

Good evening!

I'm very excited to tell you about the launch of [OpenHoward](#). [OpenHoward](#) is a new data portal that can be accessed from the [county's home page](#). This launch represents the first step in implementing the recommendations of the Open Data Task Force created by the Council through [CB32-2014](#), and marks a turning point in our effort to improve government transparency and make public information more accessible to residents. You can check out [OpenHoward](#) at:



You may also be interested to know about [new budget pages](#) I created on the District 3 Council website to make budget information easier to navigate. One page includes many of the [budget documents](#) that are being reviewed as part of the Council's FY16 budget process. The other is a [calendar](#) of remaining work-sessions and hearings, including a detailed list of which departments will be discussed and when. While there are still some formatting issues, I wanted you to be able to use them asap:

- [Budget Documents](#)
- [Budget Calendar of remaining Hearings and Worksessions](#)

As you may know, I have been working hard over the last 8 years to improve notice and increase government transparency. Other efforts include the creation of interactive pages to aid research and reporting of issues, as well as improvements to existing pages. Here are some you might find helpful:

- [New County Council Website](#) and Legislative Search Tool: A culmination of a multi-year project, and a continued work in progress.
- [Pre-Submission Notice/Community Registration](#): Allows you to register individually or as a community to get email notices of pre-submission meetings and hopefully will be expanded soon to include notice of other types of meetings and hearings.
- [Development Plan Search](#): Allows you to search for development plans by address, keyword, or map.
- [Neighborhood Information](#): Allows Howard County residents to look up who represents them and find other useful information about where they live.
- [3-Digit Sign Code Look-Up](#): Provides easier identification of information about land development and zoning matters that are required to post the property as notice through a 3 digit look up system on the County's website.
- [NotifyMe](#): Allows residents to select, from a wide variety of topics, information and updates they would like to receive through email or text message.
- [TellHoCo](#): An easy way for anyone to report non-emergency issues to Howard County while on the go.

My vision is that [OpenHoward](#) will not only improve access to and use of County data, but it will also encourage residents to conduct their own analysis, empowering them as they engage with County officials on issues that are important to our community. I am so pleased to see our efforts come to fruition, and I look forward to the next steps.

All the best,

Jen

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