



Howard County

Internal Memorandum

SUBJECT: Council Testimony and Fiscal Impact Statement
Adoption of a new County flag

TO: Brandee Ganz
Chief Administrative Officer

FROM: Brian Shepter,
Deputy Chief of Staff

DATE: March 24, 2025

Section 909 of the Howard County Charter empowers the Howard County Council to alter the Howard County flag. The adoption of a new Howard County flag ultimately requires the legislative approval of the Howard County Council. This legislation proposes a new flag and is the result of the process undertaken by the 19-member Howard County Flag Commission (the “Commission”). A copy of the Commission’s report is attached. Also attached is the design selected by the County Executive and intended to be adopted by this legislation.

The Commission was established by County Executive Calvin Ball on January 22, 2024, by Executive Order 2024-01. Adopted in 1968, the Howard County Flag is more than 50 years old. The Commission’s charge was to undertake a process that would result in recommendations for an updated and modernized Howard County flag design.

Specifically, the Commission was directed to:

1. Solicit designs from the public through a website portal;
2. Conduct one or more public hearings on the design of a new Howard County Flag;
3. Recommend criteria to be used to evaluate submissions;
4. Based on the recommended criteria, select up to 10 submissions for additional public review;
5. Establish a process by which the public may vote on the submissions selected by the Commission for additional public review in order to narrow the number of submissions to the top five; and
6. Select three of the five publicly-voted submissions to present to the County Executive.

The Commission met 13 times over 13 months and held a public hearing on September 30, 2024. The Commission and County Office of Public Information used press releases, social media, email lists, the Ball Bulletin, flyers and word-of-mouth to advertise the Commission’s processes and to invite public participation.

Participants were allowed to submit up to three designs for consideration by the Commission. The Commission received a total of 209 designs from 102 individuals. The Commission posted its Top 10 preferred designs for public vote. Over a 60-day voting period, the Commission received 1248 unique ballots. The Top Five vote earners were then isolated and the Commission recommended three designs from among the Top Five to the County Executive. The County Executive has selected one design to be submitted to the Council. This legislation proposes to adopt that selected design and include its description in our County Code.

Fiscal Impact

The County has budgeted \$20,000 for replacing the County flag in the budget for FY25. This will include the replacement of flags located in County buildings and at County facilities. It also includes flags used as part of promotional activities.

Howard County Flag Design

