



# DEB'S DISTRICT UPDATE

Deb Jung • District Four

## Special Budget Edition

On May 26, the Howard County Council passed the FY2022 Capital and Operating Budget totaling \$2.18 billion. This included an additional \$13.345 million appropriated by the County Council to the Howard County School System (HCPSS) above the amount initially proposed by the County Executive. Funding for HCPSS, body worn cameras for the Police, housing initiatives, and the North Columbia fire station dominated our Public Hearings. The Budget Worksessions involved serious discussions regarding affordable housing, recognizing that it is a difficult issue requiring a continued commitment to find an answer that benefits all residents. I am dedicated to finding the best solutions for ensuring that affordable housing is located in areas with access to high performing schools and public services. All students deserve equal access to resources that will help them succeed academically and personally.

On a lighter note, the State of Emergency has been lifted, and life is returning to normal in Maryland. Our hard work of mask wearing, social distancing, quarantining, and getting vaccinated has paid off and we all deserve a collective pat on the back. The payoff is that we can enjoy each other's company again and attend the events that we missed last year. Take a good look at my newsletter this month. Finally there are live events, including many of your favorites: Friday night concerts and entertainment at the Village Centers, a Juneteenth celebration sponsored by the Howard County Center for African American Culture at Oakland Manor and the resumption of the Lakefront Summer Festival. The arts and culture are back in Howard County and it is time to enjoy all that this wonderful county has to offer.

*Deb*

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# FY2022 Operating & Capital Budget

My main focus in this year's Budget was to ensure that the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) was adequately funded. Thankfully, the majority of my Colleagues agreed and in total the County Council approved an additional \$13.345 million in funding to HCPSS. This investment will support HCPSS's critical efforts, which include repairing aging buildings, increasing teacher salaries, supporting student achievement, and reducing structural debt.

## OPERATING BUDGET

This year's Operating Budget submitted by the County Executive fell short of the average 2.6% annual increase to the school system because of an error in calculating the State-mandated maintenance of effort. The County Executive corrected this error with a successful amendment to the Operating Budget that moved an additional \$4 million to HCPSS's instruction and special education categories.

During the Council's Budget Worksessions, I was made aware of the huge financial requirements that the State will mandate from the County once the Blueprint for Maryland's Future Act (Kirwan Plan) goes into effect. This extra cost will require aggressive steps now to ensure adequate funding for student success. In addition to the forthcoming Kirwan modifications, there are fundamental needs ranging from dyslexia and special education services to mental health supports that promote posi-



tive student behavior and engagement in school and academic success.

Knowing that the funding needs of the schools are infinite, I sponsored legislation that moved a total of \$4 million above and beyond the County Executive's efforts. This legislation passed and will fund \$2.5 million to HCPSS Fixed Charges to address the Health Fund deficit, which is structural debt that the school system incurred during previous budget cycles. HCPSS's Student Personnel Services, which works to improve student attendance, received an additional \$1.5 million thanks to one of my amendments to the Budget.

## CAPITAL BUDGET

For HCPSS's Capital Budget, I sponsored two successful amendments that moved a total of \$2.845 million not originally proposed by the

The County Council voted on the FY2022 Budget on May 26. Click [here](#) to view the archived session.

**Council Legislation: Click [here](#).**

# HCPSS

At a Budget Worksession, HCPSS Board of Education Chair Dr. Wu requested that the County Council consider increasing appropriations to HCPSS's Systemic Renovations Capital project, which funds building maintenance and system repairs. After hearing from Dr. Wu, I felt that it was an imperative to find extra funding for Systemic Renovations.

HCPSS has \$500 million in deferred maintenance and this additional funding can be spent now to extend the lifespan of our schools, make our current buildings safer and more functional for present-day students and avoid costly reconstruction projects in the future. The school system owns 77 school buildings that are important assets for the County to maintain at optimal functionality. Ignoring important repairs on HVAC systems and the like, creates sick buildings and contributes to health concerns for children and staff.

The budget for this important category should reflect the importance of our students and children. Successful increases of funding to HCPSS includes the following:

## MY BUDGET LEGISLATION

**Amendment 2 to Amendment 1** moved \$2.345 million to HCPSS School Systemic Renovation (E1044).

**Amendment 5** passed unanimously and shifted \$2.5 million to HCPSS Fixed Charges as well as \$1.5 million to HCPSS Student Personnel Services.


**Amendment 17**, introduced by myself and David Yungmann, transferred \$500,000 to HCPSS School Systemic Renovation (E1044).

## OTHER LEGISLATION

**Amendment 2**, sponsored by the County Executive, added an additional \$5.452 million in bond borrowing to school construction projections and shifted appropriations from school maintenance projects to school construction projects.

**Amendment 1 to Amendment 3**, sponsored by the County Executive, transferred \$4 million to HCPSS Instruction and Special Education, fully funding the Board of Education's request.

**Amendment 15**, sponsored by Liz Walsh, transferred \$2.5 million to HCPSS School Systemic Renovation (E1044).



The Board of Education voted to adopt the County appropriation on May 27. Click [here](#) for more.

# Housing

Housing affordability programs will be viewed as failures if we continue to concentrate low income apartment buildings in five Columbia schools that already have high percentages of low-income students. Such a housing policy is de-facto segregation not housing diversification and is a short cut to achieving units without considering results. Our new State Superintendent Dr. Mohammed Choudhury recognizes this phenomenon and has attracted national attention for his “diverse by design” model that successfully mixes segregated neighborhoods into racially and socio-economically integrated schools in Texas.

I will continue to push for more comprehensive housing policies in Howard County and I will not support status quo legislation that creates pockets of concentrated poverty in Columbia. I will view every affordable housing initiative through this lens: what is its effect on the zoned school?

During the FY2022 Budget consideration, two housing initiatives — the Housing Opportunities Trust Fund and Dorsey Overlook — caused me concern. Here’s why:

## **HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES TRUST FUND**

The Housing Opportunities Trust Fund was recommended by the Housing Affordability Taskforce. I respect the Taskforce and their dedication to promoting housing affordability. They spent many months considering important and noble questions.

However, the request for funding the trust fund preceded an adequate plan for achieving affordability goals. Prior to our final vote on the Budget, The People's Voice sent the Councilmembers’ a letter stating the following: “We support land trust funding very much, and look forward to Howard County starting to approach direct supply of needed lower income housing by using land trusts, like other jurisdictions do, to provide permanent, spread out units. At first, it was exciting to think that this outcome, which has been requested for a while now, was going to happen. Unfortunately, on closer inspection, the new trust fund does not appear to have the restricted goal and usage of the County directly procuring and supplying the needed units.

Instead, we see recommendations that the new fund allow uses such as paying fees-in-lieu for developers and directly funding non-County projects. This seems just more of the same, trying to get market building projects to solve the problem, quite inadequately, and with expensive, difficult consequences.

A land trust fund that follows the restricted goal of the County providing a direct permanent supply, spread out where needed, is what should be happening with these budgeted funds.”

I agree with this assessment and this is why I proposed a unanimously successful amendment that transferred \$2.5 million from the Trust Fund into contingency so that the public could be informed of a detailed plan for real housing affordability solutions.

# Housing

## DORSEY OVERLOOK

I also voted for Councilmember Walsh's amendment to put \$4.6 million from the Dorsey Overlook project into contingency so that the site location for affordable housing can be daylighted to the public.

Dorsey Overlook is a forthcoming low income housing project, receiving County funds, that will send all of its resident students to three low-income schools. In 2019, the community asked us during the school district's redistricting effort to focus on the County's housing policy to ensure that these types of developments were spread throughout the County. Yet the Department of Housing and the Housing Commission continue to concentrate these developments in one area, feeding to the same handful of five schools.

The Council passed a resolution during this debate that stated the following:

"WHEREAS, past development patterns in Howard County have lacked a diversity of housing types and the County is building upon policies to expand housing affordability, diversifying housing types and their distribution throughout the county; and WHEREAS, Howard County is proud of its diversity and inclusion and aims to ensure equitable opportuni-

ties for all its residents, regardless of background or socioeconomic status."

Those were the very words of my Council colleagues. Unfortunately, the Dorsey Overlook project does exactly the opposite of what was set forth in this language: it does not diversify housing types; it does not diversify distribution with regard to school assignments; and it does not provide the equitable opportunities desired by the members of this Council as stated in this resolution.

Accordingly, I am voting to put this project in contingency, which will keep the money in the project and allow the Department of Housing and the Housing Commission to bring this project before the Council again, addressing these very critical issues.

In September 2020, the developer of the Dorsey Overlook project was granted an easement of the County-owned Old Annapolis Road, which was needed to facilitate this project. The easement acquisition price was \$1 million. Click [here](#) for more.

**STAY IN TOUCH**

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# North Columbia Fire Station

The best part of an already successful Budget session was filing an amendment to put the North Columbia Fire Station into contingency until a more suitable site is located. I'm thankful to my colleagues David Yungmann and Liz Walsh for joining me in this effort. Fortunately, the County Executive also supported this position and included the contingency transfer in his own amendment until a better location is found. This is a huge win for the community, who expressed overwhelming opposition to this location due to concerns over loss of green space, traffic, noise, and safety. I look forward to supporting emergency services in the County when placed in the best location possible.

## Fees

Councilmember Liz Walsh sponsored two successful amendments to the Department of Planning and Zoning's fee schedule (CR73-2021). These fees have not been raised since XXXX and do not reflect the staff time required to process the requests. Per the code, INCLUDE XXX fees must be reflective of the costs to the County.

Increases include the following:

Variance requests for residential: increased from \$300 to \$820

Variance requests for other: increased from \$500 to \$2375

Zoning Regulation Amendments applications: increased from \$695 to \$25000.



# Keeping up with Deb

## GARDENING AT SWANSFIELD ES

I had so much fun getting dirty on purpose with 3rd through 5th graders at Swansfield Elementary. I joined staff from the Soil Conservation District and Master Gardeners to plant vegetables in the school's garden. The students had a blast digging, watering, and getting messy all in the name of learning and wondering.



## WELCOME LIDL

The Columbia Mall now has a grocery store. Lidl (pronounced like “needle”) has amazing prices and great produce. It is a great addition to the community of retailers and worth a visit for summer parties and everyday necessities.



## Congratulations 2020 Grads



## County Updates

Howard County Government has designated Juneteenth National Freedom Day (June 18) as an official County holiday. Click [here](#) for closings.

Congratulations to Robinson Nature Center for being recertified as a Maryland Green Center.

Howard County seeks applicants for Commission for Transitioning Students with Disabilities; deadline June 30. Click [here](#) for more.

# Community Updates

## SUMMER READING PROGRAM

Keep those reading muscles healthy through the Library's summer reading program, running from June 1 to August 31. Register [here](#).



## Re/watch any ceremony!

*Congratulations*

*class of*  
**2021**

#HCPSSLevelUp

### Anytime Online

at [www.hcpss.org/commencements](http://www.hcpss.org/commencements)  
by selecting the box of the appropriate  
graduation

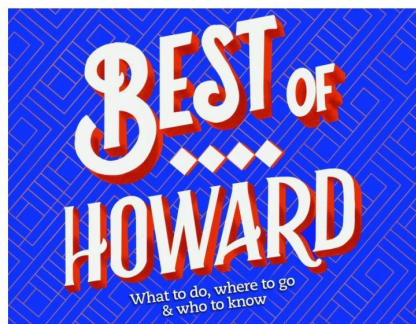
**June 7-July 1**

**Howard County local cable**

**Comcast 95 or Verizon 42**

rebroadcast schedule at

[www.hcpss.org/commencements](http://www.hcpss.org/commencements)



## BEST OF HOWARD NOMINATIONS

Got a local business that you absolutely adore? Share your go-tos, must-haves, and all-time faves with the *Baltimore Sun*. Voting starts July 1. Click [here](#) for more.

# Upcoming Events

## BIKE AROUND DOWNTOWN COLUMBIA

June 19 & 20

Color Burst Park, Merriweather District

Hop on your bike and enjoy the trails and pathways in Downtown Columbia and Oakland Mills. Click [here](#) for more.

## JUNETEENTH

June 19, 10-11am & 11.30am-2pm

Historic Oakland Manor

The Howard County Center of African American Culture is hosting a Juneteenth celebration in honor of this national day of freedom now designated a County holiday. The in-person event is followed at 11.30am with an online panel discussion and virtual tour of the museum. Click [here](#) for more.

## GIRL'S NIGHT UNDER THE STARS

June 19, 6pm

Robinson Nature Center

Grab your best gal pal and join other nature lovers for night hikes, meditation under the stars, campfire chats and s'mores. Can't get

away overnight, no problem. An evening option is also available. Click [here](#) for more.

## LAKEFRONT SUMMER FESTIVAL

Summer evenings

Columbia's Lakefront is emerging from its COVID quarantine with the return of the Columbia Association's outdoor concerts and movies. Click [here](#) for more.

## VILLAGE CENTER CONCERTS

Fridays, 6-8pm

Summer concerts are hosted at the following Village Centers.

[Harpers Choice](#)

[River Hill](#)

[Wilde Lake](#)

## FOURTH OF JULY FIREWORKS

Howard County Recreation and Parks will resume their annual fireworks display at the Columbia Lakefront. Click [here](#) for more.

