



# DEB'S DISTRICT UPDATE

Deb Jung • District Four

February 2025

## *Greetings*

This is a challenging time for many in our community, including federal workers who call Howard County their home. The sudden actions and statements by the Trump Administration have left us shaken and searching for answers. There are over 14,000 Federal employees in Howard County and that number does not account for all of our Federal contractors. I am grateful to our Federal employees and contractors, whether they live in Howard County or elsewhere in the US. These are individuals who are dedicated to their jobs, care about their Country, and perform many critical services that we Americans rely upon. They are patriotic and believe in the mission to deliver the best service possible to the American people. I want to thank all of you for your efforts over these past years and months. There are many people who feel like me and who are thankful for all you do.

On the following pages you will also find a description of CB-11, a bill I filed that would allow employment centers located in Planned Employment Centers (PEC) zoning districts to conduct important research and development activities as a matter of right. The bill also protects the health of neighboring communities from certain types of research activities that emit toxic air pollutants. A community in District 4 realized that a corporation right next door to them was seeking an air permit for such pollutants and filed a Zoning Regulation Amendment to protect all residents who might face a similar situation now or in the future. Over 100 residents came to testify in favor of the bill. The vote by the Council will take place on Monday night (March 3).

I hope you have been able to enjoy this beautiful weather these past few days. Spring might finally be around the corner!

*Deb*

# Council Updates

## February-March Legislation

Legislation was introduced on February 2 and will be voted on March 3.

### My Legislation

#### CB11 Research and Development Laboratories in Planned Employment Center (PEC)

I filed this bill so that employment centers located in PEC zoning districts can conduct important research and development activities as a matter of right. The bill also protects the health of neighboring communities from certain types of research activities that emit toxic air pollutants.

CB11 is a Zoning Regulation Amendment (ZRA) that was initiated in October 2024 by the petitioner, Anwer Hasan. This ZRA (ZRA211) sought to create an 1800-foot setback in the PEC for activities requiring a Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) air permit. In November 2024, the Planning Board voted unanimously to favorably recommend with amendments ZRA211. The Planning Board asked the County Council “to analyze the sufficiency of the proposed text amendment and to have discussions with MDE to determine the best approach for actionable legislation.” In coordination with the petitioner, CB11 fulfills the recommendation by the Planning Board to make the proposed changes legally sufficient. CB11 reinstates the

ability to conduct research and development activities in the PEC zoning district. This use was removed in 2013 during comprehensive rezoning, leaving major County employers operating under nonconforming uses. Per the County Zoning Regulations, entities that have nonconforming uses must undergo additional requirements to expand or extend their activities beyond their grandfathered allowances. With the successful passage of CB11, major employers in the PEC districts can conduct and expand operations without applying to the County for permission.

The County’s Zoning Regulations also consider compatibility of different zoning districts that are located within proximity of each other. Throughout the County, PECs are adjacent to residential neighborhoods that should not experience adverse health and safety impacts from commercial or research operations.

### Upcoming Meetings

- March 3, 7pm: Legislative Session
- March 10, 9:30am Public Hearing
- March 17, 7pm: Public Hearing
- March 24, 9:30am: Work Session

Visit the Council’s [Calendar](#) for more.



Read current legislation: [click here.](#)

# Council Updates

A variety of commercial and research activities create toxic air emissions that are regulated by MDE permits. Paint booths, generators, boilers, incinerators, and other activities that create volatile organic compounds are required to apply for an air permit and to maintain toxic emissions below Federally mandated thresholds. However, MDE does not regulate the proximity of residences to emissions-creating activities. Such compatibility issues require local zoning to balance employment activities and residents' health and safety.

CB11 excludes testing of catalytic conversion of plastics requiring an MDE air permit from research and development activities. Such research is more appropriate in industrial zones where solid waste processing is allowed. The proximity of PEC zones to residential areas and the current setback requirement of 200 feet from property lines do not provide enough of a buffer to allow plastic incineration to occur without serious health risks.

## January-February Legislation

The County Council voted on the following legislation on February 3.

### My Legislation

**CB6 & 7 Inspector General Class Code & Pay Plan** In order to hire an Inspector General, the

Council must create the position within the County's organizational plan. This bill sets the Inspector General position at a "Q" level, indicating that the position is independent from organizational supervisors with commensurate compensation. *Passed*

**CB8 Financial Disclosures for the Inspector General Advisory Board** My bill adds the members of the Advisory Board to the list of citizen boards required to submit a financial disclosure in compliance with the County's ethics rules. *Passed*

### Other Legislation

**CR161 & 162 Long Reach Village Center Urban Renewal Plan** These companion resolutions authorize the sale and redevelopment of the Long Reach Village Center to a private entity that is proposing a mixed-use, commercial and residential project. In 2014 and 2015 the County bought the center for \$5.4 million. In 2017 there was a failed redevelopment



View Council Sessions: click [here](#).

# Council Updates

attempt. In 2023, the County issued another request for proposals that resulted in one bid from Columbia Concepts. *Sponsored by the County Executive; Passed*

## Budget Transfers

### TAO1 Patuxent Woods Building Purchase

Transfer of \$5.34 million to purchase a commercial building in Patuxent Woods complex for government purposes. Funds for this purchase will be removed from the FY2025 Capital Budget for the public ice rink, data center, systemic renovations, and indoor track facility. *Sponsored by County Executive; Passed*

**TAO2 Public School Facilities Study** Transfer of \$2.5 million to pay for two studies: a Public

Private Partnership review to determine alternative financing options for school capital projects and a review of the sufficiency of current facilities to help prioritize system and replacement projects. *Passed*

## Welcome to the New County Auditor

The County Council is pleased to announce the selection of Christopher Ashman as the County Auditor. He is a certified public accountant with decades of experience performing financial oversight and auditing. Welcome to the Council!

Read the [press release](#) on the Council's News webpage.

## Inspector General Update

The following members will be appointed to the Inspector General Advisory Board by CR62, which will be introduced in March. The members will serve terms of varying lengths to provide appointment staggering.

- Steven Quisenberry, Glenelg; appointed by District 1
- Vernon Curry, Columbia, appointed by District 2
- Dennis Raschka, Columbia, appointed by District 3

- David Salem, Columbia, appointed by District 4
- Kathleen Downs, Glenelg, appointed by District 5
- Mitchell Stahm, Marriottsville, appointed by the County Executive
- Katy Sedney, Clarksville, appointed at-large by the County Council

After confirmation of these appointments, the Advisory Board will hire an Inspector General and undertake other ministerial duties related to the Office.

Search for Legislation: click [here](#).

# Council Updates

## HCPSS Funding Options Taskforce

Last year, the Howard County State Delegation sponsored a successful bill (HB1450) to create a taskforce to study revenue options for funding HCPSS capital needs.

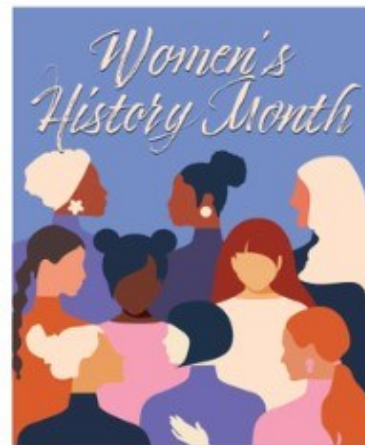
I volunteered to serve as one of two Council representatives and have been advocating for redistributing surplus County funds (called PAYGO) from the previous fiscal year to supplement HCPSS annual Capital Budget. The State's InterAgency Commission on School

Construction shared with the taskforce that they had visited all of the HCPSS schools and determined that in order to perform the necessary maintenance, alterations, and renewals, HCPSS should be spending an additional \$79 million per year on Capital expenditures. The taskforce continues to meet to see if we can reach consensus on recommendations for the future of capital funding.

Visit the County's HB1450 Revenue Options Taskforce [webpage](#) for more information.

THE HOWARD COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN  
AND THE OFFICE OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUITY  
CORDIALLY INVITE YOU TO THE

**Women's History Month Annual Brunch**  
*Moving Forward Together!*  
**Women Educating and Inspiring Generations**



The National Women's History Project has designated "Moving Forward Together! Women Educating and Inspiring Generations," as the theme for Women's History Month 2025, to celebrate the collective strength and influence of women who have dedicated their lives to education, mentorship and leadership.

**11 a.m. - 1 p.m. • Saturday, March 15, 2025**

**East Columbia 50+ Center  
6610 Cradlerock Way, Columbia 21045**

- Panel Discussion — "Amplifying Impact: Women Leading Change"
- Women's History Month Poster and Essay Contest Winners from HCPSS
- Live Entertainment

**Register at  
Eventbrite;  
click [here](#).**

# General Assembly Updates

## 2025 General Assembly Session

The General Assembly convened on January 8. The State budget is facing a \$3 billion deficit, due to lower revenue collections from population loss and higher expenditures for Medicaid and disability fees. It is anticipated that the deficit will increase if the US Congress makes anticipated cuts to Medicaid and other programs. The State also has a structural deficit projected into 2030.

## FY2026 State Budget

The Governor's submitted budget totals \$67.3 billion; it closes the current year's deficit and leaves a \$112 million surplus through spending cuts and tax increases. The proposed budget is a \$186 million short of addressing the structural deficit and the recommended spending goal that has been met by the General Assembly for the past 40 years.

The General Assembly has announced that they will defer action on the FY26 State budget until after the Federal funding expiration on March 14. As of February 21, the State has also announced another round of cost shifts to the Counties to address more State budget shortfalls. Approximately \$264 million in State funding to the Counties has been cut entirely or shifted to the local jurisdictions.

## EXPENDITURES

**Budget Increases:** A total of \$187 million in new funding has been added to the proposed budget. Highlights include:



- \$30 million — Tradeport Atlantic Container Terminal
- \$25 million — Business attraction program
- \$23 million — Anti-poverty efforts
- \$17 million — Quantum computing initiative at the University of Maryland

**Education:** Spending on education will increase by \$551 million (6.1%) statewide. Behavioral health services and teacher collaborative time, both requirements of Blueprint, will be reduced or delayed. There will also be a 100% cost shift of teachers' (including Community Colleges) retirement costs to the Counties. The State is also providing less funding to the Counties for nonpublic placement for special education students. Howard County's state aid will be reduced by at least \$9.2 million.

**University System:** Base funding for the University System of Maryland will decline by \$105 million (4.6%).

# General Assembly Updates

## REVENUES

**Income Tax Rate Increases:** Changes to the state income tax rates will yield \$820 million. High income earners (\$750,000 and more) might see a State income tax increase of \$4000 and higher. Rate changes follow in the table below; income ranges not listed are not experiencing a rate change. The Maryland Board of Revenue Estimates anticipates that 22.6% of Howard County taxpayers will pay more under the proposed rate increase.

Taxable Income	Filer Type	Current Rate	Proposed Rate
\$1-\$1000	All filers	2%	4.70%
\$1001-\$2000	All filers	3%	4.70%
\$2001-\$3000	All filers	4%	4.70%
\$3001-\$100,000	Single, Dependent, Married filling separately	4.75%	4.70%
\$3001-\$150,000	Joint, Head of Household, Widower	4.75%	4.70%
\$500,001-\$1,000,000	Single, Dependent, Married filling separately	5.75%	6.25%
\$600,001-\$1,200,000	Joint, Head of Household, Widower	5.75%	6.25%
Excess of \$1,000,000	Single, Dependent, Married filling separately	5.75%	6.50%
Excess of \$1,200,000	Joint, Head of Household, Widower	5.75%	6.50%

**Commercial Taxes & Fees Changes:** The FY26 State budget is proposing a new \$0.75 fee on each retail delivery. Increased vehicle emissions inspection fees will increase from \$14 to \$30.

**Federal Funds:** The FY26 budget includes about \$20 billion in Federal funds, including Medicaid (\$10.3 billion) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (\$1.9 billion).

# HCPSS

## More Board Certified Teachers

HCPSS announced that 164 teachers recently achieved their National Board Certification (NBC) for the first time and 10 teachers renewed their certification. HCPSS now has a total of 457 NBC Teachers. NBC is the highest credential in the educational profession.

Teachers who achieve NBC have met rigorous standards through study, self-assessment, peer review, and expert evaluation. Visit “HCPSS Congratulates 174 National Board Certified Teachers” [press release](#) for more.

## Walk Zones

The Board of Education (BOE) voted to adopt new walk zones for fall 2025. This change will restore bus service to some areas that lost service during the previous zone revision. Read the *Baltimore Banner* [article](#) “More Howard County Students Will Get to Ride School Buses, But Not Until Fall 2025.”

The new policy follows:

Grade Level	Current Policy (2024-2025)	New Policy (2025-2026)
Elementary (PreK-5)	1.0 mile	0.75 miles
Middle (6-8)	1.5 miles	1.0 mile
High (9-12)	2.0 miles	1.5 mile

## Student Personal Device Access

The BOE voted to reduce the use of personal devices by students during the student day. The policy changes will take effect on March 3, 2025. Visit HCPSS News [webpage](#) for more information.

## Elementary School Redistricting: Columbia West & Northern Regions

The BOE voted unanimously to initiate the boundary review process for elementary schools in the Columbia West and Northern regions. The attendance area adjustments will include Bryant Woods, Running Brook, Swansfield, Clemens Crossing, and Centennial Lane Elementary Schools. There may also be feed adjustments to the receiving middle and high schools. The plan will be implemented for school year 2026-2027. View the February 13, 2025 BOE Meeting Agenda Item [here](#).

## Upcoming BOE Meetings

- March 4, 4:30pm, Adoption of FY26 Operating Budget
- March 13, 4pm & 7pm, Regular Meeting
- March 20, 7:30pm, Virtual Coffee & Conversation
- March 27, 4pm and 7pm, Regular Meeting

Visit BOE’s Board Docs [webpage](#) for a calendar of events.

HCPSS news: [click here](#)

# County & Community Updates

## WR Grace Air Permit to MDE

In September 2023, WR Grace applied to the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) for an air permit (Docket #16-23) to build a pilot plant to test catalytic chemical conversions of plastic pellets into liquids and gas. The project involves installation of reactors, chillers, separators, feeders, and samplers with an exhaust gas stream and thermal oxidizer that vents to the atmosphere.

## Zoning Regulation Amendment

Residents living next to WR Grace filed a Zoning Regulation Amendment (ZRA 211) to require a greater setback from neighboring properties when an MDE permit is needed. The Planning Board held a public hearing to review the petition and the Department of Planning & Zoning's (DPZ) technical staff report as well as receive public testimony. I testified at the hearing and stated that the community is afraid of being so close to activities involving federally regulated toxins.

The Planning Board voted to recommend the ZRA with amendments. They explained that the ZRA as written was not applicable to an existing non-conforming use and does not have legal sufficiency. They recommended that the County Council work with MDE to determine actionable legislation that will have legal sufficiency.

Visit the Planning Board's [webpage](#) for the November 21, 2024 Meeting.

In February, I amended and filed the ZRA as CB11 so that it would be implementable and have legal sufficiency. CB11 will be voted on March 2.

## Hearing Examiner Appeal

*March 18*

Residents also filed a zoning complaint with DPZ. The complaint was investigated and denied by DPZ. The community has since filed an appeal (BA813D) that will be heard by the Hearing Examiner. Visit the online case file for [BA813-D](#) for more.



I extend my sympathies to the families of the two young boys who were victims of gun violence on February 22. I pray for the surviving victim. I know that the community is concerned and unnerved. I am too.

I am thankful to the Police for their swift arrest of the shooter and I have been assured by the Police Chief that appropriate safety measures will occur. The Mall management will also continue its safety efforts. I also ask that the judicial system provide more effective diversion in juvenile matters. We deserve to feel safe in our public gathering places. Visit the Howard County Police [press release](#) for more.

# County & Community Updates

## New Town Taskforce

A Request for Proposal (RFP) was issued in January for a consultant to facilitate the forthcoming New Town Taskforce. The Taskforce will evaluate current regulations and develop recommendations for improving New Town zoning, which occurs in the master-planned community of Columbia. The Taskforce will begin in March and be managed by DPZ.

I put the requirement for this Taskforce into HoCo By Design because Columbia has a unique structure in which the lienholders are the trustees of the community's development plan. I wanted to make sure that any future changes balance redevelopment with open space and residents' full input. I have nominated five residents, one from each of the five Villages that I represent, to the Taskforce.

## Federal Workers

I am so deeply upset that our highly skilled Federal workforce is being treated by the Trump Administration with suspicion and contempt. These dedicated public servants deserve respect and fairness, even if workforce reductions occur. The upheaval that is occurring in the Federal agencies is affecting people's ability to provide for their families and will have a major economic impact on our State. Per the State's Department of Legislative Services, there are about 160,000 civilian federal jobs in Maryland. In nearby Virginia and the District of Columbia, there are a total

of 400,000 jobs that also employ Maryland residents. Federal jobs account for a higher share of total wage incomes; in tax year 2021, federal wages totaled \$24 billion and accounted for 12% of total wages for Maryland residents. Federal wages for that year equate to about \$1 billion in State income tax.

**Resources for Federal Workers:** Congresswoman Sarah Elfreth has published a resource guide for employment rights' on her Congressional [webpage](#). The County is offering extended hours at the Office of Workforce Development for furloughed or terminated Federal employees.

**Local Legislation to Hire Federal Workers:** CB14, prefiled by the County Executive, adds displaced Federal employees as a priority eligibility qualification for open County jobs.



**Make a difference**  
JOIN A BOARD OR COMMISSION

**Pensions Oversight Commission:** deadline March 14

Apply online at the County's Boards & Commissions [webpage](#).

# County & Community Updates



## Delegate Frank Turner Memorial

On February 14, former State Delegate Frank Turner, who represented District 13, passed away at the age of 77 years old.

A lawyer and university professor, Delegate Turner served as a special assistant to US Senator Barbara Mikulski before running for office in 1994, making him the County's first Black delegate. He served in the State General Assembly until his retirement in 2019.

He later served on the Howard Community College's Board of Trustees, was instrumental in reopening the Harriet Tubman School, and dedicated his public service to making a difference in people's lives.

## Nominations for Sports Hall of Fame

*Deadline April 15*

The Department of Recreation & Parks is

soliciting nominations for the 2025 Sports Hall of Fame. Residents are invited to submit names of coaches, officials, and even behind-the-scenes contributors. More information can be found online under HCRP Sports Community Hall of Fame [webpage](#).

## State of the Economy

The County Executive held his annual State of Business address to the Howard County Chamber of Commerce, highlighting the new Cyber Howard Accelerator for early stage cybersecurity companies and business loans through the County's Economic Development Authority (EDA). Business resources can be found on the EDA's [website](#).

## Mortgage Assistance

The County's Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has funds available to residents who are at least two months behind on their mortgage. Visit the DHCD's Foreclosure Prevention Program [webpage](#).

**ELIGIBILITY**

- Household Income Cannot Exceed
- Must be Your Primary Residence
- Must be a Howard County Resident
- At least 2 months behind on mortgage payments

Family Size	Amount
One Person.....	\$98,680
Two Person.....	\$112,776
Three Person.....	\$126,874
Four Person.....	\$140,971
Five Person.....	\$152,249
Six Person.....	\$163,526
Seven Person.....	\$174,804
Eight Person.....	\$186,081

Effective February 7, 2025

## Keeping up with Deb



South Lakefront's Medical Building  
Grand Opening



MLK Jr. Holiday Celebration



Asian American Educators  
Community Fundraiser



Lunar New Year Celebration  
At The Columbia Mall

Korean  
Delegation  
Visit



# Upcoming Events



- March 5, 11am, North Laurel 50+ Center
  - March 7, 10.30am, Florence Bain Center
  - March 12, 1pm, Glenwood 50+ Center
  - March 18, 10am, Elkridge 50+ Center
  - March 28, 1pm, Ellicott City 50+ Center
  - April 8, 6pm, Patuxent Woods Center
- The Office on Aging is holding these listening sessions for residents to discuss aging issues.

## Mega Job Fair

March 6, 10am-2pm,  
Howard Community College  
Learn about jobs, internships, and co-ops.  
Bring copies of your resume to share with hiring recruiters.



## Leadership U: Student Leadership

Information session: March 19, 5.30pm  
Application deadline: April 7  
Leadership U is now accepting applications

for rising high school juniors to develop their leadership skills. Visit Leadership Howard County's webpage for more; click [here](#).

## Columbia Orchestra

7.30pm, Jim Rouse Theater

[Columbia Orchestra website](#) for tickets.

- March 15: Symphonic Pops
- April 5: Peter & the Wolf
- May 17: American Reflections
- 

## Hickory Ridge Community Walk

Every Monday, 10am

Meet neighbors and friends at the Hawthorne Center for a stroll through the village.

## Holi 2025

Maryland Hindu Milan Mandir Show & Dinner March 22, 5-9pm, River Hill High School; [tickets](#) available at Eventbrite.

Holi Celebration at the Chrysalis, April 12, 12-3pm, Merriweather Park at Symphony Woods

