

Amendment 4 to Council Bill No. 28 -2023

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Amendment No. 4

(This Amendment makes the following changes to HoCo by Design Chapter 8, Chapter 10, Chapter 11, Technical Appendix B, and Technical Appendix C:

- Chapter 8: Public School Facilities* - *Amends the PS-1 Policy Statement Implementing Actions to include the Gateway Regional Activity Center in the planning of activity center school capacity projects;*
- Chapter 10: Managing Growth* - *Amends the Residential Growth Targets, 2020-2040 section to specify that establishing commercial, housing, school capacity, and transportation goals are foundational goals for the Gateway Regional Activity Center master plan;*
- Chapter 11: Implementation* - *Amends the PS-1 Policy Statement Implementing Actions to include the Gateway Regional Activity Center in the planning of activity center school capacity projects;*
- Technical Appendix B: Character Areas* - *Amends the Regional Activity Center character area section to specify that establishing commercial, housing, school capacity, and transportation goals are foundational goals for the Gateway Regional Activity Center master plan.*
- Technical Appendix C: Focus Areas* - *Amends the Gateway Illustrative Map General Considerations to emphasize educational facilities and infrastructure.)*

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

- 3 • Chapter 9: Public School Facilities: 18;
- 4 • Chapter 10: Managing Growth: 6;
- 5 • Chapter 11: Implementation: 51;
- 6 • Technical Appendix B: Character Areas: 35;
- 7 • Technical Appendix C: Focus Areas: 37.

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9 Correct all page numbers, numbering, and formatting within this Act to accommodate this
10 amendment.

Implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future

Another future trend to consider is the implementation of the statewide Blueprint for Maryland's Future (Blueprint)—a set of policies and dedicated funding that is intended to transform Maryland's early childhood, elementary, and secondary school system to the level of high-performing school systems around the world. Blueprint is based on the recommendations of the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education. The Commission made policy recommendations to the Maryland General Assembly (MGA) and thereafter the MGA passed legislation annually from 2018 through 2021.

The General Assembly established priorities and funding provisions, including dedicated funding to support the Blueprint's implementation. Overall, the State of Maryland will invest an additional \$3.9 billion (45% increase) in Maryland's public schools by FY 2034 to assist local governments with implementing Blueprint. Additionally, local governments will also need to increase their investments to meet Blueprint goals. However, investment levels will vary by jurisdiction depending on historical spending levels.

Blueprint policies are grouped in five pillars: 1) Early Childhood Education; 2) High-Quality and Diverse Teachers and Leaders; 3) College and Career Readiness; 4) More Resources for Students to be Successful; and 5) Governance and Accountability. Policies advancing each pillar are phased in over time, with the goal of strengthening the entire educational system through improved student performance. Additional resources will be directed to students who need them the most to close achievement gaps and expand student opportunities.

Implementation of the Blueprint will occur over 10 years and will have both operating and capital budget impacts. Operationally, it is not intended to create an unfunded state mandate but rather to help local school systems refocus and reprioritize programs. Future cost estimates indicate that funding for Blueprint implementation will not exceed net local costs or typical annual growth rates. According to the State Department of Legislative Services, Howard County is one of nine counties that has consistently funded local schools above the required annual Maintenance of Effort (MOE) levels and is not expected to incur any additional local costs beyond historical trends to meet Blueprint mandates since "projected appropriations under current practices exceed the amount required under the Blueprint legislation."



The State's legislative analysis also indicates that Blueprint implementation, when coupled with the significant increases of nearly \$4 billion in state aid to school systems over the next 10 years, is intended to help local school systems enhance and reprioritize programs to enrich student experiences and accelerate improved student outcomes.

Given the County's historic high levels of spending, which are significantly above the MOE, and given additional state funding available, local fiscal impacts are not expected to exceed annual budgetary growth rates. The FY 24 Spending Affordability Advisory Committee reviewed these assumptions as part of their thorough review of the HoCo By Design fiscal analysis and found that "the final fiscal impact analysis is sound in methodology and presents reasonable conclusions."

Implementation of the prekindergarten requirement under Pillar 1 (Early Childhood Education) will require additional capacity beyond what can be accommodated in existing school buildings. However, the Blueprint allows for private academic institutions that meet prescribed quality standards to receive state funding for prekindergarten programs. This will help defray capital and programming costs and reduce the public share of capacity needed to provide voluntary full-day prekindergarten services. HCPSS is in early planning stages and has been exploring a variety of strategies, including converting half-day classrooms to full-day, construction of regional early childhood centers, additions to existing elementary schools, and/or leasing commercial space. Guidance regarding implementation is still evolving, and further study and planning will be necessary. Alternative strategies could include additions to elementary schools, renting or leasing commercial space, or other space solutions.

The Schools SAG discussions emphasized the need for school facilities, particularly to support regional early childhood programs required by the Blueprint. They acknowledged that the availability of large parcels suitable to school site requirements is extremely limited and recommended a more proactive approach to property identification, evaluation, and acquisition of sites for public use. Strategies they discussed included, a right of first refusal to purchase properties in certain geographies and partnering with the private sector to acquire and amass small parcels into sites large enough for school use.

PS-1 Policy Statement

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.

Implementing Actions

1. Examine alternatives to the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance waiting periods whereby a development proposal offsets the potential impact to zoned schools through an additional voluntary mitigation payment.
2. Ensure coordination of HoCo By Design and the HCPSS capital planning so that school capacity projects are planned in activity center areas, especially in the Gateway Regional Activity Center, identified for transformation on the Future Land Use Map.

Residential Growth Targets, 2020-2040

HoCo By Design has set a target of approximately 1,580 new units per year. This future growth represents a similar pace compared to the last 20 years, when an average of 1,537 new units were built annually.

Future growth in Howard County is expected to be modest given the limited amount of vacant land upon which housing and other development can occur. Most of the County has already been developed or preserved as agriculture, parks, and open space, and there is limited land left for the typical greenfield development that occurred in previous decades. Additionally, much of the remaining land is constrained with environmental features, difficult topography, limited access, or other physical features that restrict ultimate yield. This dwindling land supply and the challenges associated with developing it naturally reduce growth opportunities.

However, the HoCo By Design Market Research and Demand Forecast (prepared by the consulting firm RCLCO) shows demand for new housing in Howard County remains strong and is necessary to support job growth and a healthy jobs/housing balance. As further described in the Growth and Conservation Framework chapter, RCLCO found potential to add 59,000 jobs in Howard County between 2020 and 2040, resulting in demand for 31,000 new homes to accommodate households associated with the job growth. The RCLCO market analysis also identified a current “pent up” demand for 20,000 more housing units tied to those who work in Howard County but live elsewhere in the region. An inadequate supply of housing exacerbates housing affordability challenges, as further described in the Dynamic Neighborhoods chapter. A lack of housing choices also makes recruiting workers more difficult, as they are priced out of the local market. Further, the fiscal study for this Plan indicates that new growth is important to maintain the high quality of life and service levels that Howard County residents and businesses value and have come to expect.



To meet these demands, HoCo By Design provides a strategy for redevelopment, as detailed in the Growth and Conservation Framework chapter. The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) shown in that chapter divides the County into 18 character areas and focuses future growth into activity center redevelopment areas—many of which were included in the last General Plan, PlanHoward 2030. However, the locations of these activity centers are more targeted, as compared to PlanHoward’s growth and revitalization areas.

Among the activity centers depicted on the FLUM is a Regional Activity Center in Gateway. As described in the Economic Prosperity chapter, HoCo By Design calls for the development of a master plan for the Gateway Regional Activity Center. The Gateway master plan will summarize the area’s future development phasing and intensity, mix of uses, open space network, building height range, and infrastructure approach. [Establishing commercial, housing, school capacity, and transportation measurable goals for Gateway will be the foundational goals of the Gateway Regional Activity Center master plan.](#) HoCo By Design’s growth targets will need to be adjusted when the master plan for Gateway is completed, using an amendment process similar to the Downtown Columbia Plan in 2010. Specific growth targets will be identified through the Gateway planning process and any development in the Regional Activity Center will take place over 30 or more years. A separate, specialized APFO program should be created for Gateway to address transportation needs and school capacity. Given this long-term development horizon, multiple future General Plans will incorporate the plan for Gateway.

In addition to the Gateway master plan, development in many of the other activity centers, as shown on the FLUM, will require amendments to the County’s Zoning Regulations, Subdivision and Land Development Regulations, and associated design guidelines to shape the character of new development. Amendments to these regulations should allow for accessory dwelling units and better regulate infill development to maintain the character of existing neighborhoods.

It is important to note that redevelopment in mature suburban communities like Howard County can be difficult and time-consuming. Regulations will need to be amended, and the transition toward redevelopment of the envisioned activity centers may take some time. Implementation will need to accommodate market forces, overcome fractured property ownership, and consider development economics and consumer behavior.



Table 10-1: Implementation Matrix		
Policy and Implementing Actions	Lead Agency	Timeframe (Mid-Term five-year, Long-Term six+ years, Ongoing)
QBD-8 - Expand documentation, protection, and education regarding the County's diverse historic resources.		
1. Research and create a mechanism similar to a historic landmarks program that can be used as a tool for identifying valuable historic resources and efforts to protect them.	DPZ	Long-term
2. Expand documentation efforts to include "recent past" buildings, such as those of significance in Columbia and other maturing areas.	DPZ	Long-term
3. Continue to update the Historic Sites Inventory through updated inventory forms for properties added in the 1970s-1990s and for new sites.	DPZ	Ongoing
4. Create more thorough inventories of the County's historic resources and expand documentation of ethnicity, cultural context, and historic relevance to the County's history.	DPZ Non-profit Partners	Long-term
5. Work with nonprofit organizations to create opportunities for the Howard County community to learn about its historic sites, including telling all stories in the County.	DPZ DRP	Long-term
6. Explore grants for documentation of archeological resources, museum collections, and oral histories, and partner on this initiative with local preservation nonprofit organizations.	DPZ	Ongoing
7. Participate in a statewide effort to create one master state map of all known cemeteries.	DPZ	Long-term
PS-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.		
1. Examine alternatives to the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance waiting periods whereby a development proposal offsets the potential impact to zoned schools through an additional voluntary mitigation payment.	DPZ	Mid-Term
2. Ensure coordination of HoCo By Design and the HCPSS capital planning so that school capacity projects are planned in activity center areas, <u>especially in the Gateway Regional Activity Center</u> , identified for transformation on the Future Land Use Map.	DPZ HCPSS	Ongoing

Table 10-1: Implementation Matrix		
Policy and Implementing Actions	Lead Agency	Timeframe (Mid-Term five-year, Long-Term six+ years, Ongoing)
PS-2 - The County and Howard County Public School System should partner to leverage additional public and private resources to meet school facility needs and timing.		
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.	HCPSS Private Partners	Mid-Term
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.	HCPSS Private Property Owners	Mid-Term
PS-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.		
1. Consider adaptive reuse of commercial real estate for school buildings or HCPSS office space.	HCPSS	Mid-Term
2. Consider leasing space for early childhood or other HCPSS programming.	HCPSS	Mid-Term
3. Evaluate integrating public prekindergarten into government and commercial centers that encourage convenience for working parents, increase access to communities, and/or create opportunities to provide wrap-around services to families and students.	HCPSS	Mid-Term
4. Evaluate the efficacy of using smaller existing HCPSS-owned properties for regional programs and/or shared athletic facilities.	HCPSS	Mid-Term
5. Examine alternative school design models that establish a variety of forms to maximize available land resources. This may include higher capacity buildings, smaller footprints, shared site amenities, modular design, and/or vertical construction.	HCPSS	Long-term
6. Explore opportunities for co-location of school facilities with other public amenities, like libraries, parks, affordable housing, and athletic fields, to make use of limited greenfield space and leverage additional funding opportunities.	HCPSS All Agencies	Ongoing
7. Ensure future redevelopment of Gateway into a Regional Activity Center includes a thorough evaluation of school capacity and that any deficiencies created through its redevelopment are mitigated by providing requisite school facilities.	DPZ HCPSS Private Partners	Mid-Term
8. Ensure development of activity centers includes a review of school capacity needs and opportunities to address those needs within the activity center.	DPZ HCPSS Private Partners	Mid-Term

Character Area: Regional Activity Center

Comprised of Columbia Gateway business park, the Regional Activity Center is an existing employment center that should redevelop as a large regional growth center in the future (along with Downtown Columbia). The center currently contains large isolated buildings set back from the road and surface parking lots. The area should be reimagined as a major hub for entertainment, employment, and innovation in the County with access from one or more major transportation corridors. As a magnet to surrounding cities and neighborhoods, the Regional Activity Center becomes an iconic model for sustainable and innovative development and infrastructure projects, making it an exciting new focal point for the Baltimore-Washington region. Currently, Gateway is an underutilized asset that presents tremendous potential for transformation.

In the Regional Activity Center, residential units or office spaces may be found above storefronts. The public spaces between buildings should be designed for walkability, community gathering, and interesting street life. Specific building heights will be determined through the master planning process. Homes in and surrounding the center of development may reflect a variety of housing types—including, but not limited to, missing middle home choices. Industrial, warehouse, and flex space buildings should be considered for specific areas.

A gridded network of walkable streets should connect destinations within the Regional Activity Center and surrounding neighborhoods. Parking should be satisfied using on-street parking, structured parking, and shared rear-lot parking strategies. A comprehensive and connected network of open space throughout the Regional Activity Center accommodates recreation facilities, small parks, greenways, or gathering places; preserves natural resources; and helps manage stormwater runoff.

Infrastructure needed to support future development, including new schools, fire stations, parks, or recreation facilities, should be accommodated within the Regional Activity Center to the maximum extent possible. Impacts to infrastructure outside the Regional Activity Center should be minimized using innovative land use and site design elements within the center. These could include mobility options that reduce the number of vehicle trips entering or exiting the site, low-flow technologies that reduce sewer demands, or native landscaping and vegetation that reduce water demands. Future plans for the Regional Activity Center should consider airplane operations from nearby Baltimore/Washington Thurgood Marshall International Airport and design provisions for noise mitigation including, but not limited to, noise reduction design elements.

The design, scale, character, and intensity of development in the Regional Activity Center should be compatible with, and transition to, adjacent land uses; and the character of existing adjacent neighborhoods should be preserved. Redevelopment of properties in the Regional Activity Center should adhere to a master plan established through a public process, and the plan should establish measurable commercial, housing, school capacity, and transportation goals. The master plan should specify the uses, urban form, densities or intensities, building scale, building heights and types, and design features or controls intended for the area. New development should feel complimentary to existing neighborhoods.



Gateway Illustrative Concept Map

The concept map offers an illustrative framework, subject to further exploration and refinement in the master plan process, to transform Gateway into a major hub for employment, entertainment, and innovation in Howard County while emphasizing housing, open space, transportation mobility, environmental stewardship, and civic principles that make the activity center a “complete community”.

General Considerations

1. Plan for Significant Growth and Development in Gateway (not keyed to a specific location on the map)
2. Showcase Industrial Uses in a Reimagined Gateway (not keyed to a specific location on the map)
3. Create a Public Realm Framework for Organizing New Development and Open Space in Gateway
4. Consider Impacts of Flight Paths for BWI Airport in the Design of Gateway (not keyed to a specific location on the map)
5. Take Green Design to the Next Level (not keyed to a specific location on the map)
6. Emphasize Civic Uses, Educational Facilities and Infrastructure, and Community Facilities (not keyed to a specific location on the map)
7. Increase Mobility Options in and Leading to Gateway
8. Build an Interconnected Street Network that Follows Existing Property Lines and Creates Walkable Blocks
9. Phase Development with Consideration for Existing Development Patterns and Property Ownership
10. Provide a Mix of Housing Options in Gateway (not keyed to a specific location on the map)
11. Showcase Innovative Design and Insist on High-Quality Building Architecture Throughout Gateway (not keyed to a specific location on the map)

