

Amendment 55 to Council Bill No. 28 -2023

**BY: The Chairperson at the Request
of the County Executive**

**Legislative Day 11
Date: October 2, 2023**

Amendment No. 55

(This Amendment:

- 1. Corrects numbers included in the overview of the Howard County Public School System*
- 2. Clarifies statements about the number of schools under 110% capacity*
- 3. Inserts 2022 enrollment data*
- 4. Inserts Fiscal Year 2024 budget information.)*

1 In the *HoCo By Design* General Plan, attached to this Act as Exhibit A, amend the following
2 pages as indicated in this Amendment:

- 3 • Chapter 8, Public Schools Facilities page 7, 9, 15 and 21

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5 Correct all page numbers, numbering, and formatting within this Act to accommodate this
6 amendment.

OVERVIEW OF HOWARD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM PLANNING

Introduction

School-age children in Howard County attend public schools in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). HCPSS is governed by an independently-elected Board of Education (BOE), which consists of eight members and works collaboratively with the County Executive and County Council to develop and adopt HCPSS' operating and capital budgets. Decisions concerning school capacity and utilization, class size, attendance areas, new school construction, and facility maintenance and design are the purview of HCPSS and the BOE.

As of September 2023, there were 78 schools in Howard County, including 42 elementary schools, 20 middle schools, 13 high schools, and three education centers. There were 57,676 students (including pre-k students) enrolled in HCPSS schools for the 2022-2023 school year. The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in a decrease in student enrollment in recent years, but student population growth is expected to rise annually and is stressing many Howard County schools.

Capital Budget and Long-Range Planning

Tied to the County's capital budget cycle, school planning in Howard County is an annual process that begins with the HCPSS Feasibility Study. This document provides a comprehensive review of school boundary options focused on capacity utilization targets, presents student enrollment projections and trends, and state and local capacities for each school, and develops capital improvement program strategies. This study is prepared by HCPSS' Office of School Planning and presented to the BOE each June. The Feasibility Study informs the HCPSS capital budget for the following fiscal year by providing detailed information on how many students are projected to attend each school in the system and recent attendance area changes. The student enrollment projection horizon is over a 10-to-12-year period. The Feasibility Study is also used as the basis for the following year's Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) school capacity chart that is presented to the BOE and adopted by the County Council each July.



ADEQUATE PUBLIC FACILITIES ORDINANCE (APFO)

Howard County has had an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) in place for decades. APFO was most recently amended in 2018 to impose stricter controls for pacing growth from new development in response to school utilization concerns. The adjusted APFO standards postpone new development in a particular school region if the local elementary schools surpass 105% utilization, the middle schools surpass 110% utilization, or the high schools surpass 115% utilization. New residential development is generally "on hold" in many areas of the County due to the APFO schools test, a point discussed further in the Managing Growth chapter. Development projects are retested each year after the County Council adopts a new school capacity chart, as provided by the BOE, and may be "on hold" or delayed for a maximum of four years. This delay provides HCPSS time to plan for and increase capacity through new additions, new schools facilities, and/or redistricting.



School Capacity Utilization

HCPSS measures school capacity utilization by weighing student populations against a specific school's available space. The goal is to maintain a utilization rate between 90% and 100%. As per BOE policy, redistricting is considered if capacity utilizations are less than 90% or more than 110%. Capacity determinations for each school are revised periodically to reflect the realities of HCPSS' changing use of buildings, priorities, and educational norms. The annual APFO school capacity chart adopted by the County Council is based on the capacity utilization calculations.

In 2019, the BOE took proactive steps to address HCPSS' capacity issues by initiating a systemwide school boundary review, which revised the County's school attendance areas. The goals of the attendance area revisions were to balance school capacity utilization, provide relief to schools most impacted by overcrowding, and address inequities in distribution of students participating in the Free and Reduced Meal Program. ~~More recently, in~~ In November 2022 the BOE adopted new school boundaries to accommodate the County's newly built Guilford Park High School. ~~As a result of the added capacity of the new high school and the recent boundary line adjustments,~~ According to the 2023 Feasibility Study, 12 of the 13 all high schools are projected to be under 110% capacity ~~through 2030, with most of the 13 high schools projected to be around or below 100% capacity for the next 10 years.~~

For school year 2022-23, HCPSS elementary schools were utilized at close to 97% of capacity, with underutilized schools in the West balancing some of the high utilization rates at schools in the Central and Eastern areas. Middle schools were utilized at 98% and high school capacity utilization rates were over 105% countywide. This rate will be reduced with the opening of Guilford Park High School in 2023. The highest utilization for both middle and high school levels were in the Eastern and Northern schools. Table 8-1 shows these capacity utilization rates at each grade level. The capacities are from the June 2022 Feasibility Study. ~~As discussed on page 17 of the Feasibility Study, the target capacity utilization range for schools is between 90 and 110%.~~ Rates for each school are included in the study.

Level	Capacity	9/30/2022 Enrollments	Capacity Utilization
Elementary	25,457	24,575	96.5%
Middle	13,496	13,167	97.6%
High	17,206	18,362	106.7%
Total	56,159	56,104	99.9%

Source: Howard County Public School System, Office of School Planning

A number of projects have been approved for funding or ~~are were~~ planned in the BOE's latest proposed FY24 capital budget that will add seats to increase capacity in the areas of high capacity utilization. ~~When it opens in the fall of 2023,~~ Guilford Park High School ~~will add~~ added 1,658 high school seats in an area of the County with three high schools utilized at over 110%. ~~An addition of approximately 200 seats to Hammond High School added additional capacity in this area of the County.~~ The Oakland Mills Middle and Dunloggin Middle School renovation and addition projects ~~will add~~ are expected to add 428 approximately 400 middle school seats. A renovation and addition is planned for Oakland Mills High School to add approximately 400 seats, with an expected completion date of 2029. ~~Further, a 289-seat addition at Hammond High School will be opening in the fall of 2023.~~ Additional renovation and addition projects are planned with 2030 through 2032 completion dates. All of these projects will help to alleviate school crowding in certain areas of the County, based on projected enrollment growth.

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Howard County is exceptional, first and foremost, due to the educational system.
 — “ —
 - HoCo By Design process participant



FUTURE TRENDS

Decreases ~~Changes~~ in Enrollment and Birth Rates

Other noteworthy trends impacting future school capacity include ~~changing~~ ~~decreasing~~ enrollment post the Covid-19 pandemic and decreases in the national birth rates.

According to the United States Census Bureau, the number of births nationwide has been declining since 2008, which is now impacting kindergarten enrollment and will impact future enrollment growth in Howard County. Annual live birth counts from the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene have been declining since 2016, with an 11% overall decrease since 2016. The Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) recalculates birth projections for each county in five-year increments. The 2022 MDP birth projection included this recent historical data, leading to a declining birth projection for the County.

Enrollment ~~has initially~~ declined ~~during since the beginning of~~ the Covid-19 pandemic, as some parents shifted their children to private school or homeschool, while some delayed kindergarten enrollment. However, in 2022, enrollment saw an uptick of 215 students. Table 8-4 from the HCPSS 2022 Feasibility Study illustrates these changes in enrollment counts those decreases between 2019 and 2021.

The 2022-2023 school year official K - 1 2 enrollment count (September 30, 2022 official enrollment) showed an increase to ~~57,676~~ 56,219 students, ~~the first increase over 2019 enrollment levels.~~ While annual enrollment is projected to increase in the future, the percent of increase may continue to be below recent historical trends given declining birth rates and until pandemic-related behaviors normalize. Graph 8-1 shows historical enrollment trends and the recent decline in enrollment.

Table 8-4: HCPSS Enrollment Count, 2019 - ~~2022~~ 2021

Student Groups	Counts
2019 Total Enrollment	57,518
2020 New Students	6,891
2020 Existing Students	-8,130
2020 Total Enrollment	56,279
2021 New Students	8,368
2021 Existing Students	-8,643
2021 Total Enrollment	56,004
<u>2022 New Students</u>	<u>8,207</u>
<u>2022 Existing Students</u>	<u>-7,992</u>
<u>2022 Total Enrollment</u>	<u>56,219</u>

Source: Howard County Public School System, Office of School Planning. K-12 enrollment, not including Pre-K and special programs.

Smaller Housing Typologies

To meet the growing demand for housing within our limited remaining land area, housing types will need to shift. HoCo By Design emphasizes accommodating future growth within mixed-use activity centers, missing middle housing, and accessory dwelling units—all of which consist of smaller housing typologies than traditional single-family detached homes. For example, new apartment units in Downtown Columbia, many of which are studio and 1-bedroom units, are expected to account for close to 20% of all new housing units built in the County between 2023 and 2040. Based on the official September 30, 2022 enrollment data, there are only 41 students living in the 1,199 new housing units from the Downtown Plan that are built and fully occupied. This is a standing yield rate of 0.034 students per unit, which is less than 5% of the yield rate for a typical new single-family detached home built in the County and less than 9% of a new townhome yield rate. Countywide, new apartment yields are about 14% of new single-family detached yields and 26% of new townhome yields.

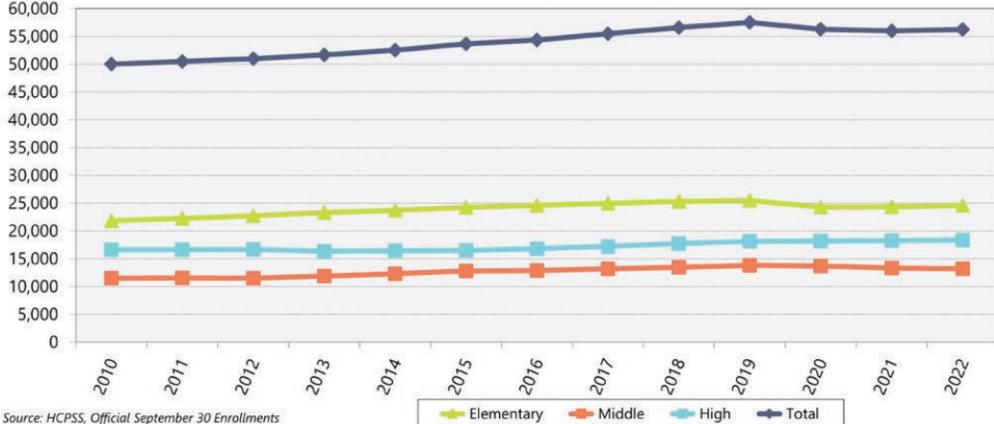
The HoCo By Design Future Land Use Map (FLUM) is based on a housing projection model that estimates about 57% will be rental and condominium apartments, 24% townhomes, and 19% single-family detached units. This projection compares to 38% rental and condominium apartments, 29% townhomes, and 33% single-family detached units built in the last 20 years. It is expected that this change in unit type mix into the future will yield relatively fewer new students compared to the last 20 years.

Table 8-5: Student Yields from New Units Built 2015-2019: All Grade Levels Combined

Planning Areas	Students per Single-Family Detached Unit	Students per Single-Family Attached Unit	Students per Apartment Unit
Columbia	0.7048	0.3417	0.0448
Elkridge	0.6331	0.3633	0.1549
Ellicott City	0.8380	0.6440	0.1867
Rural West	0.7888	NA	NA
Southeast	0.5822	0.2533	0.1062
Countywide Average	0.7135	0.3928	0.1020

Source: Howard County Public School System, Office of School Planning, October 2022

Graph 8-1: Howard County Public School System Enrollments 2010 to 2022 (official Sept. 30 count)



Source: HCPSS, Official September 30 Enrollments

Other Revenue Sources

Although General Obligation bonds make up most of the debt for HCPSS, the School Surcharge has been used to supplement these bonds. The School Surcharge is collected at the time of building permit application for all residential construction. The School Surcharge rate was significantly increased in November 2019 (effective January 6, 2020), raising the rate from \$1.32 per square foot of new residential construction to \$7.50 per square foot, with the increase phased in over three years. This increase is expected to bring in needed additional revenues for school construction. As indicated in the fiscal analysis conducted for HoCo By Design, it is estimated that School Surcharge revenues will be \$30 million on an annual average basis through 2040. The School Surcharge is paid by anyone who builds a new home (or addition), whether an individual homeowner or developer. Additionally, 25% of the transfer tax, which was increased from 1.0% to 1.25% under Council Resolution 84-2020, effective May 27, 2020, is also dedicated to school land acquisition and construction costs. This currently amounts to about \$2.5 million per year, which has been used to pay for existing and new school surcharge-supported bonds, as well as cash payments. The fiscal analysis conducted for HoCo By Design indicates that the proposed growth could help sustain transfer tax revenues for school construction.

The County also receives state funds for new school construction. The approved FY23 Capital Budget indicated indicates that the County will would receive state funding for approximately 40% of the total cost of construction for two new schools, the new Guilford Park High School and the Talbott Springs Elementary School replacement, totaling more than \$69 million. The FY24 Capital Budget indicated that the County would receive state aid of approximately \$21 million for capital projects. To be eligible for state funding, capacity needs due to enrollment growth must generally be demonstrated for each project at the systemwide level, inclusive of seats at adjacent schools. The County also receives state revenues for school operations. In FY23 the County received more than \$320 million from the State, about 31% of the total HCPSS operating budget. And in FY24, the County anticipates receiving more than \$347 million from the State, about 31% of the total HCPSS operating budget.

Further funding solutions will be necessary in the years ahead, including working with our state and federal partners.



PS-2 Policy Statement

The County and Howard County Public School System should partner to leverage additional public and private resources to meet school facility needs and timing.

Implementing Actions

1. Examine the costs and benefits of public-private partnership models to address near-term school facility acquisition, construction, and renovation needs, including long-term financial commitments and considerations.
2. Evaluate a trust fund for school site acquisition or partnerships with philanthropic organizations to purchase property and hold it for a short term until school facilities can be built.

