Amendment 95 to Council Bill No. 28 -2023

BY: Deb Jung

Legislative Day 11
Date: October 2, 2023

Amendment No. 95

(This Amendment makes the following changes to HoCo by Design Chapter 9 and Chapter 11):

Chapter 9: Supporting Infrastructure	- *Adds a requirement to the INF-2 Policy Statement's Implementing Actions to develop a scoring system for prioritizing the location of capital investments;*
	- *Adds a requirement to the INF-3 Policy Statement's Implementing Actions to explore creating a third police district and police headquarters;*
	- *Amends the INF-3 Policy Statement's Implementing Actions about adequate police staffing to include population and response times as considerations;*
	- *Adds a requirement to the INF-3 Policy Statement's Implementing Actions to expand community policing on greenways, outreach programs, and the recruitment of officers;*
	- *Deletes the INF-3 Policy Statement's Implementing Actions about "Smart City" technologies;*
	- *Adds requirement to replace fire and rescue vehicles with electric vehicles when possible in INF-4 Policy Statement Implementation Action 3;*
	- *Rewords Implementation Action 5 in INF-4 Policy Statement;*
	- *Clarifies that communities in underserved areas should be considered in establishing LPPRP goals and priorities in INF-5 Policy Statement's Implementing Actions; and*
	- *Removes quotes displayed as graphics.*
Chapter 11: Implementation	- *Adds a requirement to the INF-2 Policy Statement's Implementing Actions to develop a system for prioritizing the location of capital investments;*
	- *Adds a requirement to the INF-3 Policy Statement's Implementing Actions to explore creating a third police district and police headquarters;*
	- *Amends the INF-3 Policy Statement's Implementing Actions about adequate police staffing to include population and response times as considerations;*
	- *Adds a requirement to the INF-3 Policy Statement's Implementing Actions to expand community policing on greenways, outreach programs, and the recruitment of officers;*

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 9: Supporting Infrastructure: 8, 11, 13, 17, 20, 24, 25, and 28.

4   • Chapter 11: Implementation: 54, and 55.

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

7   amendment.

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SuStainable and equitable infraStructure inveStmentS

Infrastructure investments require careful long-term fiscal planning and prioritization. Some communities struggle with strategic planning or accounting for the full cost of infrastructure projects, which may include not only the cost of construction or acquisition of the facility or equipment, but also annual operating and maintenance costs. There may also be necessary expenses in the future to eventually rehabilitate or replace the asset once it has reached the end of its useful life. It is important to account for full long-term costs to avoid large unanticipated expenses.

Spending affordability adviSory committee (Saac)

The Spending Affordability Advisory Committee (SAAC) is tasked with making recommendations to the County Executive on revenue projections, General Obligation bond authorizations, long-term fiscal outlook, and county revenue and spending patterns. SAAC is directed to prepare and present a report to the County Executive, on or before March 1 annually, including:

- Projected General Fund revenues for the upcoming fiscal year.
- Recommended new county debt (General Obligation bonds) authorization.
- An analysis of the long-term fiscal outlook including multi-year projections.
- Other findings and/or recommendations that the Committee deems appropriate.

In March 2021, the Howard County Spending Affordability Advisory Committee (SAAC) released their report for Fiscal Year 2022, which identified the need to strengthen long-term strategic planning and fiscal discipline to ensure infrastructure investments are sustainable, with adequate prioritization and full cost accounting.

The SAAC noted that spending requests from all agencies significantly outpaced resources available and that the funding gap was projected to grow in coming years, as slower economic growth has been forecasted compared to prior decades. The magnitude of the funding gap was alarming: requested funds for capital projects by all agencies in Fiscal Years 2022-2027 were approximately double the projected debt capacity and other dedicated resources for the same fiscal years.

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> *Howard County will soon transition from a growing county with significant building and associated cost and revenue to a mature county with more stable population growth. Affordability will be even more challenging as little new housing is able to be built and the County will have to rely on different sources of revenue while attending to aging infrastructure. I am hopeful this process addresses this transition and provides for the discovery of solutions.*
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> *– HoCo By Design process participant*

There are other meaningful ways that equity could be incorporated into the County's CIP planning process. Some examples from the BMC report include the following:

- **Participatory budgeting and other community-driven planning efforts** that directly engage "vulnerable" or underserved communities in the decision-making process. For example, the Cities of Denver and Philadelphia have set aside capital funding for underserved neighborhoods. These neighborhoods are invited to submit project proposals for how these capital funds should be spent within their communities.
- **Developing a scoring system** based in equity that helps prioritize capital projects. By using a score-based system to prioritize projects, jurisdictions can make better-informed planning decisions for vulnerable communities. Below are factors that metropolitan planning organizations typically use to prioritize transportation projects; however, these can also apply to local government level capital planning.
    - o **Location burdens-based**, which considers the location of a project within equity communities as detrimental for them. Projects are awarded points if they are not located within an equity community or if they include measures to mitigate harm.
    - o **Location benefits-based**, which considers the proximity of a project to equity communities as beneficial. Projects are awarded points if they are located within or adjacent to an equity community.
    - o **Impacts-based**, which evaluates both the potential benefits and burdens a project will have on equity communities. Projects are awarded more points if they will bring about benefits and fewer points if they will bring about burdens.
    - o **Access to destinations-based**, which considers accessibility improvements that a project may provide an equity community. Projects are awarded more points if they can increase access to key destinations.
    - o **User-based**, which considers who will use a project. A project is a awarded more points if more people from equity communities use the facility.
    - o **Community engagement-based**, which considers how project sponsors involved equity communities before and during a project's development. Projects with more stakeholder engagement are awarded more points.
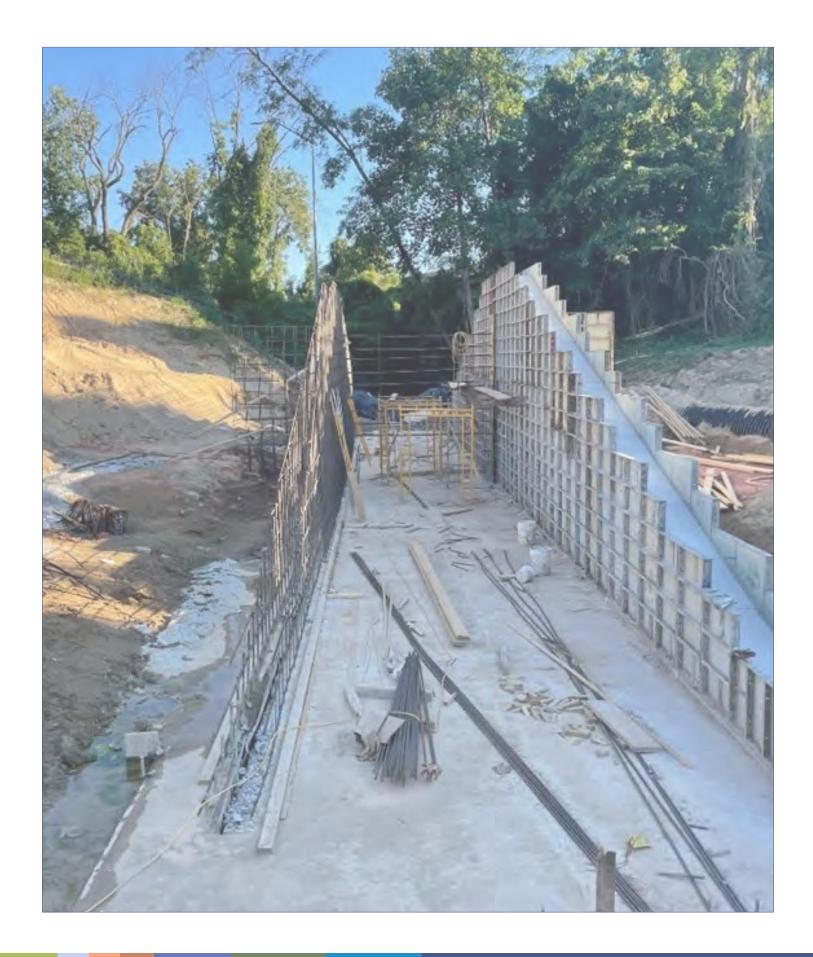
Howard County has a participatory and transparent process. But as with any process, there are always opportunities for improvements. Equity should be incorporated throughout the capital planning process to develop the CIP in a transparent and inclusive way. Transparency should extend far beyond the development and into the implementation process.
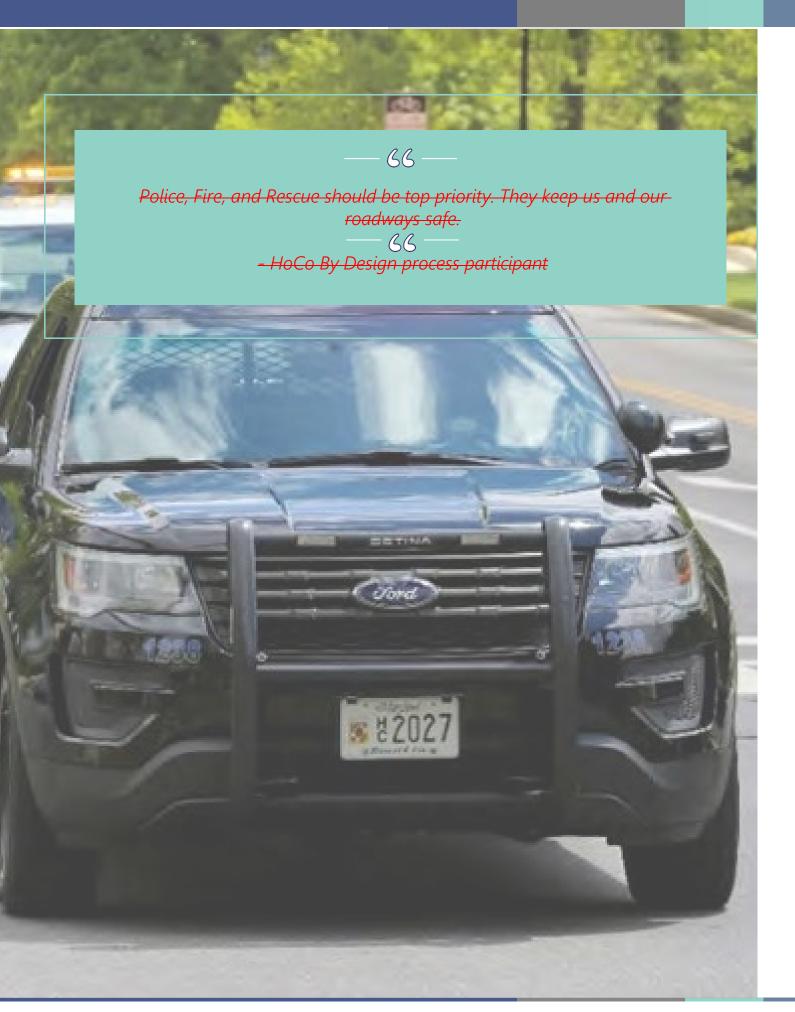
INF-2 Policy Statement

Prioritize equity in capital improvement planning and programming.

Implementing Actions

1. Explore how to implement a diverse and inclusive outreach process for identifying capital needs.
2. Implement a diverse and inclusive outreach process for capital planning.
3. Work with partners to develop a methodology to identify socially vulnerable communities.
4. Incorporate equity measures into prioritization processes for capital projects , including community centers, and develop a scoring system to prioritize capital investments in equity emphasis areas.

Police Protection

In 2022, police protection in Howard County was provided by the 509 sworn officers serving in the Howard County Police Department (HCPD) and was supported by 229 full-time and contingency civilian staff members. The department included 67 bike officers and eight K-9 teams. Given Howard County's population at that time of 334,529, HCPD had one police officer per 657 residents.

The HCPD is separated into two patrol districts, each of which has its own police station. The Southern District Police Station is located in Laurel and covers the Columbia area and the southeastern part of the County. The Northern District Police Department is located in Ellicott City, adjacent to the George Howard Building, and covers Ellicott City, Elkridge, and the Rural West. HCPD moved its administrative components—including the Police Chief, Command Staff, and Human Resources—out of the Ellicott City station to Elkridge in August 2020 because of inadequate space and the need to consolidate the Criminal Investigations Bureau at that location. HCPD also has a Community Outreach Center in Columbia, a small space at the Gary J. Arthur Community Center in the Rural West, and a 20-year-old training center in Marriottsville.

The type, amount, and location of future development in Howard County all impact HCPD's needed resources and its ability to adequately respond to service calls from the County's residents and businesses. Police department members are less dependent on a network of stations than their fire department colleagues because they typically rely on mobile patrol vehicles, rather than stationary fire engines and ambulances. Therefore, the most important investments for sustaining and expanding police protection in the County are new police officers, patrol vehicles, and specialty equipment.

As the population grows, so does the volume of calls that HCPD needs to respond to, and the number of calls from a community can vary by its type and location. For instance, senior housing and lower-density neighborhoods (especially those found in the Rural West) generally generate fewer service calls, while commercial centers, such as malls, and higher-density neighborhoods typically generate more calls. Furthermore, a community's activity levels may influence the number and type of police officers needed to adequately cover a beat patrol and meet the local community's needs.

A key performance metric for HCPD is response time, which is directly influenced by a patrol beat's activity levels and the availability of officers to respond quickly. HCPD strives to maintain and improve its average response time, which was eight minutes and 14 seconds for Priority 1 calls in 2022.

Many of the patrol beats in eastern portions of the County—inside both the Northern and Southern Patrol Districts—such as Route 1, are overburdened compared to other areas. The County should consider early ideas about the need for, and benefits of, a third HCPD patrol district and police station.

The existing firing range for the HCPD was built in 1990 and refurbished in 2007. A residential neighborhood was built adjacent to the existing facility that creates new challenges for safety related to long-range (up to 200 yards) shooting practice. New compliance standards from recent state policing reform legislation also create new demands at the firing range. The County is currently remediating lead embedded in the protective berm of the firing range and will need to investigate and implement lead solutions post-remediation. A feasibility study was completed in 2020 to evaluate the current location and determine if a new location or upgraded facility might best meet the future needs of the HCPD. The investment for an upgraded facility to meet new demands in the same location is estimated at $24.0 million.

Future planning for the County's bike lanes and greenways should consider opportunities for police patrol by bicycle (vs. automobile) in more densely-populated areas. HCPD should participate in planning efforts that address ways to connect portions of the community via walkways, bikeways, and greenways. A police-on-bike program opens new avenues of community engagement for the HCPD and increases police presence as a deterrent to crime; however, some situations may still require a police cruiser because it is more fully equipped.

HCPD would like to implement different integration technologies that improve police services in the community. In particular, the department would benefit from a broader "Smart Cities" Initiative in Howard County that links together different information systems and provides more opportunities for real-time information-sharing with the community.

INF-3 Policy Statement
Enhance police protection.

Implementing Actions

1. Evaluate the need for new or modified police department facilities. ~~Emphasize the need for~~ Explore the creation of a third police patrol district and police headquarters to meet future demands and decrease lease costs. Act upon the feasibility study completed in 2020 to improve the police department firing range at its current location.
2. Ensure the police department has adequate staff and equipment based on ~~levels of crime~~ population, number and types of crime, response times, and demand for services.
3. Enhance and expand community policing programs. ~~Consider~~ Continue the use of greenways for police patrols on bike or on foot and consider expanding the program. Develop additional outreach programs to engage young people and future recruits. Continue recruiting officers with diverse backgrounds and ethnic heritages so that cultural and language skills are reflective of the population.

4. Advocate for ~~"Smart City" or other~~ police-focused technologies that improve police protection and provide real-time information to the police department and other system users.
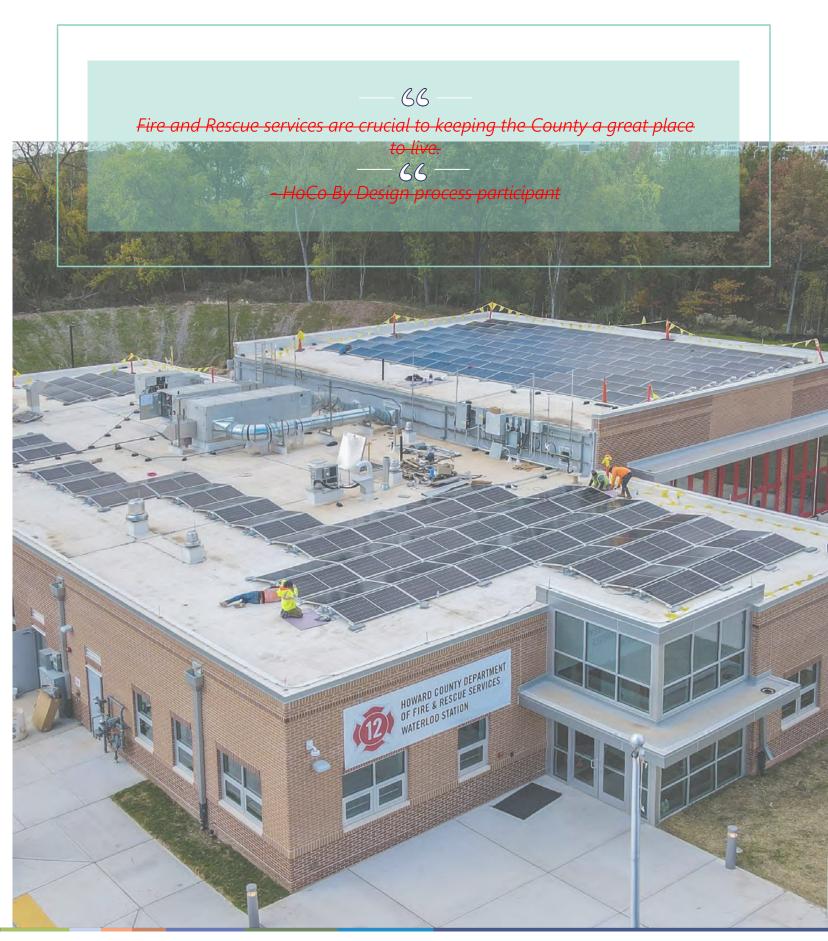
fire and rescue Services

Fire protection and emergency medical services are provided to County residents and businesses by the Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue Services (HCDFRS). In the fall 2022, HCDFRS consisted of 14 fire stations located throughout the County with a 15th in the design phase of construction. The stations were staffed by 557 full-time career firefighters, 254 operational volunteer firefighters, and 79 civilian and contingent personnel. HCDFRS' 2021-2024 Strategic Plan further describes the department and its vision, goals, and objectives for the next several years.

In 2019, the County opened Station 14 near Merriweather Post Pavilion to serve new and ongoing growth in Downtown Columbia. Station 12 was opened in October 2022 in Waterloo to serve continued growth and increasing call volume. Meanwhile, a new Station 15 was in design in North Columbia to serve increasing demands for service. In 2013, HCDFRS responded to 29,634 incidents. In 2019, HCDFRS responded to 38,110 incidents—an average 4.1% increase in incident volume per year. In 2020, incidents dropped nearly 11% to 34,000, a circumstance likely influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic and individuals' choices to use alternative treatment options in lieu of hospital emergency room visits. In 2021, call volume trended upwards to 36,034 with the expectation to return to pre-pandemic numbers, as 2022 was projected to have over 37,000 incidents. Of those incidents, nearly 60% were located in the first due response areas of four stations: Station 9 (Long Reach), Station 2 (Ellicott City), Station 6 (Savage/Laurel), and Station 7 (Banneker). Medical and rescue incidents accounted for 82% of the call volume.

HCDFRS continues to add and train staff on front-line fire apparatus to comply with National Fire Protection Association standards. The department was selected for the American Heart Association's Mission Lifeline Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Gold Plus Award in 2020. The award recognizes departments that implement quality improvement measures for the treatment of patients experiencing cardiac emergencies. HCDFRS also received two National Association of Counties awards, one in 2021 for the Mobile Integrated Community Health initiative and one in 2022 for the Carcinogen Reduction Plan.

Additional employment and residential growth, and changing demographics countywide, are expected to create the need for additional fire station(s) by 2030, equipment, and personnel to maintain and improve fire and emergency medical response times. The County levies a fire tax countywide that serves as the primary funding source for the County's fire and rescue tax fund (a dedicated fund solely used for fire and rescue services). An EMS Transport Fee passed in FY 2020 also provides revenue for this dedicated funding source. As of fall 2022, the fire tax rate was 23.60 cents per $100 of assessed value. The rate was increased in 2019 to help support anticipated staffing and operating needs to close service gaps and cope with future population growth. In addition, the County implements a transfer tax of which a rate of 0.1875% of property transaction value is designated to funding HCDFRS capital projects.

Unlike police departments, fire departments are more dependent on a network of fire stations, fire hydrants, and other water supplies located near neighborhoods, businesses, and industrial centers to house the needed fire engines, ladder trucks, ambulances, and other support vehicles.

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> *Fire and Rescue services are crucial to keeping the County a great place to live.*
> "
> *– HoCo By Design process participant*

Providing fire suppression in the Rural West—located outside of the County's Planned Service Area—presents specific challenges for response teams because public water and fire hydrants are not available near buildings or structures. As a result, fire engines are dependent upon nearby fire ponds, strategically-placed 30,000-gallon cisterns, and a continuing rotation of water-carrying fire engines or tanker trucks to replenish their water supply using temporary, on-site dump tanks set up by the fire department during an incident. This system can be manageable for smaller, more isolated fires but becomes problematic for fires that involve multiple or larger structures.

In 2022, there were 34 water supply cisterns serving the Rural West. Since 2008, long-term plans have called for up to 100 cisterns in the area to support a sufficient water supply system. Construction of the full cistern system will continue through 2040 and beyond.

Competition for land in some areas of the County will increase dramatically as new facilities and services are identified to serve nearby development. HCDFRS should consider station designs that minimize overall size requirements, leverage co-location requirements, and focus design to efficiently meet specific requirements of future needs. HCDFRS should also assess prototypes used in the County after they are built, ensure stations are functioning as they were intended, and determine if design elements from one station may be appropriate for other projects.

INF-4 Policy Statement

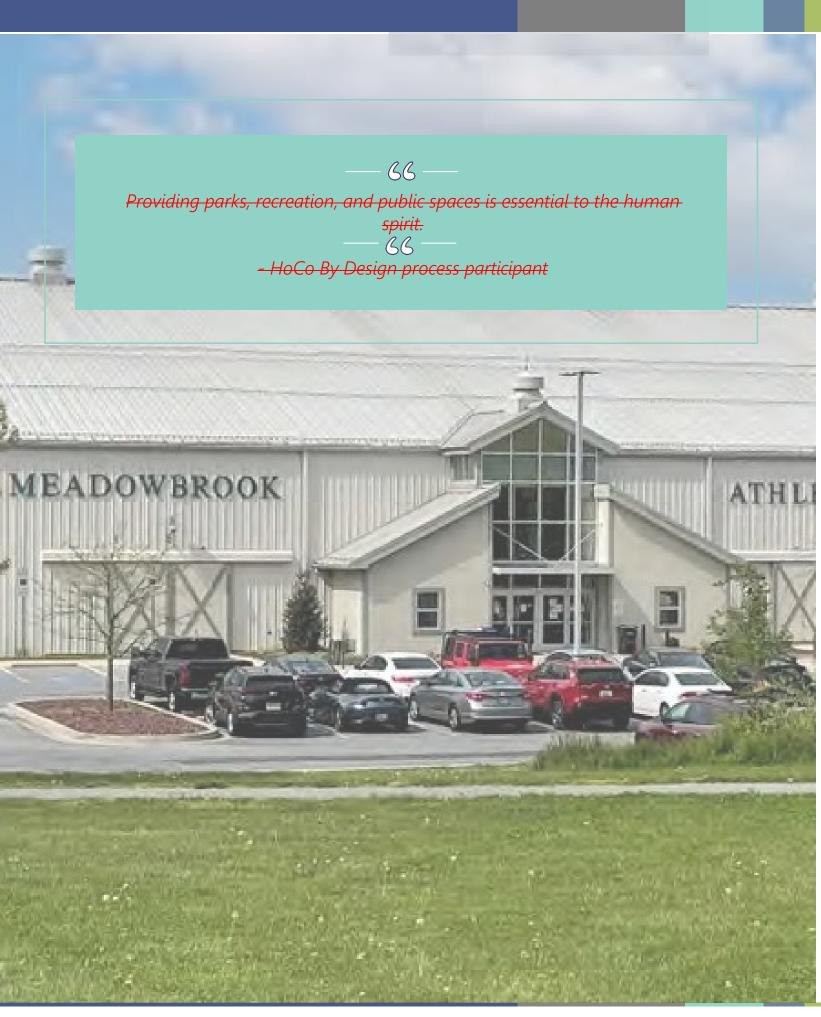Minimize loss of life, loss of property, and injury due to fire or medical emergencies.

Implementing Actions

1. Construct and staff new and replacement fire stations in the Capital Improvement Program. Renovate and rehabilitate existing fire stations as appropriate to ensure the continued provision of efficient service.
2. Continue to construct underground cisterns to support fire suppression in the Rural West. Determine strategic placement locations for water-holding cisterns that allow for improved water supply access and shortened distance for tanker trucks shuttling water for firefighting operations in the Rural West.
3. Provide funding to replace fire and rescue vehicles when needed with electric vehicles when possible.
4. Complete a strategic plan for the fire department that anticipates future year fire station needs based on the type, location, pattern, and intensity of development envisioned on the Future Land Use Map.
5. Consider opportunities to provide shared-use facilities, similar to the Merriweather District Fire Station, in some locations of the County to provide fire stations where they are most needed and thereby create equitable access, similar to the Merriweather District Fire Station.

> *Providing parks, recreation, and public spaces is essential to the human spirit.*
>
> *– HoCo By Design process participant*

recreation and parks

Parks, open space, and recreation facilities and programs contribute significantly to a healthy lifestyle and a high quality of life for Howard County's residents and visitors. Every five years, the County updates its Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP), a comprehensive plan that guides the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks (DRP) on key issues, trends, and plans for managing and enhancing its preserved public lands, facilities, and programs. The 2022 LPPRP is organized around five aspirations that incorporate department goals and strategies:

- Deliver accessible experiences to all members of the community.
- Be a trusted steward for natural resources.
- Acknowledge and amplify all cultural histories.
- Maintain functional and financial responsibility.
- Maintain high-quality spaces.

The first three aspirations also respond to the three themes of the LPPRP—parks and recreation, natural resource conservation, and agricultural land preservation. Environmental stewardship and equitable access to Howard County's parks, open space, and recreation facilities and programs are central tenants for the County and will continue to be essential when planning for Howard County's future. DRP oversees and maintains 9,825 acres of land, including 5,779 acres used for the County's 98 regional, community, and neighborhood parks, and 4,046 acres used as open space. In addition, the County benefits from 9,268 acres of state parkland, 3,213 acres of Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) land for public use, and 3,629 acres of Columbia Association open space. The presence of state parks, such as the Patapsco Valley State Park; Columbia's lakes, open space, and trail system; and county facilities, such as the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area and the Robinson Nature Center, all greatly contribute to Howard County's access to and appreciation for nature.

The County's park system includes 44 playgrounds, three community gardens, multiple recreation centers, and a wide array of athletic fields and facilities, including basketball courts, skate parks, baseball and softball diamonds, tennis and pickleball courts, and multi-purpose fields. The County also offers nearly 112 miles of trails for residents and visitors to enjoy.

DRP offers programming and activities for residents of all ages. In 2019, the Department served over 100,000 people in approximately 8,500 different programs, a figure that underscores the widespread use and enjoyment of the County's parks and recreational activities. Many DRP programs take place at the Meadowbrook Athletic Complex or one of the County's three community centers located in Cooksville, Laurel, and Ellicott City.

There are also other public, nonprofit, and private organizations that provide a variety of recreation programs, events, and leisure services in Howard County. The LPPRP includes updated information on these organizations to ensure that DRP is aware of the opportunities that exist to fill gaps, seek out partners when appropriate, and reduce or eliminate the potential duplication of efforts.

Expansion of the County Park System and Recreation Facilities

As the County's population grows, so will the demands for new and improved parkland and recreational programming. This increased demand will require hiring additional staff, purchasing and replacing park vehicles and equipment, and constructing and maintaining new parks and facilities to address public needs and facility deficiencies identified in the 2022 LPPRP.

The 2022 LPPRP sets an acquisition goal of 25 acres of parks and open space per 1,000 residents. The County currently has 29.5 acres per 1,000 residents. The 2022 LPPRP also uses the Maryland Park Equity Tool to analyze county residents' access to a facility, park, open space, or amenity. In the Rural West, access is measured as a 5- to 15-minute drive. In the East, access is measured as a 5-minute drive or a 10-minute walk. The results of this analysis indicate that there are more areas of low access or low park equity in the eastern part of the County compared to the Rural West. The 2022 LPPRP sets an acquisition goal to prioritize parks and open space acquisition within census tracts with low park equity.

Land acquisition has become a challenge for the department in recent years as large parcels of available land become scarce. As a result, DRP has shifted to acquiring smaller parcels, generally of 25 acres or less. This trend is expected to continue as smaller parcels are acquired in redeveloped areas, especially activity centers, offering an opportunity to increase equitable access to green space and create links to existing open space. Park and recreation facilities in redeveloped areas could include plazas, pocket parks, and amphitheaters, as well as open space connections to nearby parks and pathways. Park and recreation facilities may also be provided through privately-owned playgrounds, dog parks, plazas, or entertainment areas with access restricted to residents of the development.

As inter-departmental needs for the last remaining developable land in the community become more competitive, undeveloped parkland and open space may sometimes be considered for new public facilities. The struggle to protect existing parks and develop new parks to serve a growing population is likely to escalate as the competition for space grows—especially in eastern portions of the County that are inside the Planned Service Area.

INF-5 Policy Statement

Maintain and expand Howard County's park and open space system and recreation facilities and programs to keep pace with future growth and ensure safe, convenient, and equitable access to residents.

Implementing Actions

1. Establish land acquisition goals for parks and open space in the Howard County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP), and prioritize parks and open space acquisition within communities with low park equity.
2. Establish countywide goals and priorities in the LPPRP for recreation facilities, including community centers in underserved areas, and programs that are accessible to all residents.
3. Build partnerships within county government and with other organizations across the County to efficiently share resources.
4. Use flexible designs for parks and open space in more urban areas, such as plazas, pocket parks, and amphitheaters.
5. Partner with other county departments to link parks, open space, and recreation facilities to surrounding communities through transportation improvements.

Table 10-1: Implementation Matrix

Policy and Implementing Actions	Lead Agency	Timeframe (Mid-Term five-year, Long-Term six+ years, Ongoing)
PS-4 - Revisions to the County's Zoning Regulations and Subdivision and Land Development Regulations should provide more flexibility for school site development and remove barriers to efficient use of school site property.		
1. The Zoning Regulations update should allow administrative approval of zoning variances as they relate to school facility development.	**DPZ** **HCPSS**	Mid-Term
2. Evaluate the applicability of the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations governing reservations of land for public facilities to determine appropriate changes that would increase utilization.	**DPZ** **HCPSS**	Mid-Term
PS-5 - The need for school facilities—particularly to support regional early childhood programs in the near term—warrants a more proactive approach to property identification, evaluation, and acquisition for public use.		
1. Continue to review and update policies and regulatory tools to better align school planning needs to changing demographics, market conditions, and land use patterns.	**HCPSS**	Ongoing
2. Consider a right of first refusal strategy to purchase properties proposed for sale in certain priority geographies.	**HCPSS**	Long-Term
3. Research models for government and private sector partners to acquire and amass small parcels into sites large enough for school use.	**HCPSS** **Private Partners**	Mid-Term
4. Use data/intelligence from the real estate industry to monitor leasing and sale opportunities for site acquisition.	**HCPSS**	Ongoing
5. Consider purchasing available properties in the near term with leaseback options to tenants as a means to hold land for future school needs.	**HCPSS**	Mid-Term
INF-1 - Prioritize Capital Improvement Program requests that directly implement General Plan policies and implementing actions.		
1. Expand project statements to refer to policies and implementing actions in the General Plan.	**DPW** OOB All Agencies	Mid-Term
2. Make existing and deferred maintenance projects a priority in the Capital Improvement Program, with sustainable funding sources and levels allocated to address ongoing needs and backlog.	**DPW** OOB All Agencies	Mid-Term

Table 10-1: Implementation Matrix

Policy and Implementing Actions	Lead Agency	Timeframe (Mid-Term five-year, Long-Term six+ years, Ongoing)
INF-2 - Prioritize equity in capital improvement planning and programming.		
1. Explore how to implement a diverse and inclusive outreach process for identifying capital needs.	**OHRE** OOB DCRS All Agencies	Mid-Term
2. Implement a diverse and inclusive outreach process for capital planning.	**OOB** OHRE All Agencies	Ongoing
3. Work with partners to develop a methodology to identify socially vulnerable communities.	**DCRS** OHRE DHCD	Mid-term
4. Incorporate equity measures into prioritization processes for capital projects, including community centers, and develop a scoring system to prioritize capital investments in equity emphasis areas.	**All Agencies**	Ongoing
INF-3 - Enhance police protection.		
1. Evaluate the need for new or modified police department facilities. ~~Emphasize the need for~~ Explore the creation of a third police patrol district and police headquarters to meet future demands and decrease lease costs. Act upon the feasibility study completed in	**HCPD**	Ongoing
2. Ensure the police department has adequate staff and equipment based on ~~levels of crime~~ population, types of crime, response times, and demand for services.	**HCPD**	Ongoing
3. Enhance and expand community policing programs. ~~Consider~~ Continue the use of greenways for police patrols on bike or on foot and consider expanding the program. Develop additional outreach programs to engage young people and future recruits. Continue recruiting officers with diverse backgrounds and ethnic heritages so that cultural and language skills are reflective of the population.	**HCPD**	Ongoing
4. Advocate for ~~"Smart City" or other~~ police-focused technologies that improve police protection and provide real-time information to the police department and other system users.	**HCPD**	Mid-Term

Table 10-1: Implementation Matrix

Policy and Implementing Actions	Lead Agency	Timeframe (Mid-Term five-year, Long-Term six+ years, Ongoing)
INF-4 - Minimize loss of life, loss of property, and injury due to fire or medical emergencies.		
1. Construct and staff new and replacement fire stations in the Capital Improvement Program. Renovate and rehabilitate existing fire stations as appropriate to ensure the continued provision of efficient service.	**DFRS**	Ongoing
2. Continue to construct underground cisterns to support fire suppression in the Rural West. Determine strategic placement locations for water-holding cisterns that allow for improved water supply access and shortened distance for tanker trucks shuttling water for firefighting operations in the Rural West.	**DFRS**	Ongoing
3. Provide funding to replace fire and rescue vehicles ~~when needed~~ with electric vehicles when possible.	**DFRS**	Ongoing
4. Complete a strategic plan for the fire department that anticipates future year fire station needs based on the type, location, pattern, and intensity of development envisioned on the Future Land Use Map.	**DFRS** Elected Officials OOB	Mid-Term
5. Consider opportunities to provide shared-use facilities, similar to the Merriweather District Fire Station, in some locations of the County to provide fire stations where they are most needed and thereby create equitable access~~, similar to the Merriweather District Fire Station~~.	**DPW** DFRS DPZ	Ongoing
INF-5 - Maintain and expand Howard County's park and open space system and recreation facilities and programs to keep pace with future growth and ensure safe, convenient, and equitable access to residents.		
1. Establish land acquisition goals for parks and open space in the Howard County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP), and prioritize parks and open space acquisition within communities with low park equity.	**DRP**	Mid-Term
2. Establish countywide goals and priorities in the LPPRP for recreation facilities, including community centers in underserved areas, and programs that are accessible to all residents.	**DRP**	Mid-Term
3. Build partnerships within county government and with other organizations across the County to efficiently share resources.	**DRP** All Agencies Non-Profit Partners	Ongoing
4. Use flexible designs for parks and open space in more urban areas, such as plazas, pocket parks, and amphitheaters.	**DRP**	Ongoing
5. Partner with other county departments to link parks, open space, and recreation facilities to surrounding communities through transportation improvements.	**DRP** OOT DPZ	Ongoing

Table 10-1: Implementation Matrix

Policy and Implementing Actions	Lead Agency	Timeframe (Mid-Term five-year, Long-Term six+ years, Ongoing)
INF-6 - Continue to invest judiciously to maintain and enhance county facilities and assess county agency space needs against the County's portfolio of spaces.		
1. Use the Capital Improvement Program to evaluate and prioritize county building renovations.	**DPW**	Ongoing
2. Establish county space standards and evaluate the efficiency of county space usage. Assess future county agency needs for space.	**DPW**	Ongoing
3. Determine whether it is in the County's best interest to continue all or some leases. Consider opportunities to purchase leased space or construct new office and/or mixed-use spaces.	**DPW**	Ongoing
4. Determine whether it is in the County's best interest to continue to own or surplus various properties. Consider finite land supply and potential future costs of acquisition as part of such evaluation.	**DPW**	Ongoing
INF-7 - Partner with the Howard County Library System to provide training and resources needed in the community.		
1. Evaluate the need for additional library capacity in the County to serve planned population and program growth. Provide necessary expansion of resources via additions or new facilities within the Planned Service Area.	**HCLS**	Mid-Term
2. Enhance the design of existing and any future libraries to both optimize the delivery of service at each library branch and help create a civic focal point. Where feasible, integrate libraries with other complementary public or private facilities.	**HCLS** DPW Private Partners	Long-term
INF-8 - Continue to support the Howard Community College's expanding abilities to provide higher education for county residents and workers.		
1. Continue the County's commitment to fund expansion of the Howard Community College (HCC) to accommodate enrollment and program growth. Support the HCC in obtaining funding from the State of Maryland and others to invest in the campus.	**HCEDA**	Ongoing
2. Continue to work with the Howard County Economic Development Authority, the private sector, and other institutions of higher education to meet workforce development and re-training needs, especially in science and technology-related fields.	**HCC** HCEDA OWD Private Partners	Ongoing
3. Continue to expand non-credit course offerings and cultural programs that promote life-long learning and enhance community life.	**HCC**	Ongoing