

Amendment 76 to Council Bill No. 28 -2023

BY: Deb Jung

Legislative Day 11

Date: 10/02/2023

Amendment No. 76

(This Amendment makes the following changes to HoCo by Design Chapter 7 and Chapter 11:

*Chapter 7: Quality
By Design*

- *Removes all quotes;*
- *Removes language about planting obscuring sightlines;*
- *Adds Harper’s Choice and Hickory Ridge to the list of examples of Village Centers that follow conventional development patterns;*
- *Removes language about the process to amend New Town zoning and substitutes a description of how New Town zoning embodies the General Plan’s intent;*
- *Clarifies that conventional zoning is still appropriate for existing residential neighborhoods and commercial centers;*
- *Removes the sixth and seventh paragraphs of the section titled “Preserving Character in Future Development” and substitutes a paragraph describing the history and character of the New Town Zoning District;*
- *Amends the QBD-1 Policy Statement Implementing Actions to remove a requirement to build on the 2018 Development Regulations Assessment and incorporate opportunities to codify current practices, add a requirement to create a taskforce to determine how to preserve New Town’s planned community framework, fixed densities, and existing character, and remove a revision of the New Town Zoning District based on design guidelines and character based codes;*
- *Amends the QBD-2 Policy Statement Implementing Actions to clarify the FLUM may be used to guide redevelopment rather than must be used, add an incentivization for affordable home ownership, and add a new market study for retail demand;*
- *Amends the QBD-3 Policy Statement Implementing Actions to clarify the orientation of commercial buildings is prioritized;*
- *Removes language about accessing parking via an alley or front loaded driveway;*
- *Amends the QBD-4 Policy Statement Implementing Actions to remove the encouragement of infill housing typologies that create smaller more affordable units and add assurance that adequate parking exists for all infill development;*

*Chapter 11:
Implementation*

- *Amends the QBD-1 Policy Statement Implementing Actions to remove a requirement to build on the 2018 Development Regulations Assessment and incorporate opportunities to codify*

current practices, add a requirement to create a taskforce to determine how to preserve New Town's planned community framework, fixed densities, and existing character, and remove a revision of the New Town Zoning District based on design guidelines and character based codes;

- *Amends the QBD-2 Policy Statement Implementing Actions to clarify the FLUM may be used to guide redevelopment rather than must be used, add an incentivization for affordable home ownership, and add a new market study for retail demand;*
- *Amends the QBD-3 Policy Statement Implementing Actions to clarify the orientation of commercial buildings is prioritized; and*
- *Amends the QBD-4 Policy Statement Implementing Actions to remove the encouragement of infill housing typologies that create smaller more affordable units and add assurance that adequate parking exists for all infill development.)*

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 7: Quality By Design: 17, 21, 22, 25, 26, 27, 30, 31, 34, 38, 39, 40, 42, and 44;
- 4 • Chapter 11: Implementation: 46, 47, 48, and 49.

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

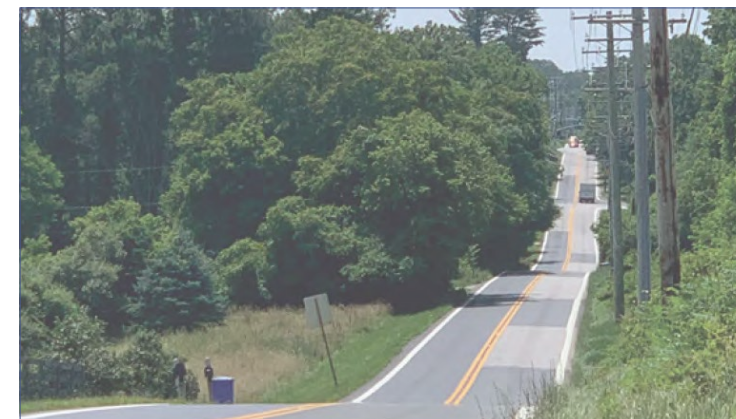
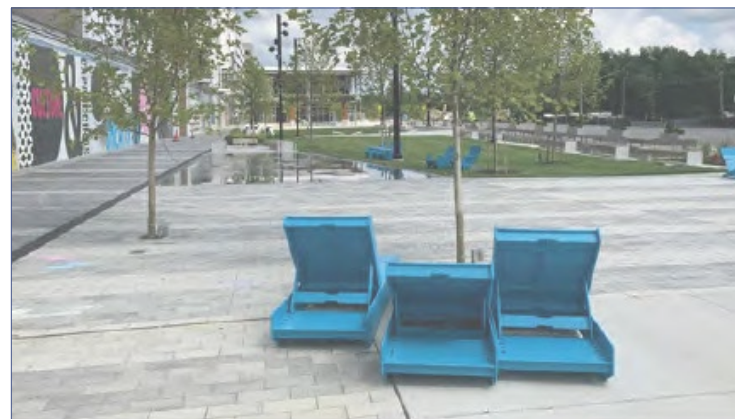
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Open Space

Open space patterns influence community character and offer different benefits. Broad building setbacks, buffers between uses, and large parking lot islands can provide stormwater management and landscaping. These serve an aesthetic function and provide some environmental benefit but offer little social or recreational benefit. Stream valley open space networks located behind buildings offer environmental and recreational benefits but are not very visible and prominent. Community commons and open spaces located along street and building frontages and designed as community focal points provide social and aesthetic benefits as highly visible public spaces. Each of these open space patterns are appropriate for specific applications, and it will take careful consideration to determine the pattern best suited for each situation.

Howard County's geography, natural systems, protected areas, rigorous landscape requirements, and maturing landscape in developed areas have resulted in a community character where the landscape often predominates over the built form. As a result, the landscape becomes the major organizing and structural element in the neighborhood, a circumstance which may neutralize a variety of architectural styles. This emphasis on the landscape can be positive if architecture is not of a character that the community desires. ~~Conversely, too much planting can often obscure and negate superior architecture or important sightlines to major cultural or community focused spaces.~~

The landscape in developed areas also reflects a shift from an emphasis on the amount of planting, to an emphasis on the use of native and non-invasive plants. These areas have also shifted from solely increasing tree canopy coverage to providing more ecologically-beneficial landscapes in the overall landscape design.



Roadways and Corridors

Transportation networks also contribute to community character, and the existing roadways are a prevalent feature of the County's defined character. From the interstate highways that convey travelers at great speeds, it is easy for people to move effortlessly across landforms and from one place to another. Individual details of the landscape become less important than the networks of forest, farmland, and broad views.

Howard County has created broad landscaped corridors along its major interstates and has begun to transform its secondary routes into more walkable environments. A shift to more walkable corridors—along with increased attention to pedestrian and cyclist connectivity—is supported by the Route 1 Manual, Route 40 Design Manual, and the Complete Streets Policy.

In the western portion of the County, there has been a desire to maintain the agrarian viewsheds from the roadway. Within the East, there is a similar focus on preserving the character of scenic roads (views of forests and stream valleys, and narrow, winding, and/or hilly roads) through recent regulatory changes that strengthen and protect viewsheds. Off the highways and along secondary and local roadways with lower speeds and tighter design, the crossing of a river, changes in landforms, and the details of adjacent buildings and the landscape become more apparent. On bike and on foot, these details are even more pronounced, and the presence of street trees along public and private roads has become an organizing element in the suburban landscape.

new toWn Columbia

New Town Columbia stands out as a carefully planned community initiated by a single developer with a vision to be carried out over time. In 1967, Columbia's founder, James Rouse, set out to design and build a city. A conscious, planned approach, this novel endeavor resulted in one of the most talked about New Towns of mid-20th century America, an inspiration for planned communities across the country. Rouse envisioned the planned community of Columbia as a socially responsible, environmentally friendly, and financially successful place in which people of all ages, incomes, and backgrounds could grow as individuals, neighbors, and citizens. Today, Columbia is a thriving unincorporated city with over 100,000 residents living in ten villages, each containing multiple neighborhoods. His strategic vision for what was to be a new kind of community that he applied to the development of New Town Columbia included the following objectives:

1. Provide a real, comprehensive, balanced city.
2. Respect the land and allow the land to impose itself as a discipline on the form of the community.
3. Provide the best possible environment for the growth of people.
4. Realize a profit.

Columbia includes ten villages, each containing multiple neighborhood clusters organized around a village center. The ten villages are organized around Town Center, which includes Downtown Columbia. As "Respect for the Land" was one of the four formative goals for Columbia, clustered development patterns and the curvilinear road network are informed by the open space system, which is defined by the natural drainage patterns. The open spaces and roads, therefore, serve a dual role in both connecting and separating the distinct components of Columbia. Because it follows natural drainage patterns, much of the open space network has historically been located behind structures.

Most of Columbia's village centers are inward-oriented and located on neighborhood-serving roads. However, River Hill, [Harper's Choice](#), and [Hickory Ridge](#) Village ~~Center is~~ [Centers are](#) located on a busy ~~roadway~~ [roadways](#) and ~~follows~~ [follow](#) more conventional suburban retail development patterns. As Town Center and the village centers mature and, in some cases, redevelop, development patterns are following more recent trends that increase the visibility of retail uses and emphasize walkability. Other distinct characteristics of Columbia include the emphasis on landscape; the incorporation of lakes in Town Center and several villages, and the retention of historic features, such as former manor homes, barns, and hedgerows. Despite having an extensive pathway and sidewalk network, Columbia is generally auto-oriented. It is trending, however, toward redevelopment and has begun to incorporate infrastructure improvements that enhance bicycle accommodations and walkability.

DoWntoWn Columbia

In 2010, Howard County adopted the Downtown Columbia Plan following five years of debate, discussion, and dialogue with a wide array of stakeholders. The plan's goal is to revitalize downtown, creating a diverse, mixed-use, physically distinctive, and human-scaled place with a rich variety of housing choices, business opportunities, and recreational, civic, cultural, and educational amenities. The plan's implementation is well underway, with many investments completed or in process to realize this vision.

majoR pRovisions of neW toWn zoning

In 2014, Columbia Association's planning staff (the late Jane Dembner) prepared a New Town Zoning Briefing Paper for the Columbia Association Board of Directors. This briefing paper noted that New Town zoning regulations were adopted in 1965 and remained relatively unchanged until 2009 and 2010, when changes were made to address village center redevelopment and Downtown Columbia revitalization. The briefing paper listed the following as major provisions of New Town zoning regulations:

- **District size:** a New Town zoning district must contain at least 2,500 contiguous acres. (Columbia is the County's only New Town district and comprises 14,272 acres.)
- **Flexibility in land use:** New Town permits all uses allowed in other county zoning districts except heavy manufacturing and mobile homes.
- **Open space preservation:** New Town zoning requires that 36 percent of the lands zoned New Town be for open space uses. This requirement, combined with the design of Columbia, has resulted in a distinctive tight weave of Columbia's open space areas, residential neighborhoods, and clustered housing sites. Columbia's open space is a defining and distinguishing feature of Columbia.
- **Overall housing density:** Overall density (gross density) may not exceed 2.5 dwelling units per acre of New Town zoned land. The maximum number of dwellings permitted by the Downtown Columbia redevelopment process is in addition to this density limit.
- **Mixed-use requirements:** New Town requires a mix of various land uses, with minimum and maximum percentages and allows flexibility in the geographic placement of those uses.

The General Plan does not [propose to](#) change these provisions. ~~Any changes to New Town zoning would be considered through a public process to update the Zoning Regulations. New Town embodies much of HoCo By Design's intended goals: walkability, diverse housing options, and equitable access to open space. Continuity of neighborhoods is critical to the feel and success of New Town.~~



pReSeRving ChaRacteR in futuRe Development

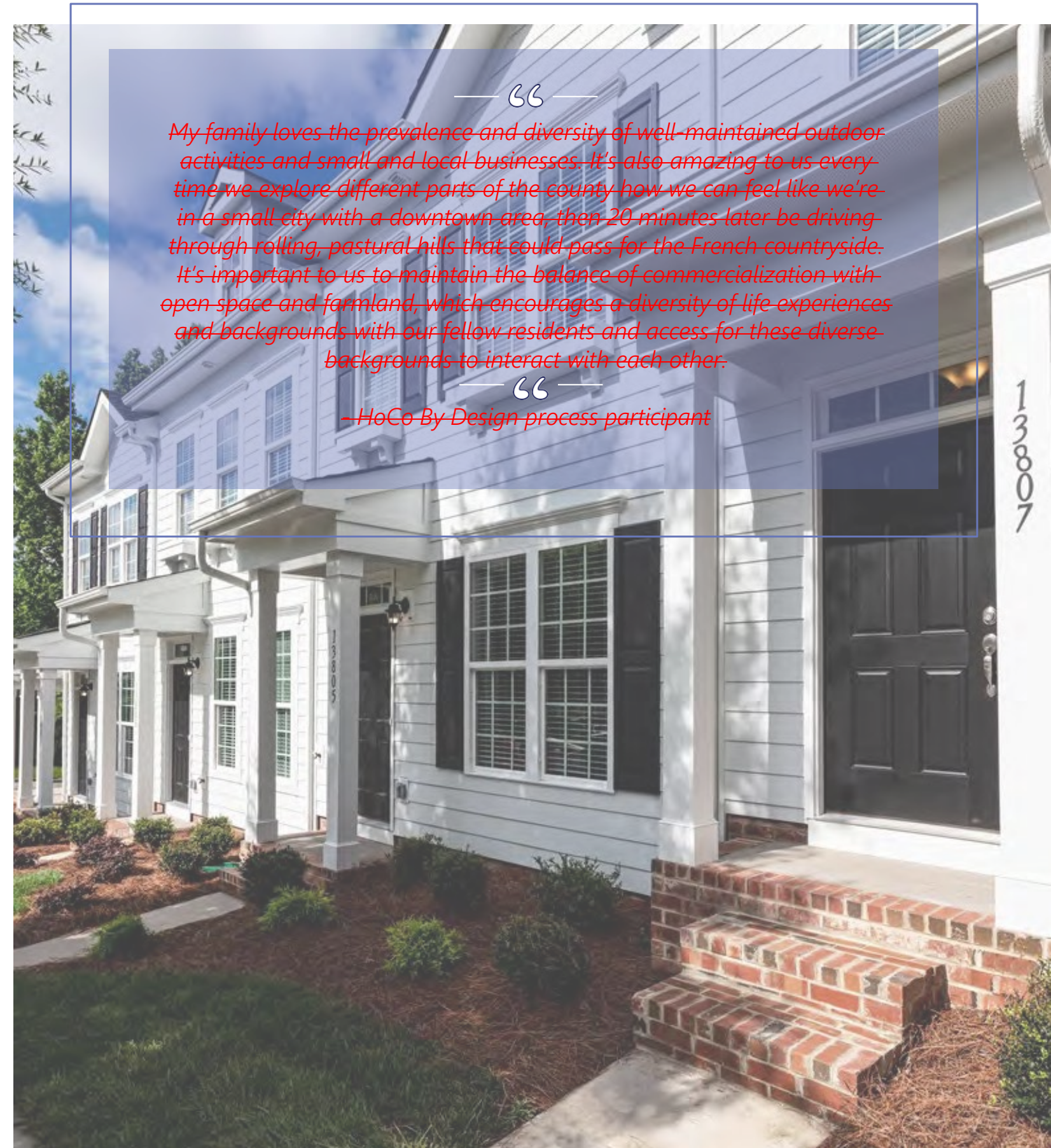
Development standards can and should encourage high-quality future development. These standards should clearly articulate the community's desired vision for an area targeted for development or redevelopment to help the County obtain the type and quality of development it seeks. New developments, redevelopments, and infill developments should use best practice placemaking and urban design principles to achieve high-quality built environments, preserve and incorporate natural features, and establish transitions between the built and natural realms. Key design elements could include the use of building articulation, building placement and site planning principles, building design transitions across landscapes, landscape design, plantings, stormwater management, and open spaces.

The County's existing ordinances regulate a largely-suburban built environment but could be enhanced to further protect the built and natural character of the County and to promote more walkable, high-quality development, where appropriate. The County's Zoning Regulations, Subdivision and Land Development Regulations, and design manuals will need to be reviewed and rewritten to support the vision and policies presented in the General Plan—especially provisions related to context-sensitive new construction in existing neighborhoods, and walkable, mixed-use development in new activity centers.

Conventional zoning ~~may still be~~ is still appropriate for existing single-family residential neighborhoods and strip commercial centers. However, the adoption of an ordinance or guiding document that incorporates more character-based (or form-based) elements will assist in achieving high-quality development that is in keeping with the character of Howard County and the desires of the community.

In contrast with conventional zoning that emphasizes separating uses, a character-based (or form-based) code uses character, or the look and feel of a place, as the primary organizing principle for new development. Hybrid codes may also combine conventional zoning with character-based elements.

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, encourage development patterns that are consistent with the historic character, and create opportunities to establish future districts that may benefit from such designation criteria.



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My family loves the prevalence and diversity of well-maintained outdoor activities and small and local businesses. It's also amazing to us every time we explore different parts of the county how we can feel like we're in a small city with a downtown area, then 20 minutes later be driving through rolling, pastoral hills that could pass for the French countryside. It's important to us to maintain the balance of commercialization with open space and farmland, which encourages a diversity of life experiences and backgrounds with our fellow residents and access for these diverse backgrounds to interact with each other.

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—HoCo By Design process participant

ChaRacter-based Elements

Character-based code elements emphasize context of development and may apply to a designated area or more generally within the overall land use regulations and zoning codes. They could be used to regulate a number of factors, including building height and placement, parking locations, street frontage, sidewalks, planting areas, drainage, density, and the street itself. This information is conveyed with specific instructions and often includes easy-to-understand diagrams or other graphic illustrations.

While character-based concepts can be applied anywhere, they are most successful in: areas that have a mix of uses, historic communities, and Rural Crossroad areas. A character-based approach to land use regulation in Howard County may yield more walkable, compact, and diverse, mixed-use environments.

Character-based code elements are used to achieve the following:

1. Create neighborhoods where development is appropriately scaled to surrounding land uses and the public realm.
2. Encourage active transportation (e.g. walking, biking, etc.).
3. Foster social cohesion.

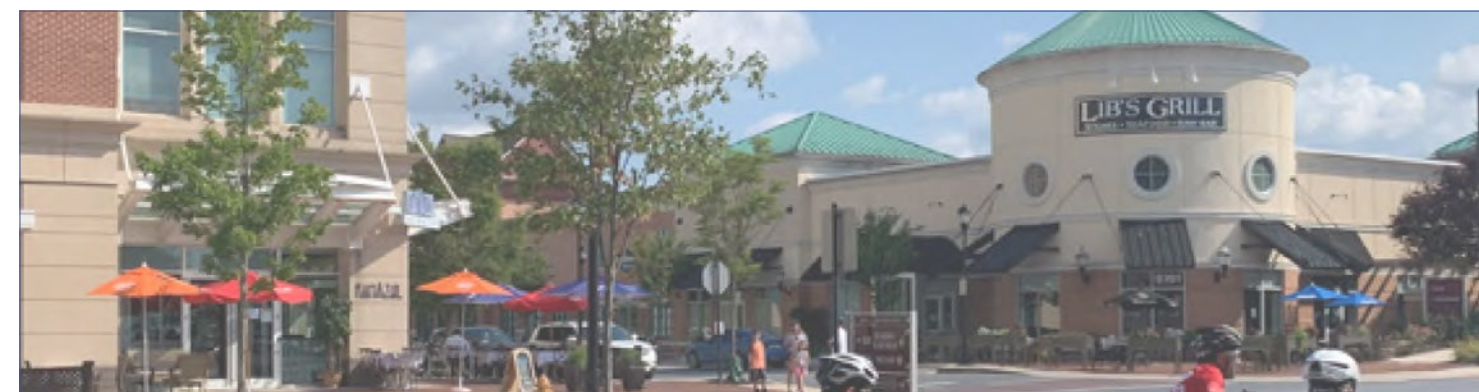
~~The New Town Zoning District represents more than 14,000 acres and 28,000 parcels in Columbia. The New Town District is comprised of 268 approved Final Development Plans (FDPs) and a regulatory structure that results in challenges for FDP amendments and is difficult to administer. Over time, ownership has changed and development has advanced making it challenging to reconcile the district's original goals and organizational structure.~~

~~In 2018, Howard County completed a Development Regulations Assessment and Annotated Outline for its Zoning Ordinance. It recommended, in part, significant changes to the New Town Zoning District. Zoning experts cite vague, poorly defined language in some cases and much too detailed language in others as significant challenges to administering New Town zoning. They also claim that the absence of flexibility in New Town zoning and requirements for multiple rounds of approvals will put Columbia at a disadvantage when competing for desired future investment.~~

The New Town Zoning District represents more than 14,000 acres and 28,000 parcels in Columbia. Created as a planned community by a visionary developer over 50 years ago, it is today frequently cited as one of the best places to live in the Country. Columbia has a unique sense of place, much like an historic district, that its residents want to preserve and enhance, as reported by the Columbia Association's testimony to the County Council on June 28, 2023. Columbia's original master plan contained a focus on open space in proportion to housing units that has been preserved over the decades and results in a wooded suburban community. The architectural character, although representing an earlier era, is also part of the community's signature feel. One of Columbia's founding principles was to provide a full-spectrum of housing that still exists today and provides the majority of affordable housing options in the County. Older parts of Columbia have some of the County's highest proportion of multi-family units and more affordable older single-family homes and townhouses. This relationship should be acknowledged and considered when determining locations for new affordable housing.

As a complement to character-based or hybrid zoning, pattern books or design guidelines and manuals can serve as a framework for preferred architectural patterns, styles, and details in the community. They can provide guidelines and standards for building types, building composition and massing, building materials, roof types and details, windows, doors, porches, and other architectural elements. They can also include standards for landscaping, lighting, fences, walls, signage, and other outdoor elements. The scope is typically limited to specific districts, neighborhoods, or activity centers in the community. While pure form-based codes can be challenging to develop, form-based elements can be used to support more traditional zoning regulations using hybrid approaches to further achieve desired character outcomes.

The HoCo By Design Character Areas technical appendix provides additional design-related guidance for future code updates.



hoWaRD County's Design aDvisoRy pAnel

The Design Advisory Panel (DAP) is a seven-member panel of professionals, including architects, landscape architects, planners, urban designers, and civil engineers, who provide recommendations regarding proposed plans for development or redevelopment that are subject to DAP review.

Created by the Howard County Council in 2009, the purpose of the DAP is to encourage excellence in site design and architecture, promote design compatibility with surrounding development, promote revitalization, and enhance property values.

The DAP provides design advice on proposed subdivisions and site development plans when they are subject to the Route 1 Manual, Route 40 Design Manual, New Town Village Center Design Guidelines, Downtown-wide Design Guidelines or Downtown Neighborhood Design Guidelines, Clarksville Pike Streetscape Plan and Design Guidelines, compatibility criteria for conditional use applications, or design guidelines consistent with the requirements of the County's adopted Zoning Regulations.

The DAP also provides guidance regarding the following:

1. The design for buildings, vehicular circulation and access, pedestrian access and linkages, parking, loading, dumpsters, external mechanical units, existing trees, landscaping, hardscape, conceptual designs for graphic elements, and walls and fences.
2. Building scale and massing in relation to and compatible with the surrounding area and with significant and contextual adjacencies, and appropriate responses to existing site conditions, grading, and stormwater management.
3. Building architectural style, materials, entrances, windows, roof design, and colors.
4. Open space on the site including pathways, public spaces, street furniture, amenity areas, and similar features.
5. The design of exterior lighting devices and potential disturbances to the public and adjacent properties.
6. Principles of sustainability and green design.



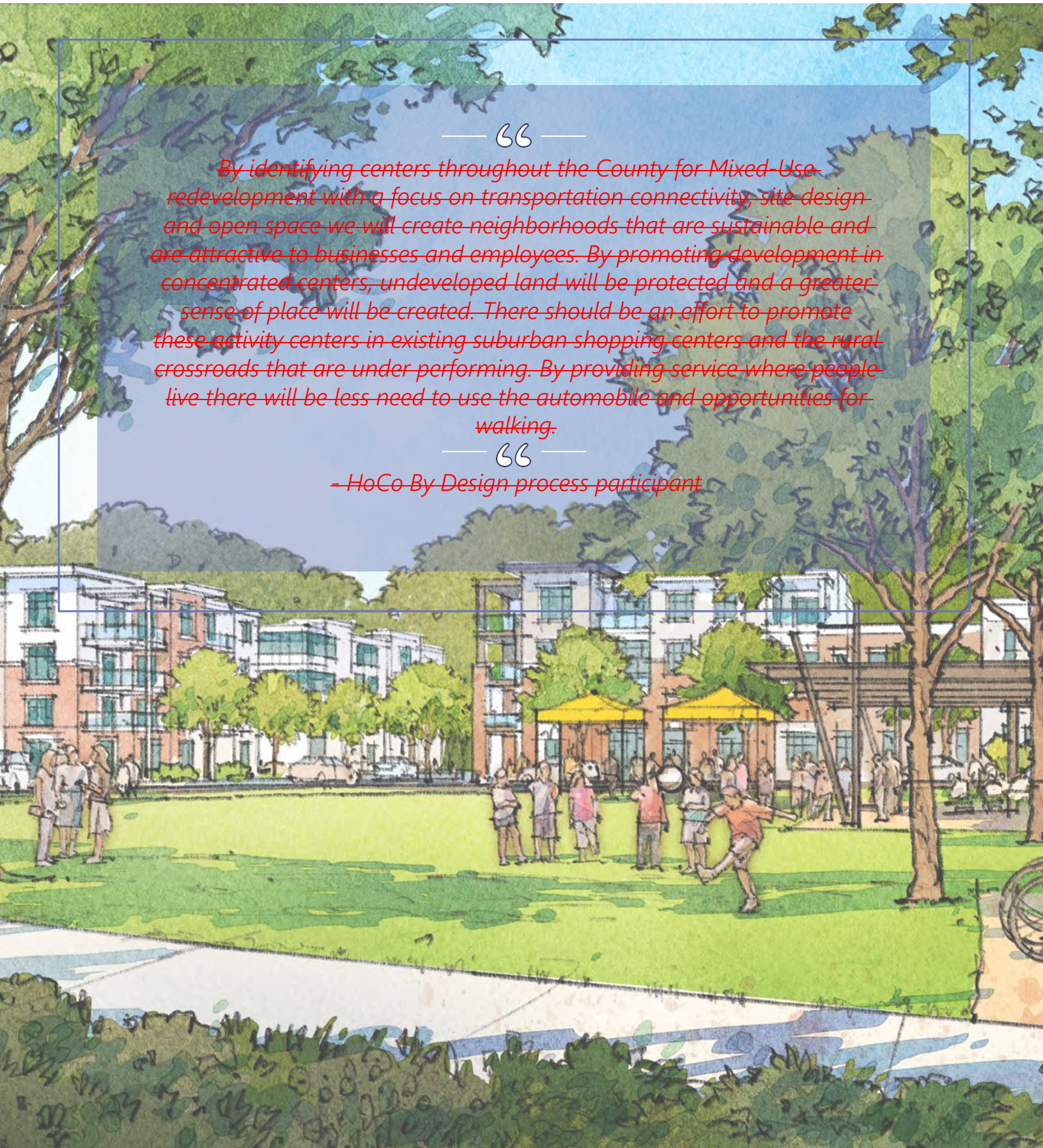
Regional examples of how character and design can be prioritized in new development.

QBD-1 Policy Statement

Prioritize character and design in future development, recognizing variations in Howard County's unique areas.

Implementing Actions

1. Identify areas to investigate character-based zoning concepts and consider the use of pattern books, design guidelines and manuals, or a hybrid approach to establish an intended character and design elements for different character areas in Howard County.
2. ~~Build on the 2018 Development Regulations Assessment to update the County's Zoning Regulations and Subdivision and Land Development Regulations and policies. Incorporate opportunities to codify current practices and create regulations and design standards for new developments, infill developments, and redevelopments.~~
3. ~~2.~~ Evaluate the existing historic district zones and consider replacing them with new historic zoning district overlays or form-based districts.
4. ~~3.~~ Review the current Design Advisory Panel (DAP) review areas and approved guidelines for updates. Consider whether the role of the DAP should be expanded to other areas within Howard County.
4. ~~Create a taskforce to determine how to preserve New Town's planned community framework, fixed densities, and existing character as defined through the master development plan while considering future redevelopment~~
5. ~~Revise the New Town Zoning District and investigate the use of enhanced design guidelines and character-based or form-based codes in Columbia.~~
 - a. ~~Build upon the preferred development types, patterns, intensities, and design elements described in HoCo By Design's Character Areas technical appendix.~~
 - b. ~~Take into consideration the design and planning principles illustrated in HoCo By Design's Focus Areas technical appendix.~~
 - c. ~~Explore rules and requirements for design review by the Design Advisory Panel, or a combination of staff and the DAP.~~
 - d. ~~Identify the appropriate purpose and timing of design review within the development review process.~~



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By identifying centers throughout the County for Mixed-Use redevelopment with a focus on transportation connectivity, site design and open space we will create neighborhoods that are sustainable and are attractive to businesses and employees. By promoting development in concentrated centers, undeveloped land will be protected and a greater sense of place will be created. There should be an effort to promote these activity centers in existing suburban shopping centers and the rural crossroads that are under performing. By providing service where people live there will be less need to use the automobile and opportunities for walking.

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—HoCo By Design process participant

Identifying and Transforming Activity Centers Throughout the County

Traditional suburban communities are changing. As land available for greenfield development runs out, communities, stakeholders, and County government will have to adjust to meet the social, economic, infrastructure, character, and environmental needs of the future. Positioning mature suburban communities for new opportunities requires considering market demands, demographics, regional forces, infrastructure capacity, community actions and reactions, physical planning, and phasing redevelopment in specific areas with fractured land ownership, as well as government rules and policies.

To accommodate growth and continue to provide a high level of service and infrastructure, the County will need to embrace redevelopment opportunities. Several decades of conventional suburban development, combined with land preservation efforts, have resulted in a community with very little developable land remaining, a wide spectrum of character typologies, and a population increasingly reliant on automobiles.

HoCo By Design seeks to identify activity centers that promote mixed-use, walkable development areas throughout the community as areas for transformation. These activity centers are depicted in the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) presented in the Growth & Conservation Framework Chapter. Character areas that provide opportunities for the County to grow and innovate with future activity centers include Downtown Columbia, Regional Activity Center (Gateway), Transit Activity Center, Industrial Mixed-Use Center, Village Activity Center, and Mixed-Use Activity Center. The FLUM and character areas aim to create more predictability around what type of development will occur in these targeted areas. These activity centers provide opportunities to reimagine Howard County's future and introduce new mixed-use employment centers, regional shopping centers, entertainment areas, and upper-story or adjacent residential units in appropriate locations.

The overall goal is to allow and promote compact mixed-use development patterns in county activity centers that create places where people live, work, shop, and play as a cohesive community—furthering the economic vitality and sustainability of the area. Mixed-use development also increases the efficiency of the utilities and transportation serving the area and enhances the sense of community experienced by residents, business owners, and visitors.

These new activity centers in the County will evolve over time in terms of land use mix, density and intensity, home choices, and transportation options. Each activity center's design will be unique, resulting in a variety of mixed-use places. These are the areas where the County should emphasize public and private investment—increasing allowable densities and intensities, adding infrastructure capacity (such as public schools, fire stations, and other public facilities), improving access from nearby neighborhoods, investing in streetscape improvements, and encouraging affordable housing.

When developing activity centers, integrating transportation design principles creates cohesive, fluid, and engaging experiences for cyclists and pedestrians. Many suburban rights-of-way (ROW) were designed for high-speed, auto-only travel. By narrowing travel lanes and adding on-street parking, sidewalks, and planting strips, streets can be made safer and more walkable, creating a more user-friendly, aesthetically-pleasing public realm. Redevelopment can also address barriers to non-motorized connectivity in places like aging shopping centers by enhancing pedestrian connections and creating internal drives with infill buildings fronting onto them. Rather than having large surface parking lots between the building and the street, this redevelopment approach relocates parking to the rear of buildings, thereby achieving better land use transition patterns.

Many of the activity centers identified in the FLUM are existing suburban shopping centers and office parks that contain large swaths of impermeable areas and often reflect outdated automobile-centric site designs. Retrofitting aging building sites allows developers to take advantage of existing infrastructure and services. Such redevelopment further helps to mitigate the effects of sprawl by providing better connections to transit and mobility corridors.

Green Redevelopment

Redevelopment of existing shopping centers provides significant environmental benefits by introducing open space, community gathering areas, and stormwater management where none currently exist. Examples of open space elements that can be added in redeveloped centers include small parks, squares, plazas, and community gardens. New or improved stormwater management, which incorporates environmental site design practices, reduces impervious area and adverse impacts to sensitive watersheds. The County currently reviews energy and water efficiency requirements in its Building Code every three years and during the Building Code update process. The County should continue to review these requirements to ensure they reflect the most recent best practices. To further these green initiatives, the County should explore integrating additional environmentally sustainable design standards in future updates for the Zoning Regulations, site design requirements, and environmental programs.

In 2020, Howard County added bird-friendly design standards to its pre-existing Green Building requirements (which apply to new public buildings of 10,000 square feet or larger and new private buildings of 50,000 square feet or larger). The purpose of bird-friendly design is to reduce the likelihood that birds will collide with buildings. Design techniques include use of façade materials that are more visible to birds and reduction of excessive artificial lights that can disorient migrating birds.



QBD-2 Policy Statement

Use the The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) may be used to guide redevelopment in identified activity centers, which present opportunities for mixed-use development, mixed-income housing, small parks or community gathering spaces, increased stormwater management, and multi-modal transportation options.

Implementing Actions

1. Use-Consider using the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) during the rezoning process to create activity centers consistent with the character area descriptions.
2. Assess existing Subdivision and Land Development Regulations, Zoning Regulations, and Design Advisory Panel design review policies for opportunities to create or strengthen regulations and design standards for activity center development/redevelopment. Evaluate potential standards for frontage design, main entrance location, and parking calculations. Incorporate accessibility by including standards and guidance to ensure there is direct access to the building from the street.
3. Review the Zoning Regulations and design manuals to identify ways to mitigate the impacts of auto-oriented uses and minimize negative impacts, including odor, noise, light, air pollution, and diesel emissions.
4. Ensure redevelopment of suburban shopping centers and office parks reduces impervious surface, increases open space, and provides adequate stormwater management, where none or little existed before.
5. Explore integrating additional environmentally sustainable design standards in future updates to the Zoning Regulations, site design requirements, and environmental programs to further green initiatives.
6. When retrofitting shopping centers and business parks, investigate opportunities to create mixed-income housing for all residents. Incentivize affordable housing that can be purchased by low and moderate income buyers.
7. Ensure better retail success in the Village Centers by initiating a new market study to update the 2014 study that will clearly identify supportable retail types and quantities at each center. Non-retail uses, including civic and cultural, should be included. This becomes a roadmap regarding support for and input into county and developer proposals.

Enhancing the public Realm and Walkability

The public realm is comprised of the spaces between the buildings, including the streets, sidewalks, parks, and other public spaces. Plans for these spaces ensure that community character remains at the forefront as development, redevelopment, and infill occurs.

The concept of accessibility and walkability is a thread that is woven throughout this document in character area descriptions, redevelopment recommendations, and policy statements. A walkable community achieves a balance between multiple modes of transportation and ensures equitable accessibility for persons of all ages and abilities. A walkable place reduces reliance on automobiles and not only encourages walking and biking, but also makes it safe and appealing to pedestrians and cyclists. In Howard County, sprawling development patterns and a disconnected network of pedestrian facilities can make it difficult to travel by foot in some areas, especially for those who may use mobility devices. Many of the existing commercial and suburban retail developments in Howard County remain automobile focused.

A comprehensive approach to design and investment in public spaces and transportation corridors creates opportunities to coordinate projects that reinforce a common community vision. The ability to create walkable environments through investments in the public realm can also influence travel behavior and nearby land uses and development densities.

In conventional development, commercial uses like gas stations, drive-through restaurants, and banks often place the building at the back of the lot and the vehicular circulation in the front. Flipping the two helps activate the

Benefits of a Walkable Community

- A walkable location with a mix of uses generates more foot traffic, which encourages retail sales.
- Mixed-use environments are generally more economically-resilient and able to evolve with changing demographics.
- The ability to walk and ride transit reduces the need for and costs of car ownership¹.
- Providing walkability throughout Howard County would be a benefit to lower-income families, who may be more reliant on walking.
- A walkable environment can help people incorporate exercise into their daily lives at no cost.
- Communities designed to be walkable have the potential to improve air quality by reducing short car trips.
- Walkable neighborhoods generally have lower rates of traffic fatalities—for both pedestrians and motorists.
- Seniors who choose to give up driving may be able to remain independent longer if they are able to walk to services.

¹The average cost of owning and operating a car in 2019 (per AAA) was more than \$9,000 per year.

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Plan and design land use and transportation systems together in a walkable equitable manner.

— “ —
—HoCo By-Design process participant



Public Art and Planning


According to the American Planning Association, Planning Advisory Service report entitled Public Art and Planning, "Public art can be an engaging tool for creating a sense of place that reflects the character, history, and values of a community. Communities can use public art to further economic growth and sustainability, cultural identity, social cohesion, and public health. There are numerous ways to incorporate art into the built environment and everyday planning processes in a way that engages diverse stakeholders."

street and create a more pedestrian-friendly streetscape. Scale, shade, comfort, and commercial uses activating the street become as important as the infrastructure itself.

Redevelopment in Columbia's downtown and village centers, as well as recent planned mixed-use developments, emphasize design for pedestrians and bicyclists. The County already has some tools in place with the Route 1 Manual, Route 40 Design Manual, and the Clarksville Pike Streetscape Plan and Design Guidelines, which guide design of the public realm. HoCo By Design's County in Motion chapter also provides policies and recommendations related to walkability and bikeability.

Finally, the location of recreational open space in new developments and redevelopments impacts its usability. The County's Subdivision and Land Development Regulations should be updated to ensure the creation of usable and accessible community open space.

QBD-3 Policy Statement

 Focus on creating active, walkable, and universally accessible public realms in all new development and redevelopment and include a broad range of community spaces, as appropriate to each character area.

Implementing Actions

1. Prioritize the orientation of **commercial** buildings toward the street in all new development and redevelopment to create more walkable places.
2. Work with stakeholders and community members to incorporate policies for diverse and inclusive public art and cultural expression throughout the County. Identify potential partnerships for strengthening public art programs and art education opportunities.
3. Continue to work with stakeholders of all ages and abilities to identify strategies for universal access to employment centers, stores, parks, and recreation and community amenities.
4. Establish goals and guidelines for providing community open spaces and park spaces to create more equitable access across different neighborhoods in Howard County. Ideally, residents should have a variety of open space choices within walking or biking distance of their home.
5. Evaluate the goals described in the Route 1 Manual, Route 40 Design Manual, Clarksville Pike Streetscape Plan and Design Guidelines, and Complete Streets Policy for updates and determine if there are items in these manuals that could be adapted more broadly within the County.
6. Use a holistic approach to incorporating transportation infrastructure into the public realm that focuses on connections and universal user experience.

Addressing Context-Sensitive Design

Future development in the County will be guided by character areas applied to the Future Land Use Map (FLUM). Transformative redevelopment in activity centers will become the primary means of change across different areas and places in the County. However, in some cases, neighborhoods may present opportunities for small-scale, context-sensitive infill development and redevelopment that complements the character and uses of surrounding homes and neighborhoods.

In conventional suburban patterns where different uses are separated, clear boundaries and buffers are established to mitigate the impacts of adjacent incompatible uses. A shift to redevelopment presents an opportunity to reimagine site design for both residential and nonresidential buildings. Redevelopment can incorporate best practice design principles that create complete streets, provide for high-quality architecture, construct meaningful open spaces, and maintain the character of existing neighborhoods. Incorporating smaller-scale housing and commercial and office activity centers in areas adjacent to existing residential neighborhoods creates both a challenge and an opportunity. By focusing on transitions in form and massing, the County can begin to infill around its single-use residential areas with contextually-appropriate mixed-use development.

Community character is shaped in large part by the way developments respond to the land, interface with other uses, relate to streets and civic spaces, and reinforce connections. These factors often have a greater impact on character than the use of the buildings themselves. Well-coordinated site and structure design provide an overarching context for a place that transcends its use.

There are many early subdivision neighborhoods in Howard County that may not be officially designated as historic but are older neighborhoods consisting of housing types that are no longer commonly built. Many such neighborhoods are characterized by large lots and mature trees. These neighborhoods have experienced more recent infill development with new houses placed behind existing homes, often accessed off pipestem driveways. In these situations, the new construction tends to follow market trends and is often not compatible with the existing neighborhood in site orientation, bulk, massing, and proportion. These developments can slowly change the character of the neighborhoods.

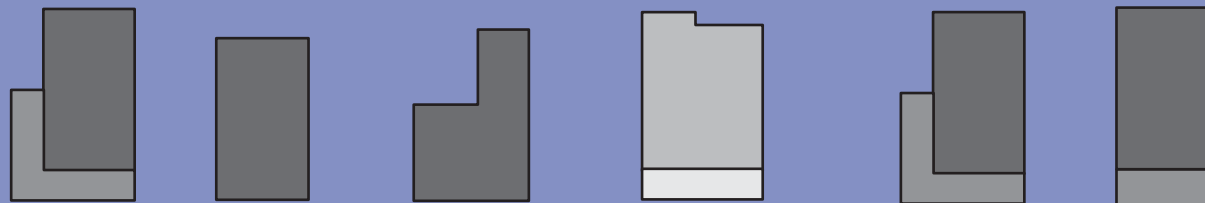
— ☺ —
The form (design/massing/site placement) of new housing types is more important than the type of housing. Architecture and site planning do more to shape how housing forms feel in a neighborhood and disparate forms create anxiety and opposition.

— ☺ —
-HoCo By Design process participant

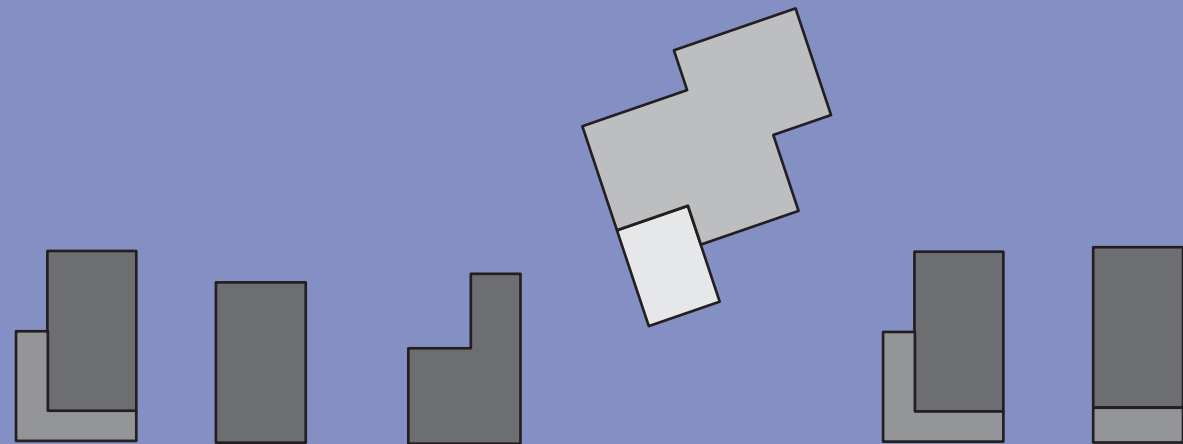
Context-Sensitive Design in Established Neighborhoods

New homes can blend into established neighborhoods through compatible site orientation, bulk, massing, and proportion.

In the following diagram, the new home in the center (shown in light gray) is oriented to the street, just like the existing homes (shown in dark gray). The new home follows the same setback from the street as the existing homes. While not identical to each home on the street, the new home's proportions (depth and width) are comparable to other existing homes. The porch on the new home spans the width of the home, like others on the street, and features similar proportions to existing porches.



Compared to the example above, the new home in the diagram below (shown in light gray) is less compatible with existing homes. The new home is oriented at an angle (rather than towards the street) and is set further back from the existing homes. The new home's proportions also differ from all the existing homes on the street, as does its porch.



Infill Development

It is important that future infill in mature existing communities respects the character of both the built and natural environments. New development should consider existing adjacent development early in the application and conceptual design process. It should be compatible with the scale, bulk, massing, and proportion of the surrounding community. Architectural features may also reflect existing character and can help new development assimilate with nearby buildings through similarly sized and patterned architectural features, such as windows, doors, awnings, arcades, cornices, facade materials, roof types, and other details.

Small infill sites where existing development patterns are established and expected to remain can use building form and placement to avoid incompatible adjacencies. For example, a quadplex with four units can be designed to look nearly the same as a single-family home, allowing it to fit seamlessly into the neighborhood. Allocating parking to the rear of the lot, ~~accessed from an alley or a front-loaded driveway~~, allows the occupancy of the building to appear comparable to adjacent houses. This infill approach provides an opportunity to include a variety of housing types and price points to address housing needs in Howard County.

On larger infill sites, new development across the street from existing development should be complementary in lot size and building massing and placement. New lots and buildings that differ significantly in massing and scale should be located towards the center of the development, with lots and building sizes gradually transitioning to the scale of existing surrounding development. Where these transitions are not possible due to existing neighborhood patterns, infill buildings should still maintain a consistent structure setback and provide a new massing and architecture that correlate to the adjacent building heights and architectural rhythms.

Similar treatments should be considered for small commercial or office buildings near existing neighborhoods. Commercial and industrial development near neighborhoods should be limited to operations that are low-intensity, unobtrusive, and at a scale and design compatible with nearby residential development. The design of these centers should transition effectively between residential and nonresidential uses, and include safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle access for nearby residents. New development should focus density and intensity around major intersections and provide appropriate transitions to less intense edges of the neighborhood. Similarly, massing should consider the edge transitions as well. New, taller, more dense buildings may occur at one end of the new development block, with medium, less dense buildings mid-block, and smaller, low-density buildings meeting the scale of the existing neighborhood. Transitions may also take place over rear lot lines, where one side of an existing block may have a different character than the opposite side of the new development block. Illustrative approaches to infill development in different settings are described in Technical Appendix C: Focus Areas.

Context-sensitive infill may be further achieved through design guidelines that are specific to surrounding areas. Buildings and architecture in Howard County are highly varied and reflect several architectural styles, including Georgian, Federal, and Greek Revival styles and forms. Mid-century architecture was introduced with the development of Columbia, and new contemporary architecture is also prevalent throughout the County. These variations in architectural styles reinforce the character of different places, but often buildings and developments outside of historic areas, districts, and rural areas do not align with the character of the surrounding areas. Architectural compatibility can be achieved through design guidelines or pattern books to maintain the look and feel of mature neighborhoods; however, regulating architectural style would be challenging given the variety of styles present in the County.

Updates to development and redevelopment regulations can incorporate architectural and site design principles that better reflect unique areas, address pedestrian and transit-friendly opportunities in larger developments, and result in meaningful open spaces. Updates to the County Zoning Regulations should address infill development options in residential districts, which includes standards to ensure that new development is appropriate to the site and its surroundings. Architectural elements can also serve as important transitional features for new development. Where a clearly established building character is expected to remain, infill development should blend with nearby buildings by using similarly sized and patterned architectural features.

hoWaRD County lanDscape Manual

The Howard County Landscape Manual, which establishes standards of performance for preparing landscape plans, was last amended in 1998 (though a policy memorandum was added in 2010 to update recommended street tree and plant lists). As noted in the 2018 Development Regulations Assessment, there is a need to update the manual to better address issues related to quantities, species, spacing, and survival of plantings, as well as integration with solar technology. Updates could reconsider landscape standards for places in the County that are planned for a more walkable, mixed-use environment, such as planting calculations, screening requirements, placement design, and species mixes. The assessment also cited the need to review and strengthen landscape buffers along residential/commercial and residential/agricultural edges.



NatuRe and Context-Sensitive Design

As previously noted in this chapter, the natural landscape often serves as a unifying element in neighborhoods. Infill development and redevelopment can be designed to both respect natural features and accentuate them. For example, mature trees can be retained and new trees planted to enhance the existing landscape. Building setbacks (such as the space between buildings and the street) can be repeated in new development so existing patterns of green spaces (such as front yards) are maintained. Finally, the approach to design can emphasize adapting a building to a site (rather than adapting a site to a building), thereby reducing disturbance to natural features.

QBD-4 Policy Statement

Develop context-sensitive design standards appropriate for various scales of infill development to effectively transition between larger developments and established uses, and to encourage compatibility of small-scale infill within established neighborhoods.

Implementing Actions

1. Explore the implementation of form-based or character-based districts and neighborhood compatibility standards that emphasize massing and form over use type.
2. Investigate programs to preserve the community character of older neighborhoods that are not currently designated as historic or do not yet meet criteria to be designated as such.
3. ~~Encourage infill housing typologies that create smaller more affordable units, if they blend in with surrounding homes through context sensitive design.~~
4. 3. Review existing design manuals for updates to address contextual architecture design.
5. 4. Assess existing land use and zoning policies for opportunities to incorporate best practice placemaking and urban design principles that create transitions between land uses and between the built and natural environments.
6. 5. Update the Landscape Manual to reflect current best practices, and to provide clear direction on buffers that address the scale and mass of new development abutting existing development.
7. 6. Ensure that adequate parking exists for all infill developments.

Table 10-1: Implementation Matrix		
Policy and Implementing Actions	Lead Agency	Timeframe (Mid-Term five-year, Long-Term six+)
DN-15 - Increase access to and availability of affordable housing for people experiencing homelessness in Howard County.		
1. Seek out additional opportunities for partnerships on future housing developments to increase the number of homeless preference set-aside units developed in Howard County.	DCRS DHCD	Ongoing
2. Create awareness and advocacy around the needs of those experiencing homelessness whenever new housing developments are being planned and created.	DCRS DHCD	Ongoing
3. Evaluate the need for additional shelter/bed capacity, permanent supportive housing, and expanded public-private partnerships to address the needs of the County's chronically homeless and other individuals with special needs.	DCRS DHCD Private	Mid-Term
4. Explore opportunities for acquisition of blighted or under-utilized properties for the purposes of providing flexible shelter options and services for the homeless population.	DCRS DHCD	Ongoing
5. Seek opportunities to locate housing for the homeless or individuals with special needs in close proximity to jobs, amenities, and transportation connections.	DCRS DHC DPZ	Ongoing

Table 10-1: Implementation Matrix		
Policy and Implementing Actions	Lead Agency	Timeframe
QBD-1 - Prioritize character and design in future development, recognizing variations in Howard County's unique areas.		
1. Identify areas to investigate character-based zoning concepts and consider the use of pattern books, design guidelines and manuals, or a hybrid approach to establish an intended character and design elements for different character areas in Howard County.	DPZ	Mid-term
2. Build on the 2018 Development Regulations Assessment to update the County's Zoning Regulations and Subdivision and Land Development Regulations and policies. Incorporate opportunities to codify current practices and create regulations and design standards for new developments, infill developments, and redevelopments.	DPZ	Mid-Term
3. 2. Evaluate the existing historic district zones and consider replacing them with new historic zoning district overlays or form-based districts.	DPZ	Mid-Term
4. 3. Review the Design Advisory Panel (DAP) review areas and approved guidelines for updates. Consider whether the role of the DAP should be expanded to other areas within Howard County.	DPZ	Long-term
5. Revise the New Town Zoning District and investigate the use of enhanced design guidelines and character-based or form-based codes in Columbia: a. Build upon the preferred development types, patterns, intensities, and design elements described in HoCo By Design's Character Areas technical appendix. b. Take into consideration the design and planning principles illustrated in HoCo By Design's Focus Areas technical appendix. c. Explore rules and requirements for design review by the Design Advisory Panel, or a combination of staff and the DAP. d. Identify the appropriate purpose and timing of design review within the development review process.	DPZ	Mid-Term
4. Create a taskforce to determine how to preserve New Town's planned community framework, fixed densities, and existing character as defined through the master development plan while considering future redevelopment.	DPZ	Mid-Term

Table 10-1: Implementation Matrix		
Policy and Implementing Actions	Lead Agency	Timeframe (Mid-Term five-year, Long-Term six+ years, Ongoing)
QBD-2 - Use the The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) may be used to guide redevelopment in identified activity centers, which present opportunities for mixed-use development, mixed-income housing, small parks or community gathering spaces, increased stormwater management, and multi-modal transportation options.		
1. <u>Use Consider using</u> the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) during the rezoning process to create activity centers consistent with the character area descriptions.	DPZ	Mid-Term
2. Assess existing Subdivision and Land Development Regulations, Zoning Regulations, and Design Advisory Panel design review policies for opportunities to create or strengthen regulations and design standards for activity center development/redevelopment. Evaluate potential standards for frontage design, main entrance location, and parking calculations. Incorporate accessibility by including standards and guidance to ensure there is direct access to the building from the street.	DPZ	Mid-Term
3. Review the Zoning Regulations and design manuals to identify ways to mitigate the impacts of auto-oriented uses and minimize negative impacts, including odor, noise, light, air pollution, and diesel emissions.	DPZ	Mid-Term
4. Ensure redevelopment of suburban shopping centers and office parks reduces impervious surface, increases open space, and provides adequate stormwater management, where none or little existed before.	DPZ	Ongoing
5. Explore integrating additional environmentally sustainable design standards in future updates to the Zoning Regulations, site design requirements, and environmental programs to further green initiatives.	DPZ OCS DILP	Ongoing
6. When retrofitting shopping centers and business parks, investigate opportunities to create mixed-income housing for all residents. <u>Incentivize affordable housing that can be purchased by low and moderate income buyers.</u>	DPZ DHCD	Long-term
7. <u>Ensure better retail success in the Village Centers by initiating a new market study to update the 2014 study that will clearly identify supportable retail types and quantities at each center. Non-retail uses, including civic and cultural, should be included. This becomes a roadmap regarding support for and input into county and developer proposals.</u>	HCEDA DPZ Private Partners Columbia Assn.	Mid-Term

Table 10-1: Implementation Matrix		
Policy and Implementing Actions	Lead Agency	Timeframe (Mid-Term five-year, Long-Term six+ years, Ongoing)
QBD-3 - Focus on creating active, walkable, and universally accessible public realms in all new development and redevelopment and include a broad range of community spaces, as appropriate to each character area.		
1. Prioritize the orientation of <u>commercial</u> buildings toward the street in all new development and redevelopment to create more walkable	DPZ	Ongoing
2. Work with stakeholders and community members to incorporate policies for diverse and inclusive public art and cultural expression throughout the County. Identify potential partnerships for strengthening public art programs and art education opportunities.	DPZ	Long-term
3. Continue to work with stakeholders of all ages and abilities to identify strategies for universal access to employment centers, stores, parks, and recreation and community amenities.	OOT DRP DCRS DILP	Ongoing
4. Establish goals and guidelines for providing community open spaces and park spaces to create more equitable access across different neighborhoods in Howard County. Ideally, residents should have a variety of open space choices within walking or biking distance of their home.	DRP DPZ	Mid-Term
5. Evaluate the goals described in the Route 1 Manual, Route 40 Design Manual, Clarksville Pike Streetscape Plan and Design Guidelines, and Complete Streets Policy for updates and determine if there are items in these manuals that could be adapted more broadly within the County.	DPZ OOT	Mid-Term
6. Use a holistic approach to incorporating transportation infrastructure into the public realm that focuses on connections and universal user experience.	OOT DPW	Long-term

Table 10-1: Implementation Matrix		
Policy and Implementing Actions	Lead Agency	Timeframe (Mid-Term five-year, Long-Term six+ years, Ongoing)
QBD-4 - Develop context-sensitive design standards appropriate for various scales of infill development to effectively transition between larger developments and established uses, and to encourage compatibility of small-scale infill within established neighborhoods.		
1. Explore the implementation of form-based or character-based districts and neighborhood compatibility standards that emphasize massing and form over use type.	DPZ	Mid-Term
2. Investigate programs to preserve the community character of older neighborhoods that are not currently designated as historic or do not yet meet criteria to be designated as such.	DPZ	Mid-Term
3. Encourage infill housing typologies that create smaller more-affordable units, if they blend in with surrounding homes through context-sensitive design.	DPZ	Mid-Term
4. 3. Review existing design manuals for updates to address contextual architecture design.	DPZ	Long-Term
5. 4. Assess existing land use and zoning policies for opportunities to incorporate best practice placemaking and urban design principles that create transitions between land uses and between the built and natural environments.	DPZ	Mid-Term
6. 5. Update the Landscape Manual to reflect current best practices, and to provide clear direction on buffers that address the scale and mass of new development abutting existing development.	DPZ DRP OCS	Mid-Term
6. Ensure that adequate parking exists for all infill developments.	DPZ	Ongoing
QBD-5 - Pursue new historic designations to protect and preserve historic communities and sites through the creation of new single site historic districts, new multiple site historic districts, conservation districts, or other types of designations for historic communities.		
1. Research the various types of historic designations, beyond those currently used by Howard County.	DPZ	Long-Term
2. Provide outreach to the various communities to gauge their level of interest in historic designation options.	DPZ	Long-Term

Table 10-1: Implementation Matrix		
Policy and Implementing Actions	Lead Agency	Timeframe (Mid-Term five-year, Long-Term six+ years, Ongoing)
QBD-6 - Strengthen existing historic preservation programs and initiatives in Howard County.		
1. Complete the update of the Ellicott City Historic District Design Guidelines to create a user-friendly document that responds to changing technologies while maintaining the character of the District.	DPZ	Mid-Term
2. Update the Lawyers Hill Historic District Design Guidelines.	DPZ	Long-term
3. Evaluate ways to strengthen preservation and maintenance of historic properties outside of historic districts.	DPZ	Long-term
4. Strengthen historic preservation programs both to prevent demolition and demolition by neglect, and to better incentivize restoration and adaptive reuse.	DPZ	Long-term
5. Continue to implement the 2014 Preservation Plan and update it as needed.	DPZ	Long-term
6. Encourage the design of new construction that is compatible with historic structures so that neighborhoods maintain a better sense of place and retain historic integrity.	DPZ	Ongoing
7. Explore the use of transfer of development rights programs, easements programs, or other development incentives to preserve historic sites and their environmental settings.	DPZ	Mid-Term
QBD-7 - Continue to provide incentives for the restoration and preservation of historic resources.		
1. Continue to promote use of county historic tax credits for properties located in local historic districts or listed on the Historic Sites Inventory.	DPZ	Ongoing
2. Continue to pursue and promote funding opportunities for historic property restoration and preservation.	DPZ DRP DPW Elected Officials OOB Private Property Owners	Ongoing
3. Support a grant program for the general upkeep and maintenance of historic cemeteries and tax-exempt properties.	DPZ Elected Officials OOB	Long-term
4. Continue partnerships supporting cemetery preservation that can provide funding, advocacy, and education.	DPZ	Ongoing