



# DEB'S DISTRICT UPDATE

Deb Jung • District Four

October 2025

## *Greetings*

October is always a busy time. It is the heart of sports season and fine weather for outdoor activities. I've been busy with legislation, community fundraisers, and constituent meetings.

The Council voted this month on two significant pieces of legislation: the Gateway Master Plan and my bill to lift the cap on the time limit for the Aging in Place Tax Credit. We had only one month to review and consider the 228-page Gateway Master Plan that charts a 30-year redevelopment effort for that area of the County. I would have preferred to table the bill for more deliberation but getting it done quickly was a priority of the County Executive. One staff member of the County Executive said to me, "Let's get it done!"

The Plan envisions an Innovation District that will harness our County's great brain power and talent into jobs that produce amazing discoveries and advances. The proposal calls for spaces beyond just work so that people can socialize, recreate, and relax. If the Plan comes together, the County will have an exceptional employment center. Yet I have concerns regarding the existing environmental hazards at the Gateway site and I introduced a number of amendments to ensure the health and safety of this future community. See page 3 for more.

As to my Aging in Place Tax Credit bill, three members of the County Council refused to remove the cap on the credit but did agree to extend it by two more years. The following page will fill you in on the details.

Hope you all have time to enjoy our great weather and beautiful foliage!

*Deb*

# Aging in Place Update

I have good and bad news for seniors trying to squeeze more out of their fixed incomes for taxes on higher property values, increased energy costs, and escalating food prices.

## TAX CREDIT EXTENSION

My bill (CB59) proposed the removal of the time limit on the Aging in Place Tax Credit so that qualifying seniors could remain in their homes, stay connected to their communities, and avoid costly retirement facilities. Lifting the cap would have allowed seniors to better plan for their future, basing their decisions on what is best for their situation instead of high home values forcing them out. More than 500 people signed a petition asking my colleagues to vote in favor of this bill.

My bill was voted down by a majority of my colleagues on October 6. I had anticipated that my bill would not succeed because the County Executive had introduced a competing bill (CB60) that extended the cap from eight to 10 years.

In the spirit of compromise, I introduced an amendment to CB60 to extend the cap for an additional five years to a total of 15 years. According to aging estimates, most seniors remain in their homes for an additional 17 years before deciding that a new living situation is necessary. My Council colleagues did not support my amendment.

I tried my best to deliver a longer term solution to seniors but incremental change is the best that I could do.

## APPLICATION CHANGE

Councilmember Christiana Rigby sponsored a successful amendment to the County Executive's bill that changes the application process for the Aging-in-Place tax credit.

My previous legislation had removed the annual re-application for the credit to make it easier on seniors and family members who assist elderly residents with their bills. Seniors were automatically re-enrolled after an initial application as long as they remained in their qualifying home.

Councilmember Rigby's amendment now requires the property owner to submit an annual attestation to the Finance Department to continue to receive the credit. I voted against this change because this creates an unnecessary burden.

I do not yet fully know how the Finance Department will communicate this change to current recipients but I hope that they dedicate significant public information effort so that this change doesn't force uninformed seniors out of the credit program.

Current legislation can be found on the Council's [Legislation](#) webpage.

# Gateway Master Plan

The Council approved the Gateway Master Plan (CB66) on October 6. The Plan proposes that the existing business park become an innovation center for priority industries and workforce housing. Housing is primarily envisioned in the northeastern and southern corners with a 30-year phasing schedule.

## The Brownfields Problem

HoCo by Design, the County's 10-year General Plan, was the Council's first introduction to the idea of adding up to 7000 housing units in Gateway. At the time, I was concerned about adequate school capacity, but I was unaware that nearly half of Gateway is designated as an EPA brownfield. General Electric operated a manufacturing facility on 440 acres of Gateway from 1972 to 1990. Approximately 40

years later, there remain several solid waste management units and contaminated areas on the former property. Volatile organic compounds and other contaminants remain in the groundwater or soil above levels that are safe for residential and domestic uses. Current EPA restrictions on these parcels either prohibit housing entirely or prohibit housing from occupying ground-floor buildings.

Two parcels bookending the EPA brownfields in the southern portion are envisioned by the Master Plan as being the location for a livable, walkable community with missing middle housing. I fully support the housing proposal but I fully oppose cramming any housing next to brownfields that have not been fully remediated to ensure health and safety.

## Brownfields Environmental Restrictions

### GROUND FLOOR RESIDENTIAL USE

#### RESTRICTIONS (IC Plan, MDE)

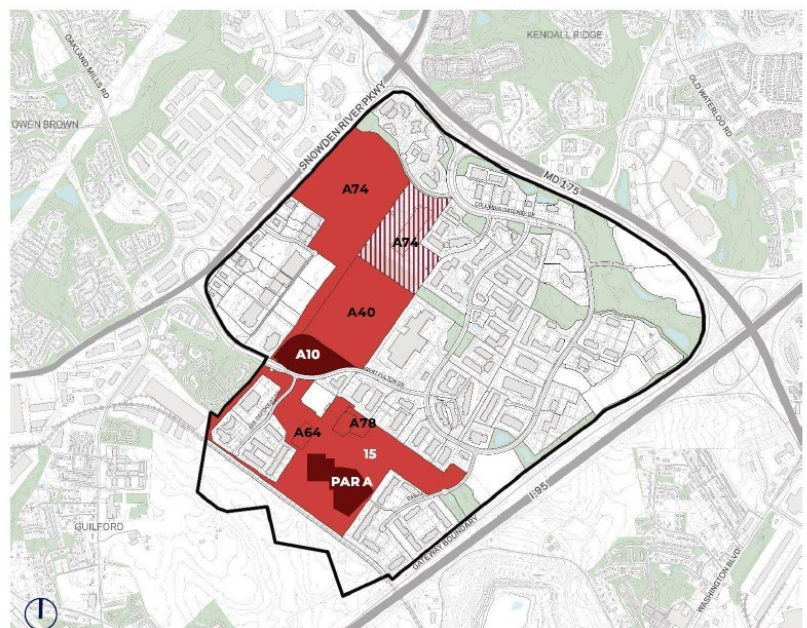
- **Lot A74** – Warehouse/Industrial Use (38 Ac.), DWS Holdings

### RESIDENTIAL USE RESTRICTIONS (IC Plan, EPA)

- **Lot A74** – Warehouse/Industrial Use (78 Ac.), DWS Holdings
- **Lot A40** – Warehouse/Industrial Use (48 Ac.), DWS Holdings
- **Lot A64** – Undeveloped/Parking (2.6 Ac.), Columbia Association
- **Lot A78** – Waste Management (GE)

### FUTURE USES RESTRICTIONS (EPA Covenant)

- **Lot PAR A** – Old Land Fill (15.7 Ac.), GE
- **Lot A10** – Undeveloped (14.7 Ac.), Howard Hughes (Restricted for residential use through EPA covenant, owner looking into restrictions scope and locations)



Source: Howard County GIS Open Data

# Gateway Amendments

I sponsored several amendments and amendments to amendments to strengthen the Plan, which failed to prioritize health and safety protections for future residents in the southern section of Gateway where the greatest environmental contamination exists.

## My Amendments

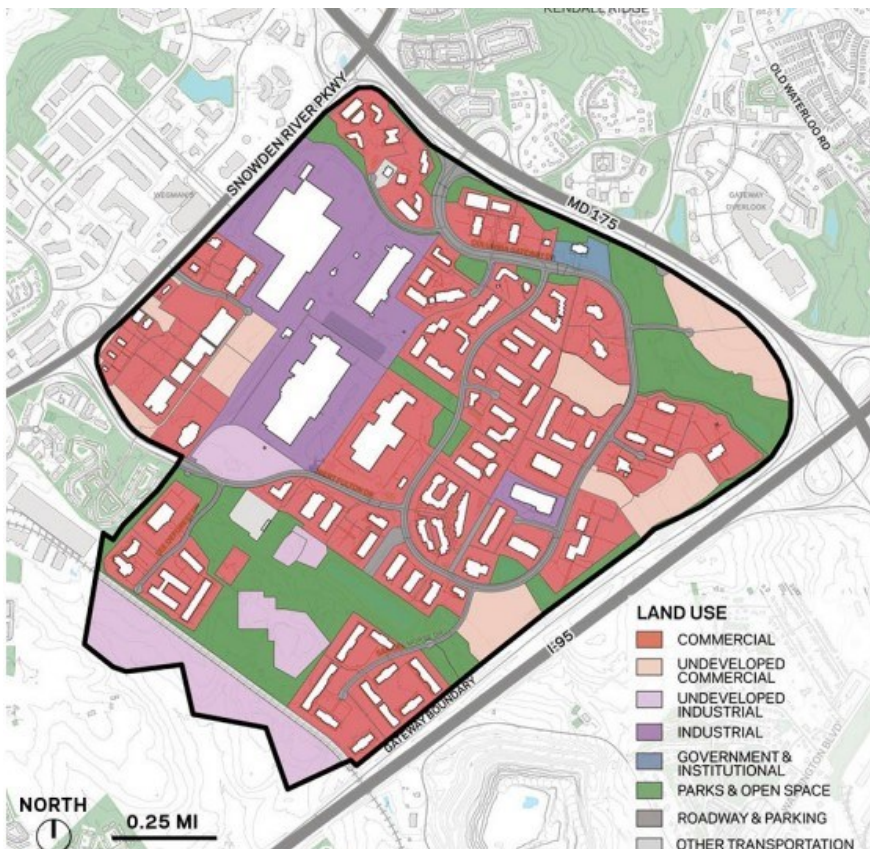
**Amendment 1 to Amendment 1:** Required environmental remediation occur before people live near brownfields; also included language that current standards should be met because a century's worth of Clean Air and Water regulations could be abandoned in the near future. *Page 62, Failed*

**Amendment 1 to Amendment 3:** Strengthened the language that future residences should not be sited on contaminated areas.

*Pages 84-85, Failed*

**Amendment 12:** Inserted language to ensure compatibility of uses, including employment, industrial, and residential uses; R&D near residences should not produce emissions. Pages 33, 68, 71, 73, 77, 80-84; *Failed*

**Amendment 13:** Added language that certain "Parks and Open Space" areas on Map 6 are EPA brownfields; required brownfield sites be added on Map 10 to show their proximity to future housing. *Pages 61 & 68; Passed*



Map 6: Existing Land Use Map

The green area in the bottom of the map is categorized as Parks & Open Space in the Zoning Map but are brownfields with EPA restrictions.

**260 AC.**

designated as industrial use including 84 acres that remain undeveloped

**52%**

of the Gateway's land area is covered with commercial uses including office and retail uses

# Council Update

**Amendment 15:** Required shielding for noisy data center generators. Data centers provide great union jobs but the activity needs to be compatible with neighboring uses. *Pages 84 & 87; Passed*

**Amendment 16:** Added language to remediate environmental contamination before any redevelopment occurs. We don't have a lot of land left in the County, but it is imperative that future houses are built in environmentally safe areas. *Pages 87 & 89; Failed*

**Amendment 17:** Added language related to the NextGen flight paths, which have a greater impact on Gateway than the Airport Noise Zone. We can't make plans for housing in an area that experiences harmful levels of noise pollution from overhead airplanes. *Passed*

**Amendment 20:** Inserted language that funding for a new school should be pursued. I also

Visit the County's [Gateway Master Plan](#) webpage to learn more.



Figure 10: Aerial photo looking south from Columbia Gateway Drive

deleted the section on alternative school building designs because the State, not the County, makes these design decisions. *Pages 214-218; Failed*

**Amendment 21:** Required projects that receive public financing meet general labor standards. *Page 224; Failed*

## Upcoming Meetings

- October 27, 9:30am: Work Session
- November 3, 7pm: Legislative Session
- November 10, 9:30am: Monthly Meeting
- November 17, 7pm: Public Hearing
- November 24, 9:30am: Work Session
- December 1, 7pm: Legislative Session

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



# Council Update

The following bills were introduced in October and will be voted on November 3.

## **CR161 Solar PILOT**

A farm belonging to the Carroll family is requesting a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) for a solar project to be installed in an area where no farming can occur. Howard County offers tax breaks, also known as PILOTs, to solar projects on agricultural lands to assist farmers with profitability and to generate renewable energy locally. This proposed project is contracted to produce energy for the University of Maryland Medical System.  
*Tabled*

## **CR183 FY2027 HCPSS Capital Budget**

### **Request to the State**

The proposed HCPSS Capital Budget for State funded projects includes a total request of \$48.2 million (\$27.1 million from the State and \$27.2 million from the County). The FY2027 request is for systemic renovations (including air-conditioning for 10 gyms and security improvements) and roofing projects.

D4 schools in the list include:

- Fulton ES: roof
- River Hill High School Gym: HVAC
- Clarksville Middle School Gym: HVAC

This year HCPSS plans to meet the State funding timeline by submitting this request to the Council for projects that are requesting State funding separate from County-only funded projects in FY27. Additional Capital projects that are not seeking State funding in FY27 will be handled in a secondary request that will follow the County's budget process with submission to the County Executive in January/February and review by the County Council in the spring.

The State cost split for Howard County has declined from 61% in FY2012 to 51% in FY26. FY27 will receive a 50% State share, the lowest share allowed by State law.

## **CR184 Affordable Housing PILOT**

Orchard Club is asking for an extension on an existing PILOT for its mixed-income apartment building in Elkridge. Under the extended PILOT, the County will receive a total of \$2.5 million, as opposed to the full property tax amount of \$4.4 million, over the 15-year extension period. This apartment building leases 99 of its 196 units to low-income and moderate-income households making up to 50% and up to 80% of area HUD income limits, respectively.

Live and archived meetings are on the Council's [Watch Us](#) webpage

# APFO Joint Meeting

On October 14, the Council held a joint meeting with the Board of Education to discuss school capacity needs. This meeting is required by Code when a school or school region reaches 95% capacity utilization and is projected to exceed 110% within five years. Nine schools met this criteria (see the table below). The earliest potential capacity solution for the schools in this list is the renovation/addition of Dunloggin Middle School scheduled for occupancy in 2030. The Southeast region continues to be overcrowded, with no relief until 2034 with a proposed new elementary school.

At the joint meeting, the attendees discussed the current costs of new schools.

Dunloggin Middle School is anticipated to cost \$93 million and the proposed renovation-addition at Oakland Mills High School is anticipated to be \$160 million.

For many years, new construction contributed the greatest number of new students but that has slowed and resales of existing homes and apartment turnover lead enrollment trends. For elementary schools:

- Bollman Bridge had one of the highest apartment turnover increases (51 students),
- Waverly had the highest resale increase: (43); and
- Hammond ES had the highest new construction increase (22).

## 95% or greater capacity utilization in 2024 and projected to be 110% capacity utilization by 2029

School	2024 Capacity	2024 K12 Actual	2024 Utilization	2029 Capacity	2029 K-12 Projection	2029 Utilization	2024 Relos	Potential Solutions
Bollman Bridge ES	609	692	113.6%	609	724	118.9%	7	New Southeastern ES with boundary review
Bryant Woods ES	289	349	120.8%	289	375	129.8%	6	Boundary review
Centennial Lane ES	603	719	119.2%	603	688	114.1%	6	New Northern ES, boundary review
Hammond ES	653	763	116.8%	653	758	116.1%	7	New Southeastern ES, boundary review
St Johns Lane ES	612	636	103.9%	612	688	112.4%	7	New Northern ES, boundary review
Burleigh Manor MS	721	777	107.8%	721	801	111.1%	2	DMS addition, boundary review
Hammond MS	604	605	100.2%	604	729	120.7%	3	OMMS/MHMS additions with boundary review
Patuxent Valley MS	760	841	110.7%	760	853	112.2%	4	MHMS addition with boundary review
Thomas Viaduct MS	740	758	102.4%	740	882	119.2%	4	OMMS addition/boundary review, TVMS addition

## School Capacity Chart

In school year 2028-29, nine elementary schools and three middle schools exceeded allowable thresholds for new residential construction in their assigned districts. Related documents filed with this year's chart (CR113) included a list of residential projects that are on pause (or in the "school wait bin") because of school overcrowding. The largest project is a 552-unit apartment building at 10010 Junction Drive in Annapolis Junction zoned for Bollman Bridge (open), Patuxent Valley (closed), and Hammond (open). CB18-2025, introduced by Council Member Rigby, exempts projects like 10010 Junction from the school bin if 15% of the units are affordable. Click [here](#) for CR113 and its related documents.

# HCPSS Updates

## Redistricting 2025

The Superintendent presented his proposed Attendance Area Adjustment Plan to the Board of Education (BOE) at its September 25 meeting. Since then, the BOE has requested additional concept plans that address overcrowding at Bryant Woods and Centennial Lane elementary schools, socio-economic demographics of the student populations, transportation impacts, and middle school feed patterns. Visit HCPSS [School Planning](#) webpage for more.

### Upcoming dates:

October 23: BOE Worksession

November 6: Public Hearing

November 13: Work Session & Straw Vote

November 20: BOE Approval

## Coffee and Conversation

*November 1, 9.30am*

The BOE's next Coffee and Conversation will be held at Atholton High School. Contact [boardoffice@hcpss.org](mailto:boardoffice@hcpss.org) to register.

## Career Academy Information Sessions

*November 11 & December 10*

HCPSS will host information sessions at the Applications and Research Laboratory for students interested in the career academy. Visit HCPSS [News](#) webpage for more.

## Visual and Performing Arts Events

HCPSS students will showcase their artistic achievements at upcoming performances and exhibitions. Visit the HCPSS [Performance and Gallery Schedule](#) webpage for more.

## Penelope Tofigh Named Youth Poet Laureate of Howard County

In this role, Penelope reads original poems at County events and coordinates readings and literary events. Read her poem, "I Have to Say I'll Miss You In a Poem" on the website for the River Hill High School's [Literary Magazine](#).



## Apply for JROTC

*Deadline January 6*

Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (JROTC) programs are offered at Atholton (Army), Howard (Army) and Oakland Mills (Air Force) high schools. Students may apply for participation regardless of their assigned school. Visit HCPSS [News](#) webpage for more.

Visit HCPSS [News](#) webpage for more

# Keeping up with Deb



## Chinese American Parent Association 10th Anniversary



## Hispanic Heritage Festival



### Veteran-Owned Small Biz Expo



### New Solar Project in D4



### HoCo Chamber Gala

# Keeping up with Deb



# Howard County Council Farm Tour

# Upcoming Events



## HoCo Pride

October 26, 11am-5pm

The Chrysalis

The annual Pride event was postponed due to weather and rescheduled for October 26.

## Celebration of the Arts

October 25, 6-10pm

Horowitz Visual & Performing Arts Center

Visit the [Celebration of the Arts](#) webpage.

The Howard County Center for the Arts will be hosting its annual fundraiser, visual performances, and Howie Award presentations.

## Saturday Night Fever

August 22-November 2

Toby's Dinner Theater

Visit [Toby's Dinner Theater](#) website.

Polyester suits, smooth dance moves, and hits from the Bee Gees relives the era in real time.

## St. Louis Church Concert Series

Visit the St. Louis Church [Concert Series](#) webpage for more.

- October 24, Concert by Candlelight
- December 7, Christmas at St. Louis

## Clarksville Commons Farmers' Market

Saturdays until November 22, 9am-1pm

This farmers' market is still going strong.

## Columbia Orchestra

Visit the [Columbia Orchestra](#) website for more.

- November 1, Young People's Concert
- November 14, Let's Dance Jazz Series
- November 22, Chamber Orchestra: Musical Aviary
- December 20, Holiday Pops



## Cranksgiving

November 8, 10am-1pm

Visit the [Downtown Columbia Partnership](#) website for more.

Cycle yourself and your donations to the Plaza at the Mall in Columbia for this annual pedal-powered food drive.

## Merriweather District Events

Visit the [Merriweather District](#) website for more.

- October 24, Spook-tacular Trick-or-Treating and Costume Party
- November 21, Merriweather Tree Lighting & Ice Rink

## Merriweather Symphony of Lights

November 29-January 4

Visit [Merriweather Lights](#) website for more.