



Howard County

Internal Memorandum

Subject: Testimony and Fiscal Impact Statement
Amendment – Budget Ordinance – to strike a condition - L0020, New HCLS
Central Branch & Relocation

To: Brandee Ganz
Chief Administrative Officer

From: Felix Facchine, Deputy Chief of Staff
Office of the County Executive

Date: October 23, 2025

PURPOSE

Council Bill No. CB__-2025, seeks action by the County Council to strike a budget condition placed on capital project *L0020-FY2021 New HCLS Central Branch & Relocation* in the FY2026 Capital Budget. The Budget Condition placed a restriction on the County's ability to spend \$5 million in State grant funding for the new Central Library project. The Budget Condition states that the funding may not be used until the purchase of property for the new Central Library was completed on or before September 15, 2025. As this condition is now obsolete, the County Executive seeks action by the County Council to remove the condition from the FY26 capital budget. Pursuant to Section 610(b) of the Howard County Charter, this legislation is an Emergency Bill that would amend the FY26 budget to strike the Budget Condition.

BACKGROUND

In the Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) Capital Budget, the County Executive proposed the transfer of \$5 million in restricted State grant funding for the new Central Library project to be moved from *C0214-Category Contingency Fund* to its intended capital project *L0020-FY2021 New HCLS Central Branch & Relocation*. This State grant funding was initially received by the County in Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) as part of a \$10 million grant award, of which \$5 million was previously appropriated to L0020 in FY24.

During the FY26 budget process, the County Council amended the FY26 Annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinance of Howard County (CB36-2025) by Amendment 14-2025, placing a condition to the use of FY26 funding in capital project L0020. The Condition requires that funding in L0020 may not be used until the "purchase of the property in fee simple located at

10227 Wincopin Circle Columbia. Maryland 21044, which was appraised on May 19, 2023 for approximately \$14,000.000, on or before September 15, 2025.”

The County has engaged with HRD, HCLS, and HCHC during Summer and Fall 2025 to discuss parameters of a land transaction for the new Central Library. Under this proposed arrangement, HRD intends to sell a portion of the property located at 10227 Wincopin Circle in fee simple to Howard County for purposes of the County constructing a new Central Library consistent with the conceptual design presented in March of 2023.

Capital project L0020 does not currently contain any appropriation intended for land acquisition of a new Central Library. Furthermore, the date established in the condition has since passed, making it impossible to meet the Budget Condition. Therefore, the County Executive is seeking action by the County Council to delete the obsolete Budget Condition and allow the County to continue moving forward with project planning, design, and negotiations for land acquisition.

The County Executive intends to negotiate a purchase and sale agreement with Howard Research and Development Corporation (HRD) for the acquisition of land for a new Central Library at the Columbia Lakefront, subject to appropriation by the County Council in the FY2027 capital budget. To achieve this goal, the County Executive intends to use State funding in L0020 to advance planning and design for the Central Library project such that a project financing plan may be included in the FY2027 capital budget.

FISCAL IMPACT

The \$5 million in State grant funding subject to this Budget Condition was previously appropriated in the County’s capital budget. Therefore, there is no fiscal impact to this Budget Amendment.