not anticipated to require capital expenditures to remediate existing County infrastructure.

CB 14-26 – Purchasing – Acquisition of real property by gift

Summary of Legislation

This bill seeks County Council approval to acquire a gift of real property to the County to include 241.77 acres of land across three parcels in Pasadena, Maryland from the Looper Estate Revocable Trust. The County Executive identified conservation and recreation as the public purposes for the property. The Administration indicates the fair market value of the property at \$5.3 million, with no financial obligation required for the acquisition of the land.

Review of Fiscal Impact

We concur with the Administration's assessment that the bill allows for the acquisition of real property at no initial purchase cost. However, we identified several fiscal and technical elements that are not addressed in the Fiscal Note. Specifically, the acquisition will result in a permanent reduction of the assessable tax base, totaling a \$23,888 loss in property tax revenue for FY26,

with further uncertainty regarding potential tax refunds for the current year.

Additionally, while the Administration intends to fund immediate stabilization and security through existing appropriations in the Park Renovation capital project (P479800), we cannot independently verify the sufficiency of these funds as formal cost estimates were not provided. Future capital and operating costs remain unquantified pending the development of a formal master plan by the Department of Recreation & Parks.
