



Testimony – County Council Howard County, MD
Howard County General Plan Hearing: #2, HoCo by Design
(Chapters 7, 9, 10 and 11)
Betsy Singer, Co-chair, Jewish Community Relations Council
July 19, 2023

Good evening: My name is Betsy Singer and I'm Co-Chair of the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) of the Jewish Federation of Howard County.

We feel that it's important that HoCo by Design emphasizes "Equity" as it does. Howard County should plan for a future that includes opportunities and access for ALL people and ALL communities.

We have testified to you earlier this year about our concerns that Howard County suffers from a severe shortage of low and even moderate-income housing. We're glad to see that the plan emphasizes expanding this type of housing so people can afford to live near where they work. We also recognize the need to shelter the homeless and provide emergency help.

I'd like to comment briefly on chapters, starting with:

Implementation (Chapter 11)

The Implementation Matrix in HoCo by Design recognizes the importance of fighting to reduce carbon and methane emissions in Howard County during the next ten years. Our county government has been in the forefront of communities in the US that recognize the impact of climate change and are working to do something about it. The current goal is to get to 60% below 2005 levels by 2030 and reach net zero by 2045. We endorse the coordination with the Office of Community Sustainability and other government agencies to integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation goals into all county programs and policies.

And, of course, the County just published a comprehensive, science-based plan, **Howard County Climate Forward: Climate Action and Resiliency Final Report 2023** that provides a blueprint for the future.

Chapter 7, Quality by Design, new homes should complement existing neighborhood scale, setbacks, and building materials while ensuring energy efficient buildings and homes that are all-electric and thus cleaner and safer. New buildings could be built up as multi-story (10 stories) in Downtown Columbia and Gateway, and not outward to reduce their footprint. Ground floor access would accommodate people with disabilities and seniors who want to age in place. Infill development and redevelopment should allow for multi-family design such as duplexes and triplexes and the possibility of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU's).

Supporting Infrastructure, Chapter 9, Developing a sustainable and equitable infrastructure and the investment required to manage new infrastructure, is one of the more difficult actions to accomplish. In addition to financing new developments, additional costs of maintenance can be expected in the future due to more weather events associated with a hotter, wetter climate. Repairs to public facilities, private homes, buildings, and highways should be factored in, as well as emergency services such as additional rescue, fire and police staffing and equipment.

Managing Growth, Chapter 10

The housing shortage has created intense competition and price increases in both “for-sale” and rental housing markets. Over 13,000 households now pay unaffordable rents. Of these households, 6,800 of them pay more than 50% of gross income on rent. Senior renters have seen their rents far outpace their pensions. Senior homeowners who want to downsize find that there are very few affordable options.

The JCRC participates in the Housing Affordability Coalition, and we support the targets in the Housing Opportunities Master Plan: At least 2,000 new homes should be built each year; 25% of new units, or a minimum of 500 homes, should be affordable to households earning below 60% of median income. And this housing should be spread throughout the County (Downtown Columbia and Gateway) and not clustered only in a few neighborhoods.

Thank you.

Good evening. I'm Dana Sohr from Columbia. I'm the deputy director of Bridges to Housing Stability, so I'm a housing practitioner, but also a resident of 39 years. And from both of these perspectives, I'm dismayed that anyone can question whether Howard County needs more affordable housing than the draft General Plan proposes to authorize.

I'm going to address some of the myths about that term affordable housing, because it's so loaded. At Bridges, it's part of our daily vocabulary, because affordable housing is closely intertwined with homelessness. Bridges was founded 33 years ago to prevent and end homelessness in Howard County. But in pretty much every year since then, we've served more clients than the year before. Last year we served nearly 1,000 people in 340 households.

You might hear those numbers and wonder, what's wrong with those people at Bridges? - they aren't doing very well with their mission to end homelessness. We look at the growing number of clients every year and say, what's wrong with our housing market? Because homelessness is a housing problem. That's the title of a book we recommend. The authors show that the majority of U.S. homelessness can't be explained entirely by personal vulnerabilities such as mental illness, substance abuse, or an inability to earn decent income. Most of the time the deciding factor is the housing market – specifically the high cost of housing. It's counter-intuitive, but homelessness is actually more common in affluent areas like Howard County than it is in high-poverty areas. That's because in high-poverty areas, where housing is more affordable, vulnerable people can often still scrape together enough to pay the rent. In a high-cost housing market like ours, personal vulnerabilities – especially earning low income -- often lead to housing insecurity and homelessness.

Another myth: No one can define affordable housing. Here's the definition, once again, from the US Dept of Housing & Urban Development: It's housing that costs around 1/3 of gross income or less. It's an important definition because housing affordability can fundamentally define outcomes for an individual or family. If housing is too expensive for a family, it can destroy their ability to prosper and prepare their children for a productive life.

Another myth is that only certain kinds of people, perhaps undesirable people from elsewhere, are looking for affordable housing. The reality is that today, 1 in 4 Howard County households – that's 30,000 households -- are living on less than 75,000 dollars. They're seniors on fixed pensions, essential employees in our workforce who aren't highly paid – including many educators. They're young working adults unable to put down roots. They're people with disabilities coping with high costs and unsuitable homes. These are some of the people who need affordable housing.

Another myth: housing activists myopically believe that all we have to do is build a bunch of housing, and some of it's bound to be affordable. We urge everyone to review the county's Housing Opportunities Master Plan, which is loaded with specific recommendations for creating a blend of new housing at a range of price points that better meet our community's needs.

Some people are here tonight because they're concerned about overcrowded schools. I personally agree, we've collectively done a pretty poor job in Howard County of building enough homes for our growing workforce while ensuring that school capacity has kept pace as well. And today, as we consider both of these critical needs, the conversation is often stymied by people pushing the false dichotomy that more housing and great schools are mutually exclusive, that we can have more housing **or** great schools, but we can't have both. That's another myth.

As Jackie Eng urged us earlier this evening, we must collaborate to identify new funding sources for the housing we need and the great schools our children deserve. There are ideas on the table here and already in practice elsewhere. We expect and trust that you, our elected leaders, will facilitate this funding discussion and deliver effective solutions. With your leadership, we can have more housing and great schools.

The most dangerous myth of all is that the people who are privileged to already have stable and affordable homes in this great community have no responsibility to do anything about affordable housing..

But we believe that everyone should be dismayed that 500 schoolchildren experience homelessness each year, that young people finishing their schooling find very few affordable housing options and are forced out of Howard County, that our parents can't afford to age in place, and they can't afford to downsize here either. And we should be dismayed at the shortages of school employees, the difficulties that many private businesses have in recruiting and retaining workers, and the long waiting times at the hospital. A lack of affordable housing is implicated in all of these issues.

We also have to recognize that our community's policies are producing the housing scarcity that drives up prices and makes a home unaffordable to rent or buy for so many. These policies have the most profound impact on people who are already marginalized. The policies are inequitable and they're deepening racial segregation by limiting people's economic choices. The policies have to change.

This is everyone's problem, and we hope and believe that we can work together as a community to address our housing and school capacity needs.

Thank you, council members, for your service to our community.

Testimony for the Planning Board on HoCo By Design
Drew Roth, Elkridge
July 19, 2023

Overview

Under the PlanHoward 2030 general plan, the Route 1 Corridor and Elkridge were left behind.

These parts of the county had massive residential development that did not include building sufficient school capacity, infrastructure, and amenities that the rest of the county enjoys.

HoCo by Design perpetuates the inequities experienced by Elkridge and the Route 1 Corridor. Instead of requiring all parts of the county to be brought to the same level of county services, it prioritizes the maintenance of schools, infrastructure, and amenities that already exist, while developing at an even faster rate. My part of the county will fall ever further behind.

Document-wide issues

1. Inadequate attention to schools

In Howard County, there are 0.48 students per residential housing unit. This is an easy number to derive. This number has remained stable for the last decade.

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1nYLgM_kDUyxaL-a9Eo8BGiztuFdXJ0UPNzGvg4zT8_U/edit#gid=0

The number of students per unit reflects the demographics of the county. The development community tries to obfuscate this by talking about different student yields for different types and ages of housing. This is an obvious shell game to try to make somebody else pay for the impact of new development. Building types of units that have a low student yield does not reduce the growth in enrollment, it just redistributes where the families with kids live.

HoCo By Design should include a plan for building additional school capacity in the amount of ½ seat per new residential unit, to come online when the proposed residential units come online, plus new capacity to replace the existing portable classrooms. Use the allocation table (Table 10-1) in Chapter 10 Managing Growth as a guide to the projected growth.

New school capacity should be located where the most current and future students are most distant from their existing schools, to make transportation times more equitable for all students, and to reduce the overall cost of transporting students. This information is known.

Schools are a critical and significant land use in Howard County, and the FLUM should include the location of future school sites.

Recommended changes:

- * Remove the false and misleading analysis on student yields based on type and age of home, which is in Chapter 8 Enrollment Trends. Instead, use a simple and easily verified yield formula of the number of students divided by the number of housing units in the county. This number has been 0.48 +/- 0.1 students/per unit for the last decade.
- * Prioritize adding new school capacity in areas where the most students travel farthest to their assigned schools. Optimize school locations and attendance area assignments to minimize the variance in travel time system-wide.

2. Biased and nonsensical fiscal analysis

HoCo By Design repeatedly makes a false argument that more residential development is fiscally beneficial for the county. See Chapter 2's Fiscal impact assessment and Chapter 6, page 41.

If this argument were true, ElkrIDGE would have a high school, there would not be an abundance of portable classrooms in HCPSS, and there would not be a \$1B school maintenance backlog.

It appears this false argument is based on not providing infrastructure and services to the residents of new developments, as has been the case in ElkrIDGE for the last decade. Here is in black and white, Chapter 2 Page 24:

“Regardless of Howard County’s growth trajectory, government will face challenges in the years ahead in maintaining its existing infrastructure. It is clear from the fiscal analysis that new growth generates net positive revenues for the County, with more growth generating more in net revenues. However, more growth will also require more infrastructure that will eventually need to be replaced. The County will be best served in the future if it prioritizes maintenance of existing infrastructure in future budget decisions.”

In Chapter 6, page 41, HoCo By Design admits the county is running a Ponzi scheme:

“These one-time revenues [impact fees] make up a significant portion of the net revenues to the County each year and are necessary to sustain the County’s supporting infrastructure. Absent a steady revenue stream, additional funding would be needed to maintain current services levels, which would otherwise necessitate tax increases.”

One-time revenues that should be building new infrastructure is instead being used to fund ongoing operations. Which is why we have portable classrooms everywhere.

The forecast discussion in Chapter 2, page 11 states:

“The Forecast observed that the existing jobs-housing ratio in Howard County is much lower than in nearly every other nearby county. This has created a “pent up” demand of approximately

20,000 more households that would prefer to live in Howard County if options were available to them.”

The second statement does not follow from the first statement. If we have less jobs per resident than surrounding counties, it means our residents are commuting to jobs outside the county, and fewer residents of other counties commute to work in Howard. The proper conclusion is we need to create more jobs in Howard County, which happens to be more fiscally sound. The pent-up demand is for jobs, not housing.

This is acknowledged in Chapter 5, page 9:

“According to the SAAC FY22 report, “[b]oosting commercial-base development is one of the most promising strategies to help rebalance the expenditure needs and fiscal resources. The County should continue to build on its current strengths in developing and implementing comprehensive strategies to promote, retain, and expand its commercial base.” The report further detailed the importance of the General Plan in guiding development decisions that consider fiscal impacts on the County’s budget and maintaining existing commercially zoned land to allow for additional commercial development. This conclusion was reiterated in the FY23 SAAC report, which called for the General Plan to encourage redevelopment and commercial growth in defined employment centers.”

Recommended changes

- * The analysis of whether housing pays for itself should include externalized costs, such as state funding for new school constructing.
- * Require that impact fees from new development be spent on new schools and other new infrastructure. Forbid using impact fees for school renovations and for debt service for already built facilities.
- * Require a capital improvement plan to eliminate portable classrooms in the public schools over the next 10 years.
- * Prioritize commercial and industrial development over residential. Measure progress by whether the size of the Howard County working population aligns with the number of jobs in Howard County.

3. Abuse of the concept of Equity to treat some communities inequitably

In the Introduction and in Chapter 9, Supporting Infrastructure, there is a discussion of Equity in Capital Planning, which notes that Complete Streets projects are prioritized based on the “Vulnerable Population Index”. This discussion repeatedly refers to “equity communities” without defining the term.

For bike projects, the history of this approach has produced spectacularly inequitable results. Columbia, which already had the best bike infrastructure in the county, has received a disproportionate share of new infrastructure investment, while other parts of the county like ElkrIDGE, which has no bike infrastructure at all, has received no investment to speak of.

The cause of this inequitable outcome is based on two factors.

1. The “equitable” prioritization process does not consider what infrastructure already is in place. There is no establishment of a baseline service level, and no determination of shortfalls against the baseline.
2. A false assumption that communities with a larger disadvantaged population (Columbia) have historically received a lower level of county investment and services.

It is worth noting that there is no discussion of “equity communities” in the planning for Water and Sewer, Police, and Fire Protection. Why is that?

Perhaps it is because the current planning approach for these types of infrastructure produce an equitable result. These departments determine the level of service to be provided to everyone, determine the baseline of what service is currently provided, look at shortfalls and growth trends, and build a budget to invest appropriately. For sewer service, developers have to pay up front!

There is no reason why Complete Streets, Recreation and Parks, and bike and pedestrian infrastructure cannot be handled in the same way. An obvious conclusion is that “equity” is nothing more than a pretext to make an inequitable bias in favor of Columbia for new investment.

Recommended changes

- * Explicitly require priority for investment in underserved parts of the county, to bring all parts of the county up to the same level of county services. “Underserved” does not mean the presence of disadvantaged populations. It means places that do not have services such as nearby schools, complete streets, community centers, and facilities for recreation and arts, and so on.
- * Whereas “equity community” is not defined, change the INF-2 policy statement from “Prioritize equity in capital improvement planning and programming.” to “Prioritize underserved communities in capital improvement planning and programming.” Clearly define “underserved community” to mean a community that does not receive the services in question to the same level as most of the county.

4. Misleading and Dishonest Growth Targets

In Chapter 10, Managing Growth, under the topic “Residential Growth Targets” on page 5, the final revision sets a target of 1,580 units per year. This is misleading, since the actual target is $1580 + 150 \text{ Green Neighborhood} + 150 \text{ Affordable} = 1880$, per Table 10-1 page 8. The target should be defined to include the Green Neighborhood and Affordable

Recommended changes

- Define the total number of allocations to include Green Neighborhood and Affordable.

- Set the total number of allocations at 1400, until such a time as there is sufficient school capacity to eliminate portable classrooms, and the school maintenance backlog is within the projected revenue streams provided by ongoing income and property tax revenues and transfer fees, without relying on impact fees from new development.
- Eliminate all recommendations to weaken the APFO law by removing categories of development from APFO requirements. Eliminate consideration of “mitigation fees” that allow developers to buy their way out of APFO delays.
- Recommend that the length of APFO delays be tied to the number of portable classrooms in the school system. If the number of portable classrooms increases, the APFO delay increases, without grandfathering projects in the pipeline. If the number of portable classrooms decreases, the APFO delay decreases. Forbid increasing class sizes as a way of reducing the number of portable classrooms.
- Eliminate the notion of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) as a matter of right, as it creates uncertainty in the growth of residential development units, and complicates school enrollment projections. ADUs are a bad idea generally, as the primary builders of ADUs will be flippers, who will convert owner-occupied homes into multi-unit rental properties, which will destabilize established neighborhoods.
- Forbid school planning projections from incorporating APFO delays into student enrollment growth as is the current practice. This has the perverse effect of delaying the construction of new schools.

5. Lowering the Quality of School Facilities

The Chapter 8, Public School Facilities includes these statements:

page 3 - Strategic Advisory Group Findings - support for “innovative approaches” for new schools. This appears to be an attempt to build new schools in the east that are not up to HCPSS standards. All HCPSS schools should be of the same quality, and built to the existing Educational Specification. It is not acceptable to give some parts of the county second rate school facilities. The solution to “land scarcity in the eastern portions of the County” is to buy more land for public purposes in this region.

Page 16 - Table 8-5 shows student yield for new housing of various types in different regions. This is misleading. On average, every residential unit in Howard County generates on average 0.5 students per unit per year. That is the only relevant number.

Page 9: “When it opens in the fall of 2023, Guilford Park High School will add 1,658 high school seats in an area of the County with three high schools utilized at over 110%.” This statement is false. The three overcrowded high schools are Reservoir, Long Reach, and Howard. Guilford Park High School is not in the same area of the county (Elkridge) as the families who have endured a decade of severe overcrowding at Howard and Long Reach. Alleviating overcrowding by sending students to an even more distant high school is an unfair and inequitable burden on these families. It is outrageous that Elkridge has no high school, despite having 1/3 of the county population, and it is wrong to pretend this blatant inequity does not exist by claiming that busing

Elkridge students 6 to 8 miles down congested Route 1 to GPHS is an acceptable solution. The proposal to address growth in the Route 1 corridor by expanding Oakland Mills High School is also outrageous. Growth in the Route 1 corridor should be addressed by adding school capacity in the Route 1 corridor, not in Columbia.

Page 11 - "Ensure coordination of HoCo By Design and the HCPSS Long Range Master Plan so that school capacity projects are planned in activity center areas identified for transformation on the FLUM."

This is how to justify never building a high school in Elkridge, where more students travel farther to their school than any part of Howard County. New capacity projects should be located where there is a shortage of nearby existing capacity. Current students with no nearby schools who have endured overcrowding and long bus rides should be a priority over future students in activity centers that won't exist for years.

Page 12-13 Land Use Considerations

There is much talk in this section about reducing the required school site footprints, and it even says the only suitable secondary school site is on Marriottsville Road. It ignores the Howard County preferred site for High School 14 in Troy Park, which meets the current guidelines for site acreage. There is no need to change the facility standards for HS 14, and there is a site right now.

It is also very disturbing that the Gateway redevelopment is to be planned with their own schools, while there is no discussion of building new schools where development has already occurred without schools to go with it. Such as a high school in Elkridge.

Recommended changes:

- Require that all new public schools be built to the same Educational Specification standard as existing public schools. Limit consideration of "innovative approaches" to financing and acquisition issues. All Howard County students deserve the same high quality educational experience in a high quality facility.
- There should be an implementing action to prioritize new capacity projects for areas that have been left behind in school construction during development that has already occurred. The priority should be to bring the same level of service to all existing communities, and future developments can take their turn in line.

6. Destruction of our Historic Districts

In Chapter 7, Quality by Design, page 25, it states "According to the Development Regulations Assessment, there could be opportunities to revise the historic district zones in the County. Currently, the Zoning Regulations describe the requirements and restrictions applicable to

historic districts instead of generally addressing the allowable land uses or development standards. Frequently, in zoning regulations, historic districts are identified with an overlay zone or as a character-based district that more clearly defines the boundaries and helps demonstrate how historic preservation regulations interact with underlying zoning and subdivision regulations. Overlay zones with a clearly defined base zoning district can help provide predictability of permitted uses within a historic district, [and] encourage development patterns that are consistent with the historic character [...].” An implementing action on page 30 states “Evaluate the existing historic district zones and consider replacing them with new historic zoning district overlays or form-based districts”.

This excerpt is chock full of falsehoods.

Our existing historic districts have clearly defined boundaries. The historic districts are already overlays on underlying zoning. Each historic district has published guidelines for new construction and exterior modifications. There is no confusion about how historic preservation regulations interact with underlying zoning.

In the Character Area technical appendix, page TAB-13,, the final revision to the ‘Historic Communities’ topic modified the narrative to state that character should be prioritized rather than paramount. The reason for doing this is “Concern that language describing character as ‘paramount’ in certain character areas could prohibit diverse housing types envisioned in the Plan.”

Which is exactly why it should remain paramount in Historic Communities. Protecting the integrity of our historic districts is more important than building diverse housing types in every single part of the county. Historic districts are special places. Once the historic integrity is lost, it’s gone forever.

This content appears to have been written by development interests in an attempt to manufacture confusion so they can do things that are not permitted by the established regulations and guidelines. We should not be encouraging development in historic districts. This is wildly inappropriate. This section is nothing but an attempt to allow developers to destroy our historic districts.

Recommended changes:

- Remove the false and misleading discussion that misrepresents the current historic district boundaries and governance in Howard County.
- Remove the implementing action to evaluate the existing historic district zones.
- Revert the language in Technical Appendix B, Character Areas, so that preserving the character of Historic Communities is “paramount”, not “prioritized”.
- Strengthen the Historic Preservation Commission by requiring a Certificate of Approval for subdivision plans within historic districts.

7. Route 1 Corridor

The Route 1 Corridor should not be a replay of the failed Corridor Activity Center zoning approach. To prevent this from happening, incorporate the following recommendations:

- Any “Redevelopment Authority” should have representation from the community, should be subject to open meetings laws, and should be subject to the Public Information Act.
- Authorization to assemble parcels for redevelopment should explicitly include assembly of parcels for school sites, and should explicitly include assembly of a site for a public high school in Elkrige at the PDX/UPS freight hubs on Route 1 across from the Elkrige Library. Schools are an essential part of a community, and the Route 1 corridor lacks schools where the students live.
- Property tax incentives for Route 1 redevelopment should not include incentives for residential development. A failure of CAC zoning was that residential development is more profitable than other uses, and developers got exemptions for the mixed-use developments they were required to create, and built primarily dense residential instead. Tax incentives should be focused on encouraging mixed use.

County Council Public Hearing Testimony
HoCo By Design (General Plan)
July 19, 2023

Chairperson Rigby, Vice Chairperson Jung, and members of the Howard County Council. My name is Emily Brandon, and I am testifying as a member of the Howard County community being negatively impacted by the housing crisis in Howard County. Except for two years during graduate school, I have spent my entire life in Howard County.

My husband and I both maintain full-time employment. He, working in the pharmaceutical industry, and myself with a Master of Social Work in Maryland-based nonprofit advocacy. As of this week, I have joined the Bridges to Housing Stability team, who you will no doubt hear from in today's hearing. We both have good credit, make what should be considered a livable wage, and had hoped to start raising a family in Howard County in the next few years. I can already see that is not going to happen.

After receiving my undergraduate degree and finding full-time employment, I found my first apartment in Columbia, MD. My three-bed, two-bath apartment that I shared with two friends cost \$1,949.00 per month. An even split between the three of us was approximately \$650.00 in rent each month, though with utilities closer to \$700.00. We moved into this apartment in the summer of 2016. That floorplan is now \$2,424.00 per month.

My second apartment in Columbia, MD, was a two-bed, two-bath apartment, third floor walk-up that cost \$1,439.00 per month. An even split for the two of us was approximately \$719.50, with utilities closer to \$770.00. We moved into this apartment in the fall of 2016 due to multiple issues with the first apartment that was described as "luxury" such as water coming through the light fixtures in the ceiling that was never properly checked and maintenance taking over one month to replace our broken washer and dryer. While the pricing for this floorplan is not available on their website, a one-bed, one-bath apartment at this location is now approximately \$2,000.00 per month.

After this, I moved to northern Anne Arundel County for two years to be closer to the University of Maryland, Baltimore School of Social Work, where I was completing my Master of Social Work degree. We lived there through the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic before moving in with my now in-laws in Laurel, MD (Howard County) while I worked to find better employment. Once I did, we moved into an apartment in Ellicott City, MD. When we first rented our current two-bed, two-bath apartment in winter 2021, our rent was \$1,844.00. An even split between my now husband and myself was \$922.99 per month. When we renewed our lease in 2022, we signed a 15-month lease to reduce the rental increases from over \$300.00 per month to \$179.00 per month, totaling \$2,023.00.

This brings us to today. My husband and I were about six to seven months from beginning the home-buying process. Our hope was to sign a 12-month lease, giving us plenty of time to find our first home. When we received our rent renewal notice, we found that our rent was going to increase from \$2,023.00 per month to \$2,471.00 per month, a \$448.00 increase each month. When we asked about a 15-month lease, which had nearly cut the rental increase in half when we

last renewed, we were told it would only reduce the increase by \$43.00. Had we renewed for the year, we would each be paying \$1,235.50 per month. Our floorplan is now being advertised with a starting rent around \$2,366.00 per month.

Rental increases are expected over time, but when rental costs increase 20% in a single year and the costs of basic necessities rise as well, young professionals and families are faced with impossible choices. We are fortunate enough to have family nearby who will let us live with them until we purchase a home, and we will put most of our belongings into storage. As a two-income household, I can't begin to imagine the stress of families, disabled individuals, and older adults who have a much more challenging path ahead than myself.

A 2020 study by the U.S. Government Accountability Office estimated that "a \$100 increase in median rent was associated with a 9% increase in the estimated homelessness rate."¹ My current landlord insists that the 20% increase is happening across apartment complexes in Howard County. If both parties hold true, homelessness in Howard County is only going to get worse unless we act.

The Howard County Housing Affordability Coalition has proposed recommendations that can ease the housing crisis in our community and help make Howard County a place where everyone can afford to live and thrive. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony, and I ask that you implement the recommendations in the next General Plan.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Brandon

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¹U.S. Government Accountability Office, <https://www.gao.gov/blog/how-covid-19-could-aggravate-homelessness-crisis>



County Council Public Hearing Testimony: General Plan Update

July 19, 2023

Council Chairwoman Rigby, Vice Chairwoman Jung and Council members Jones, Walsh and Youngman. My name is Jackie Eng; I live in Cooksville and I serve as coordinator of the Howard County Housing Affordability Coalition. My testimony this evening is on behalf of the Coalition's 16-member steering committee and 500-plus individual and organizational members and allies.

The Coalition will be submitting written testimony in support of HoCo By Design's recommendations regarding: opportunities afforded by proposed Activity Centers for diverse housing styles to respond to the need for low and moderate (missing middle) housing stock; accessory dwelling units as a response to the need for affordable and accessible housing for people with disabilities and seniors; and for integration into HoCo By Design of commercial, housing, school capacity and transportation targets as the foundational goals of the to-be-developed Gateway Regional Activity Center Master Plan.

Tonight, however, our testimony addresses the vital and intrinsic relationship between the County's long-term economic viability and housing. The HoCo By Design Report's market research and analysis, advisory committee and community input and the Report's recommendations and implementation strategies consistently reinforce this relationship. We also want to address one of the primary constraints on new affordable housing—school capacity.

Economic Imperative

First, significant numbers of additional homes—market and affordable—are essential to expanding Howard County's commercial tax base. The following excerpts from HoCo By Design's Economic Prosperity Chapter and Market Research and Demand Forecast underscore the importance of a healthy employment and housing balance to the County's long-term economic vitality.

- Careful and proactive planning is critical to unlocking future market potential in Howard County, the economic success of which has historically been tied to its residential appeal and convenient location. This relationship suggests that, in order to sustain the economic growth that Howard County has enjoyed in the past, the county must continue to invest in housing, infrastructure, place-making, and other items that make it a desirable place to locate.
- In the future, economic and demographic trends are likely to necessitate continued investment in the factors that make Howard County an attractive place to be, ranging from its housing inventory to its infrastructure.
- Howard County's housing to jobs ratio is currently much lower than nearly every other nearby suburban county. If housing development does not keep up with job growth, affordability issues are likely to worsen, and people and jobs may choose to move elsewhere.

Howard County Housing Affordability Coalition

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- If unaddressed, rising affordability issues may deter young households from moving to Howard County, which could limit its ability to attract talent going forward.

Traditionally housing has been regarded as a private sector function to be controlled by local government. It is clear from the HoCo By Design report, however, that housing, like roads, fire protection, parks and schools, is a public need—a public good—that requires planning, not just restrictions. For our economic health, we must be planning for more housing and for housing that is affordable to a wider range of people. In order to achieve more housing, the County needs to add density in a far greater number of areas and must increase the planned number of permits each year. The Coalition has previously testified that that number of permits should be 2,000 of which 25 percent should be affordable and of those 10 percent should be accessible. To create housing that is more generally affordable, the County must devote funding to that effort.

Housing and Schools

To the Coalition’s second point this evening...given the current APFO standards for school capacity, for any substantive increase in housing development to occur more school seats must be created. Schools, like housing, are a public good, necessary for the County’s economic vibrancy. The Coalition therefore strongly supports Policy recommendations 1 and 3 in the Public School Facilities chapter that would facilitate collaborative and innovative approaches to locating and building facilities to meet the needs of the County’s student population.

(EP Policy 1) The County, Howard County Public School System (HCPSS), and private sector should work collaboratively to identify school sites that meet the needs of the student population and anticipate future growth patterns.

(EP Policy 3): The County and Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) should collaborate on future school siting and develop tools that provide the flexibility needed to allow for alternative school designs, flexible site requirements, and adaptive reuse of underutilized properties.

We all know that new school capacity is expensive and that our County is already struggling to pay for a large backlog of deferred school maintenance. In addition, the County has a minimal capacity for new debt and therefore it will become an even bigger challenge to easily borrow funds necessary for new educational facilities.

Education Policy Statement #2 reads: *“The County and Howard County Public School System should partner to leverage additional public and private resources to meet school facility needs and timing.”*

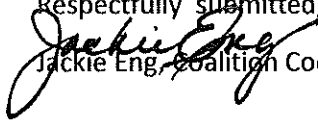
The Coalition believes that this statement is too limited in scope to address current school capacity concerns that are placing an inordinate restraint on addressing the County’s daunting housing inadequacies. We therefore urge the Council to strengthen the policy statement to direct a more inclusive and collaborative initiative to identify new funding sources to meet the demand for school facilities and capital improvements. At the same time, the County must devote similar resources to meet the demand for affordable housing. We offer the following as a place to begin discussions of revising Education Policy #2:

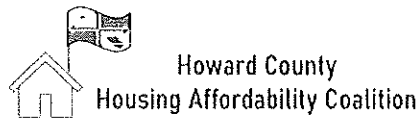
The County, Howard County Public School System, housing and education advocates, developers and other interested and impacted parties should pursue all possible avenues for additional public and private resources (including the suggestions within the Housing Opportunities Master Plan) to meet school facility needs and timing.

As a reminder, the Housing Opportunities Master Plan recommends that the Transfer Tax be increased with the proceeds be equally divided between schools and housing. The Coalition has begun considering what other funding mechanisms might merit full discussion between not only the County and HCPSS but also among the broader community of education organizations and advocates, for profit and nonprofit developers, realtors, affordable housing advocates and community members. So we have some ideas that we'd like to talk about and look forward to engaging with the housing and education communities to find funding solutions around which we can collectively coalesce. The County's long-term economic viability depends upon addressing our significant and critical housing needs, which in today's environment requires finding new funding for both housing and schools.

Thank you for this opportunity to present our perspectives.

Respectfully submitted,


Jackie Eng, Coalition Coordinator





My name is Joseph Karolchik, and I have been a resident of Howard County, Maryland, since 1989. In 2010, I founded Nteligen, which is a Howard County-based research and development business focused on highly secure cybersecurity operations that support critical defense communications. I chose to locate my business in the county because I believe strongly in investing in the community where I live. My purpose in addressing the council today is to offer my support and viewpoint for investment in and development of the Gateway district.

Nteligen currently leases around 13,000 square feet of space in Columbia Gateway Park, where the company's office has been for 10 years. During the pandemic, Nteligen maintained its entire workforce of 32 employees through remote work-from-home while continuing to pay our full rent on unoccupied office space. We now have a desire and a need to bring employees back into the office in support of evolving work requirements that require us to build classified workspace that represents a significant capital investment on the company's part. However, we have gotten feedback from the workforce that they are looking for a work environment that offers more than just office space.

Working from home emphasizes that there is a balance to living, working, and playing that can be achieved in your personal space. People are looking at the office and asking how that same work/life balance continues in the future. Some of this can be achieved through corporate culture, and some through creating a dynamic office environment. However, the Gateway community surrounding the office doesn't provide a destination that inspires balance. Rather, it encourages purposeful travel strictly for the work side of the equation with no other time spent at the destination.

Sharing some feedback, employees have expressed that the number one issue with Gateway Park is the traffic pattern, especially exiting the park to travel eastbound on Route 175, where merging across several lanes of traffic can be extremely hazardous. There are limited amenities in Gateway Park, which means that access to things like restaurants, groceries, exercise facilities, parks, bars, etc., requires driving



to another location. Gateway Park has sidewalks and is walkable for exercise but doesn't lend itself to walking to destinations. Additionally, it is fairly deserted after 5 pm, and several employees have expressed feeling unsafe during months when they leave after dark. We've heard from entry-level employees, whose salaries are \$75,000-\$80,000 per year, that there is a lack of affordable housing close to the office. Additionally, access to public transportation is limited. These factors encourage our employees to live at a distance from the office and discourage them from facing a daily commute in a private vehicle from their personal live, work, and play space to the office. Employees responded positively about the idea of Gateway becoming a mixed-use area with more convenient amenities.

I'm not altruistic in offering my input for developing the Gateway District. My vision isn't for this part of Howard County to be a great redevelopment model. Rather, I'm a business owner who wants to make the office great again by filling Nteligen's office space with employees who love everything about where they work.

General Plan Testimony – July 19th, 2023

From Lisa Krausz

Greetings Members of the Board – Thank you for this opportunity to provide feedback on the Howard County draft General Plan. I served as PTSA President for our kids' high school these last two years, however, today I speak as just a community member.

Development is important for the county, yet it's important to ensure that county capacity meets the needs of its residents. The draft General Plan aim is to strike that balance. My focus today is on the ongoing impacts of development on the schools. There are five key points I would like to make:

1. First and foremost, target school utilization capacity at 100%.
2. Though the county allows school capacity to extend above 100% - at 105% for elementary, 110% for middle schools and 115% for high schools - this flexibility is not ideal. The school system can increase capacity over time and shift school populations so that schools are not overutilized or underutilized. As development projects emerge, those projects can be put on hold using the School Capacity Test, if there is not enough capacity in a particular school. This annual "permit hold" theoretically gives the school system time to beef up capacity. Developers are allowed to annually reapply for the permit for up to 5 years. The sticking point comes, however, when a project reaches a five year mark – and I quote the General Plan: **This means that even if the schools still do not have adequate capacity after five tests, the development project may proceed nonetheless** (Chapter 10, MG 11). This arrangement is clearly a problem. It's essential

that school capacity is ensured BEFORE a development can proceed. It's imperative that the County Board safeguarded school quality in this way.

3. Do keep the Housing Allocation Chart in use – in either the General Plan or the APFO. It is very useful to help monitor progress and to inform the public.
4. As indicated in the draft General Plan, many stakeholders in the Strategic Advisory Group for School Capacity and Growth (SAG) were concerned about delayed maintenance costs for our county public schools, which compete with the demands for new construction to meet the county needs. The draft General Plan recommends some strategies to address these financial needs, which are sound. However, I quote from the draft General Plan: **Some SAG members favored policies that would require developers to bear a greater share of the fiscal burden when new housing adds students to the system** (Chapter 8, PS-6). I support this position as well. Developers need to pay to cover the full extent of the costs from the impacts that the development will have on the community, most importantly on schools and needed roads enhancements. We do not want our incredible HCPSS to decline in quality over the next 20 years because school improvements do not keep up with capacity, especially given that we already have many deferred maintenance needs, which do currently undermine school quality.
5. Lastly, I urge the County Board to delineate in proposed Policy MG-1, in Chapter 11 (which outlines the goals of the upcoming APFO Evaluation Committee) to not support the following implementation procedure: **Examine alternatives to APFO waiting periods whereby a development proposal offsets the potential impact to zoned schools through an additional voluntary mitigation payment** (Chapter 11, IMP 59). Any

mitigation payment rule must not be voluntary. Instead, it must be mandatory, and it must cover the full market value of any impacts that the development will have. This is a key way that the school system will be able to continue with new construction while also meeting its deferred maintenance needs.

Thank you for considering my recommendations. I appreciate the work of the County Board and all you do to further good governance in our community.

Howard County Council
Ellicott City, MD

July 17, 2023

From: Dr. Lorinzo Foxworth

REF: Howard County Commission for Veterans and Military Family

Good evening distinguished Howard County Council and thanks for allowing me the opportunity to apprise you of my interest and commitment to become a member of the Commission for Veterans and Families.

^ military

I'm Lorinzo Foxworth, a retired 20 year Army Veteran who have led soldiers and families as I served in positions of training for combat, leading Human Resources, Training development teams and performed Army recruiting duties in Howard County from for over 13 years as a First Sergeant. I've been a Howard County resident since 2012 and have volunteered to serve veterans while living here, Colorado, and in Georgia.

The Commission was established by County Legislation in 2011 to increase capacity for veterans and military families in areas of education, referral and employment services, advocate for outreach and needs that fits the Commissions mission to assist and help.

I feel I can be an asset to the Commission for Veterans and Military Families by helping to increase outreach, enhancing objectives to serve and by being a resource to the Commission's goals of helping veterans and families feel more welcomed by recognizing additional services that may increase capacity.

My dad and my father-in-law served in the Army and Navy respectively during WWII and I gained the passion of serving veterans based on what they went through and what I learned myself. I also have a son that served in the Army National Guard during college.

I will use my experience of being an Army veteran, my experience as Vice-President of workforce programing at Northern Virginia Community College, my experience as a JROTC high school instructor, my time served on the executive board of MCVET in Baltimore to be a key asset to the Commission. Currently, I am a member of the Ellicott City American Legion, and I was elected to the Howard County Democratic Central Committee and I will ensure to keep veterans in the conversation for resources.

As VP at Northern Virginia CC, we provided workforce certification to veterans and families and helped over 200 gain certification and employment in a two-year period. As a member of MCVETs Executive Board, I helped the agency attain approval for a \$3 million dollar grant in Baltimore just this March 2023. I hope to be able to help this Commission to be even more effective in serving and gaining resources as well. I know I will assist in helping to gain resources for the Veteran's Monument approved for the lake front in Columbia.

I look forward to your consideration and approval to become a member of the commission and I am ready to respond to any questions if needed.

Thank you, Dr. Lorinzo Foxworth

Maia Boswell

June 19th, 2023

July

Good evening honorable members of the Council! Thank you for taking the time to hear our voices today. I'm Maia Boswell, a rising senior at Glenelg High School.

My favorite part of the HOCO by Design plan is the plan's clear vision for accounting for the future, today. This plan stands to provide for and accommodate the needs for future generations of Howard County citizens, rather than focus on short-term, present day goals. As a youth, I have seen many legislations passed without any consideration to how it will impact my generation and our future. Failures in our world today could have been solved with consideration yesterday, but it seems that no one thought to wonder how it could impact the future. HOCO by Design however accounts for our future by setting up sustainable, long-term, structured goals and clear metrics on how to track progress towards those goals, and accounts for all generations; or in better words, intergenerational equity. This plan includes intergenerational equity. The idea that each generation is valuable, should be accounted for and planned for, and is kept in mind during legislation is present throughout this plan. I would love to walk through a few key pieces that demonstrate this ideal.

In Quality by Design, we see Howard County setting up towns and homes that will suit future interests, not only through preserving and instilling character, but through properly projecting land use and moving towards future homes and away from past ones. In Public School Facilities, we see the three legs of future school needs being not only named, but planned for implementation. Howard County is thinking ahead to what future school children will need, where they will go, and what they can best do to help them prosper in our community.

Supporting Infrastructure is a particularly important chapter because it is quite literally the foundations of daily life. We can see that Howard County is planning for future water, power, waste, space, and emergency services needs. Howard County is anticipating what future generations will require in their daily lives in order to live full, healthy lives. We see that in Managing Growth, this chapter is solely focused on how we can prepare for our future today and anticipate its needs. This chapter tells us what we can expect so that we aren't blindsided in 10, 20 years, like we are in the present day. Lastly, in Implementation, we see clear reporting metrics and standards. Progress is not going to be swept under the rug, ignored, or allowed to "slack off"; rather, Howard County will be held accountable for its failures. Timelines are set for when and how Howard County citizens can expect to see these changes.

With this plan, Howard County is a leader in the realm of preparing for its youth; in writing, Howard County is actively saying that it acknowledges what future generations will need, and plans how to give it to them; something many towns, counties, states, and beyond have never done before. This plan is a voice for Howard County's youth; its infants, toddlers, children, preteens, and teenagers. This plan allows them to all prosper in a safe, healthy, thriving Howard County, and all because of the foresight it includes. This plan shouts that all generations deserve to be accounted for. Please approve this plan; if not for yourself, then your children. Thank you.

HoCo By Design 2023 Update
County Council Public Hearing
July 19, 2023

Good Evening, Chairperson Rigby, Vice Chair Jung, and Council Members

My name is Mavis Ellis. I live at 11722 Lone Tree Court, Columbia, Maryland 21044. Tonight I speak as an individual, though I have served as Past Chair of the Howard County School Board, on the HoCo By Design Planning Committee, and on the Housing Opportunities Master Plan Committee. I'm also a member of many other organizations including Leadership Howard County and the African American Community Roundtable.

With this master plan Howard County has a responsibility to ALL of its residents, the homeless, the working poor, those who maybe Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed (ALICE), those in the middle like educators, police officers, nurses, and firefighters, those needing assisted living supports, our seniors and those who have moved to Howard County because they could afford Maryland's best. So tonight I will speak as an individual on Public School Facilities and the need for affordable housing.

First, I must congratulate the HoCo By Design consultants for devoting a chapter to our schools in the general plan. It wasn't there at first. But our community clearly indicated that having access to a high performing school system was a priority for many families who move to Howard County. The issue of school equity is a major planning issue when faced with school locations, capacity issues and possible redistricting. Some will say improve don't move. But, to improve in an equitable way for a county as diverse as ours requires collaboration between the County, HCPSS, and the BOE to meet new state mandates while also creating relationships between the public and private sector for funding, flexible programming and facility innovations to meet student career goals, vocational education and technical training.

Recently, a number of Leadership Howard County candidates have indicated that affordable housing was a top concern here. Most were speaking of the missing middle. For our neediest families, the lack adequate, affordable housing can be the basis of adverse childhood experiences leading to trauma and stress that our children bring into school. Yes, funding for new schools is an issue and I support policies that will hold developers accountable for a greater fiscal share. We need to find a way to support ALL of our residents.

HoCoby Design , Chapters 7 thru 11

GOOD EVENING COUNCIL MEMBERS

I AM PAUL VERCHINSKI, MEMBER OF THE HOCOPYDESIGN PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE THAT MET FROM OCTOBER 2020 THRU DECEMBER 2022. THIS WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A ONE YEAR COMMITMENT AND TURNED INTO 2 YEARS DUE TO COVID ISSUES.

I WOULD LIKE TO FOCUS ON CHAPTER 8, SCHOOLS. AS SOMEONE HAS SAID "HOWARD COUNTY IS EXCEPTIONAL, FIRST AND FOREMOST DUE TO ITS OUTSTANDING SCHOOL SYSTEM." I ALWAYS CONSIDER POLICY PRIORITIES TO BE SHOWN BY WHERE GOVERNMENTS SPEND THEIR TAX DOLLARS. IN HOWARD COUNTY WE SPEND UP TO 70% OF OUR ANNUAL BUDGET FOR EDUCATION AND ANOTHER 48% ON EDUCATION DEBT SERVICE. SO FAMILIES COME TO HOWARD COUNTY TO GET THEIR CHILDREN EDUCATED.

FAMILIES THEN BUY PROPERTY OR RENT. I WAS VERY CONCERNED THAT INITIALLY HOCOPY DESIGN WAS SLATED NOT TO INCLUDE SCHOOLS. SUBSEQUENTLY, SCHOOLS WERE ADDED. I AM HIGHLY SKEPTICAL OF THE VARIOUS POLICY STATEMENTS IN CHAPTER 8 THAT FOCUE EXCLUSIVELY ON WHERE TO SITE NEW SCHOOLS WITH NO POLICY DISCUSSION ON EXISTING SCHOOLS AND THE NEEDED EXPANSIONS FOR REPLACEMENT OF THE 250 PLUS CLASSROOM TRAILERS. NOR DISCUSSION OF NEEDED ON GOING MAINTENANCE. FOR THE EXISTING SCHOOLS. TEACHERS AND STUDENTS ARE SUBJECTED TO SUBPAR CLASSROOMS AND NEEDED VENTILATION UPGRADES. TABLE 8-4 PROVIDES EXISTING SCHOOL ENROLLMENT THROUGH 2021 BUT NO ACCOMPANYING GRAPH SHOWS PROJECTED SCHOOL ENROLLMENT OVER THE PERIOD ADDRESSED BY HOCOPY DESIGN. THE NEXT 20 YEARS. TABLE 8-4 IMPLIES THAT SSCHOOL ENROLLMENT HAS LEVELED OFF AND THE DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHRS UNDER FUTURE TRENDS LOW BIRTH RATES. WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

IT MATTERS BECAUSE ONLY 5 % OF COUNTY LAND IS AVAILABLE FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION. THE VAST MAJORITY OF NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IS PROPOSED TO BE REDEVELOPMENT OF EXISTING FOCUS AREAS. EXISTING SCHOOLS NEED TO BE ADDRESSED SINCE THEY WILL BE REQUIRED TO EXPAND UNDER THE REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSED BY HOCOPYDESIGN

FOCUS AREA REDEVELOPMENT NEEDS TO BE TIED TO EXISTING SCHOOL REDEVELPMENT A POLICY IS NEEDED TO ADDRESS THIS SHORTCOMING.

I PROPOSE THE FOLLWING POLICY, PS-6

THE COUNTY AND THE HOWARD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM SHOULD WORK TOGETHER TO MITIGATE EXISTING OVERCROWDING BY REPLACING

OLDER SCHOOLS WITH NEW STUDENT CAPACITY WHERE REDEVELOPMENT AND/OR NEW CONSTRUCTION OCCURS WITHIN THEIR SCHOOL BOUNDARIES.

IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS;

1. REVISE EXISTING SCHOOL FOOTPRINTS TO MORE EFFICIENTLY ADD CAPACITY AND ELIMINATE CLASSROOM TRAILERS.
2. OVERCAPACITY SCHOOLS SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE SUBJECTED TO CURRENT APFO REQUIREMENTS WHEN REDEVELOPMENT AND/OR REDEVELOPMENT IS PROPOSED.

Paul Verchinski
5475 Sleeping Dog Lane
Columbia, MD 21045

:

Support Affordable Housing in Howard County

I have been a homeowner in Howard County since 2001, and am generally proud to live here. Our County has many desirable attributes and characteristics. Housing, however, is an area that concerns me. As economic stratification continues to grow throughout our country and here in our community, I find it important for our County to take concrete and meaningful action to ensure that people who work in Howard County can reasonably afford to live here, too.

This is not only important to the composition, equity, and inclusion of our community, but also its economic vitality. If many of the people who enable foundational aspects of what makes Howard County attractive, such as teachers, nurses, construction workers, first responders, restaurant and hospitality staff, can't afford to live here it will negatively impact our County's quality of life and prosperity, especially over time. I want our children and other young adults and families to be able to afford to live here. Who is going to "move up" with their growing families - and how can others downsize - if many residents can't afford to buy a home here? Let's not allow our community to become out of reach for many, further stratifying our economy in an unfair and unhealthy manner. Let's also choose to avoid becoming predominantly a County of renters. Throughout our Nation's history home ownership has created financial stability for many, and encouraged a sense of belonging and investment that strengthens a community. I believe it serves us all when the overall community benefits from economic growth, rather than only some.

A sense of community, diversity, inclusion and fairness were key aspects of what drew my wife and I to Howard County twenty-plus years ago when starting our family. I encourage the Council to take meaningful steps to ensure that our County continues to be a desirable, equitable place where many people live and flourish.

Thank you for listening,
Ray LeVesque
levesque.ray2@gmail.com



HCCA

Howard County Citizens Association

Since 1961...

The Voice Of The People of Howard County

To: County Council Members

Date: 19 July 2023

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Stu Kohn from Laurel and testifying as the President of the Howard County Citizens Association, HCCA.

We are very concerned with the potential intended future of our County when one looks at HoCo by Design. Why is this plan any better than the previous three General Plans? How much have we spent on this plan? What are the benefits to all residents in our County? The theme seems to be more uncontrollable growth whereby our infrastructure is not ready for prime time. Can you tell us otherwise?

The General Plan can be summed up by the movie "A Few Good Men" when Jack Nickolson said to Tom Cruise, "You can't handle the truth." The truth is our Infrastructure which incorporates Quality of Life Issues such as Roads, Schools, Police, Fire, Emergency Medical Services, the Hospital, Gas, Electricity, and Stormwater, etc. are in dire straits as long as we are not prepared for the future which should contribute to Managing our Growth. The first sentence of Chapter 9 is very telling only if completely executed. It states, "Infrastructure in Howard County supports the daily needs of the community and delivery of essential services." Certainly, if the Council believes this sentence, then this Chapter needs to be amended before considering approval. We will provide you with several Amendments for your consideration. The first is a must to ensure utmost accountability for you to adopt. All Implementation Action statements for each Chapter of HoCo by Design shall be evaluated and include a written report card by those responsible for action requiring a review with the County Council and Public every two years. This is to ensure all Implementation Action contents are indeed meaningful and not just rhetoric to ensure the proposed goals are actually being met. Without the adoption of this Amendment the document becomes a "so what" as has basically been the case in the past. We don't want to continue business as usual. We need checks and balances. Please advocate for accountability by adopting this suggested amendment.

When we see signs on our roads which read, Stay Alert - traffic congestion next 3 to 4 miles, when we have nearly 250 trailers at our schools, when our hospital can't handle the volume of patient traffic these are major concerns. I know about the Hospital because of my recent experience in the Emergency Department. I was in the Emergency Room for 2 1/2 days because there were no in-patient beds available. I was placed in something called a "Rapid Transit" area. This consisted of basically being in

an area the size of a closet with a curtain in the front facing the public restrooms. I sent a letter to the Hospital, and they agreed the situation is not what they want but have no other choice. With 69,000 Emergency Room visits and 20,000 admitted during FY2022 it's not surprising we find ourselves in a very drastic situation. We need to stop the madness!

The General Plan is supposed to be used as a guidance for the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO). Unfortunately, APFO should be changed to ALPO standing for "A Lousy Public Ordinance." I was a member of the last APFO Task Force. It was extremely difficult to get motions passed because of a declared super majority vote. We recommend you declare a mandate that the Task Force be conducted by majority votes.

For years, HCCA has stated the Hospital is an important ingredient required to be a part of APFO. It is briefly referenced on page 32 of Chapter 9 of HoCo by Design where there is a blurb titled, "Health Services." In this section the Hospital is mentioned as an "important resource," but that's the end of the story. Why? We constantly hear the Hospital is not included because it is a private institution. Yet the County has funded the Hospital millions of dollars over the last several years including this year. HCCA was very instrumental in getting funding approved in December 2017 when we testified to the Council. We have no regrets and are proud of the accomplishment. Thus, the premise the Hospital is private is not entirely true as us taxpayers are subsidizing the Hospital.

We have some other suggested amendments for the General Plan or declarations in major critical areas for your consideration.

Ensure no school will ever be permitted to have additional portables or trailers to mitigate overcrowding.

Any new development shall have major roads either already constructed or the necessary funding approved to construct any major roads prior to the Approval of any given development. An example was Maple Lawn, the Relocation of Route 216 when funding had to be approved by the State until the first shovel was put in the ground. The project was delayed for approximately a year. Secondly, any proposed development whereby any road within two miles has a Level of Service of a "D" or worse will be delayed until remedied.

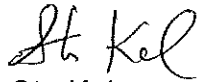
Minor Collector Roads shall be reviewed in any new development located in the Planned Service Area (PSA). Currently Section 4.2 of the Design Manual exempts the PSA areas, but is included in the non-PSA. An example is the now being constructed Wellington Farms near Murray Hill and Gorman roads. No evaluation was required to be evaluated because it is in the PSA. Ridiculous!

Ensure the Hospital is more than adequate for any future growth by periodically conducting a meeting with the Hospital Administration and the public.

Any proposed increase of housing allocation units shall not be increased until our infrastructure is determined it can manage such growth.

Hopefully you will not Approve HoCo by Design until we can all be assured the County is more than ready for the future. You need to take the necessary action to make this strategic plan a meaningful document which we can all be proud of. The future is in your hands especially if you care about the quality of life for all your constituents.

Thanks for listening but will you take any action regarding our concerns?



Stu Kohn
HCCA President

Good evening,

My name is Terri Marcus. I am a 10 year resident of Howard County who moved here for the schools. In that time, I have spent hundreds of hours volunteering for the school system, primarily through my positions on numerous PTA and PTAC boards.

I know everyone wants to give HoCo a pat on the back for finally including schools in the County's primary planning document, even though that should have been a no-brainer decades ago. BUT, after reading Chapter 8, I'd really rather this Council not get involved in our school planning policy.

Policy PS-1 sounds good. "The County, HCPSS, and private sector should work collaboratively to identify school sites that meet the needs of the student population and anticipate future growth patterns." The two implementing actions listed below the policy; however are just knives to slash away the progress citizens have made in recent years to strengthen APFO. The first states that "Alternatives to APFO waiting periods should be examined where a development offsets potential impact thru an additional voluntary mitigation payment". **HARD NO TO THIS.** Unless you are going to strengthen APFO, don't touch it. Everyone who values our school system knows that APFO is the way to prevent overcrowding and the dilution of the quality of our schools. Since when does a county that prides itself on being the best at everything settle for "adequate" anyway? If our schools have been exceptional, it is only because school system employees, parents, and the students themselves have been exceptional. Schools have been successful not because of our government leaders, but despite of our government leaders not properly planning for the impacts of population growth on our schools. Do NOT implement this action.

Implementing Action No. 2 wants to "[e]nsure coordination of HoCo By Design and the HCPSS capital planning so that school capacity projects are planned in activity center areas . . ."

AGAIN – THIS IS A HARD NO. Schools should be built where the students live now and only afterwards where developers plan to put them in the future. The needs of current residents should not be ignored.

The Land Use Considerations section states that "[p]roperly sited schools provide many benefits to local communities, such as reduced travel times and transportation costs, enhanced environmental quality, infrastructure efficiencies, and improved social equity." Many residents on the East side of the county do not enjoy these benefits. Elkridge and Hanover high schoolers should not have to commute to Jessup and Jessup middle schoolers should not have to commute to Hanover to go to school. The needs of the East side of the County should not be continually ignored just because we aren't bright, shiny, and new.

Thank you.