



HoCo By Design General Plan Update  
**CHAPTER 8: PUBLIC SCHOOL FACILITIES**  
**CHAPTER 10: MANAGING GROWTH**

**DPZ Presentation to the County Council**

**June 7, 2023**





# Public School Facilities Chapter Overview

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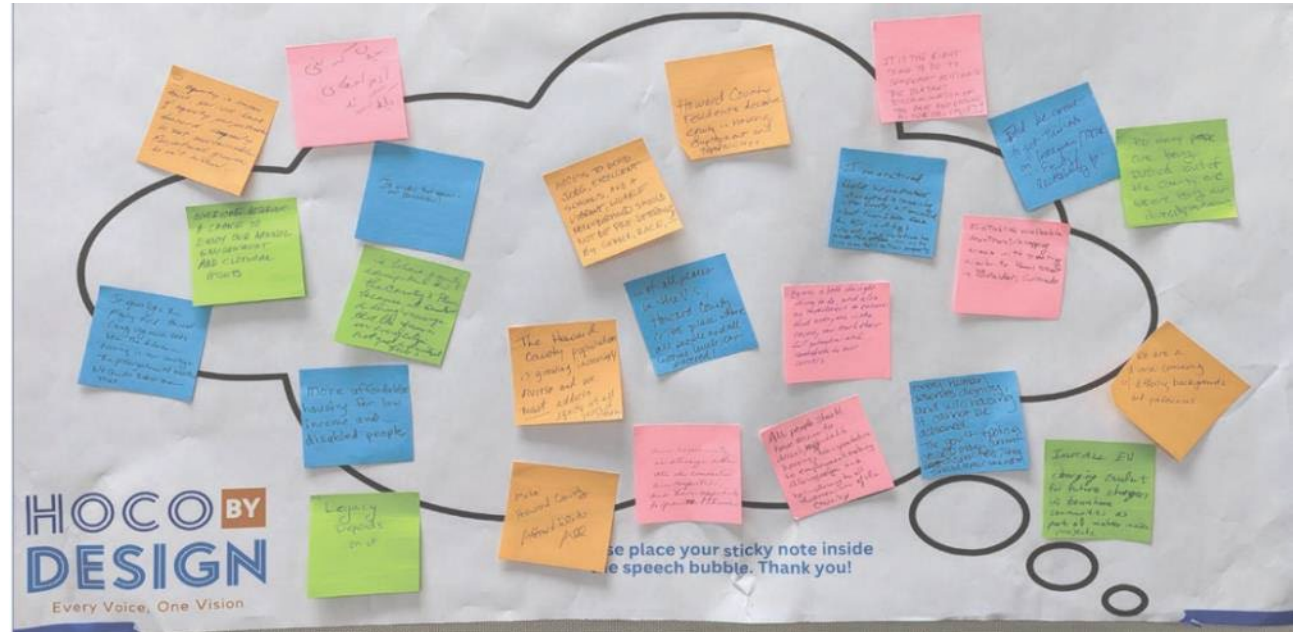
# Public School Facilities – Chapter Overview

Public School Facilities Topics	
Overview of HCPSS Planning	Enrollment Trends
Future Trends	Fiscal Considerations
Land Use Considerations	Accommodating Future School Needs

*\*HoCo By Design is the County’s first general plan to include a chapter devoted to schools. Other Maryland jurisdictions do not include chapters on schools in their general plans. Additionally, the presentation covers highlights from the chapter, including some, but not all, policies and actions*

# What We Heard

- High-performing schools are a major draw to Howard County, though there is concern over the growing student population and school overcrowding
- Some community members believe developers have not done enough to address school capacity
- Other community members have suggested capacity exists within the school system and that overcrowding can be addressed by better aligning students with available resources
- We also heard desire for career development and vocational/technical training



# Strategic Advisory Group – Role and Focus of Discussions

- Multi-disciplinary group of experts that acted as advisors to project team
- SAG discussed:
  - Roles and responsibilities of county government, HCPSS, and BOE relative to school planning
  - Process and procedures around school site identification, facilities design and funding models
- HCPSS is governed by an independently-elected BOE and works collaboratively with the County Executive and County Council to develop and adopt HCPSS' operating budget
  - Decisions concerning school capacity and utilization, class size, attendance areas, new school construction, and facilities maintenance and design are the purview of HCPSS and BOE
  - Many of the recommendations in HoCo By Design focus on efforts that the County, HCPSS and BOE can collaboratively implement or are recommendations for HCPSS

# Strategic Advisory Group Findings

- State and local capital funding mechanisms can be rigid with **long planning horizons**
- Innovative approaches to financing (like public-private partnerships) recommended
- Capital planning must balance new construction with long-term maintenance
- Some members favored policies that would require **developers to bear a greater share** of the fiscal burden



# Strategic Advisory Group Findings – Continued

- **Land scarcity in the East** creates challenges to situating new schools
- Future school facilities planning could consider flexibility in school size, configuration
- Redevelopment of office and retail space for school use suggested
- Shared amenities – parks, athletic fields, housing, or other public resources – could be explored





# Overview of HCPSS Planning and Trends

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# Feasibility Study

- Office of School Planning prepares and presents an annual feasibility study to the Board of Education each June. The study includes:
  - A comprehensive review of school boundary options
  - Student enrollment projections over the next 10 years
  - Capital improvement plan
- The feasibility study and its **capacity utilization calculations** are the basis for the following year's **APFO school capacity chart** which gets adopted in July and also informs the **HCPSS capital budget** for the following fiscal year



# School Capacity Utilization

- School capacity utilization is measured by **weighing student population** against a specific school's **available space**
- HCPSS Goal: maintain utilization between **90-100%**
- Redistricting considered when capacity is less than 90% or more than 110%
- As of February 2023, all high schools projected to be **under 110% thru 2030**, with most **around or below 100%**
- Seats being added with new Guilford Park High School, and renovations and additions at: Oakland Mills Middle, Dunloggin Middle, Oakland Mills High, and Hammond High
- HCPSS feasibility study and capacity utilization calculations – basis for APFO school capacity chart



# Future Trends – Decreases in Enrollment and Birth Rates

- The birth rate has been declining – since 2016, Howard County’s birth rate decreased 11%
- Enrollment has declined since the beginning of Covid-19, when some parents shifted their children to private school or homeschool

<b>Table 8-4: HCPSS Enrollment Count, 2019 - 2021</b>	
<b>Student Groups</b>	<b>Counts</b>
2019 Total Enrollment	57,518
2020 New Students	6,891
2020 Existing Students	-8,130
<b>2020 Total Enrollment</b>	<b>56,279</b>
2021 New Students	8,368
2021 Existing Students	-8,643
<b>2021 Total Enrollment</b>	<b>56,004</b>

*Source: Howard County Public School System, Office of School Planning. K-12 enrollment, not including Pre-K.*

# Enrollment Trends – Sources of Student Growth

- **HCPSS Office of School Planning estimates enrollment growth** based on:
  - Number of births in Howard County
  - Five-year history of cohort survival (ratio of students moving from one grade to the next in the same school)
  - First-time sales of newly-constructed homes
  - Resales of existing homes
  - Apartment turnover
  - Out-of-district enrollment at regional programs



Source: HCPSS Feasibility Study, 2022

# Enrollment Trends – Sources of Student Growth (Continued)

- DPZ provides new housing unit projections to HCPSS, including:
  - All recently approved plans not yet constructed and plans under review – indicates near-term housing growth
  - Future development potential based on zoning capacity – indicates long-term potential (updates to the Zoning Regulations following HoCo By Design will strengthen outer year projections)
- HCPSS tracks turnover/resales of existing housing, which also has a significant impact on enrollment

**Table 8-2: HCPSS Student Growth: New Construction vs. Resales of Existing Units & Apartment Turnover (2021)**

Level	Apartment Turnover	Resales	New Construction	Total
Elementary	617	689	188	1,853
Middle	(30)	175	81	
High	(10)	97	46	
Total	577	961	315	
Percent	31.1%	51.9%	17.0%	

Source: Howard County Public School System, Office of School Planning

**Table 8-3: HCPSS Student Growth: New Construction vs. Resales of Existing Units & Apartment Turnover (2022)**

Level	Apartment Turnover	Resales	New Construction	Total
Elementary	587	759	212	2,004
Middle	(70)	193	83	
High	40	144	56	
Total	557	1,096	351	
Percent	27.8%	54.7%	17.5%	

Source: Howard County Public School System, Office of School Planning

# Future Trends – Smaller Housing Typologies

- Shift to **smaller housing types** proposed in HoCo By Design
- The Plan emphasizes **growth in mixed-use activity centers**, which are generally expected to include smaller housing types
  - As an example of an existing activity center – in Downtown Columbia, there are only 41 students living in the 1,199 new housing units built as a result of the Downtown Columbia Plan (as of Sep 30, 2022)
- HoCo By Design also proposes opportunities for **missing middle housing** and **accessory dwelling units** – smaller housing types compared to traditional single-family detached
- HoCo By Design recommends a higher proportion of multi-family units than PlanHoward 2030; therefore, **fewer new students** are expected in the school system compared to the last 20 years



# Policies and Actions – Future Trends

- **Policy PS-1:** The County, HCPSS, and private sector should work collaboratively to identify school sites that meet the needs of the student population and anticipate future growth patterns
  - **Action:** Alternatives to APFO waiting periods should be examined where a development offsets potential impact thru an additional voluntary mitigation payment
  - **Action:** HoCo By Design and the HCPSS Long Range Master Plan should be coordinated so that school capacity projects are planned in activity center areas





## **Fiscal Considerations**

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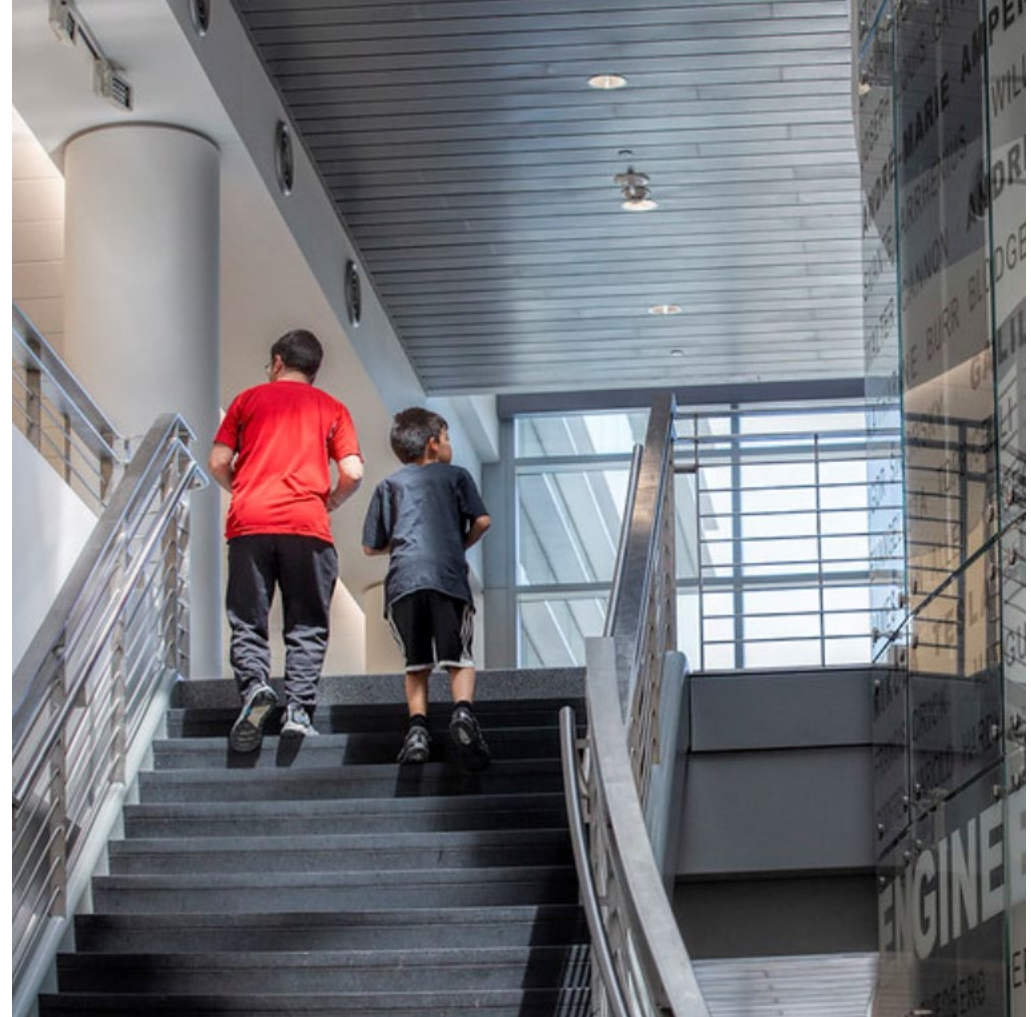
# Fiscal Considerations

- Construction of new schools, additions, and renovations funded primarily by General Obligation bonds and the School Surcharge on new homes (new development helps cover the cost of school infrastructure needs)
  - While GO bonds fund the majority (in FY23, ~\$43 million), the school surcharge is estimated to generate ~\$30 million annually thru 2040
- Additionally, 25% of the transfer tax helps cover school land acquisition and construction costs – currently ~\$2.5 million/year
- As identified in HoCo By Design's fiscal analysis, new growth and its associated fiscal benefits (especially those that come from the transfer tax and school surcharge) will support the capital funding needed to meet future enrollment demands and systemic renovation or replacement



# Policies and Actions – Fiscal Considerations

- **Policy PS-2:** The County and HCPSS should partner to leverage additional public and private resources to meet school facility needs and timing
  - **Action:** Costs and benefits of public-private partnership models should be examined to address near-term school facility needs
  - **Action:** A trust fund for school site acquisitions, or partnerships with philanthropic organizations, should be evaluated to purchase and hold property until schools can be built





## Land Use Considerations

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# Land Use Considerations

- School design/minimum size requirements limit flexibility
  - Elementary Schools: 10 acres plus 1 acre/100 students
  - Middle Schools: 20 acres plus 1 acre/100 students
  - High Schools: 30 acres plus 1 acre /100 students
- SAG suggested alternative design models, and exploring reuse of commercial real estate
- Limited land availability means future school facilities and sites may need to look different than existing schools
  - Taller buildings, shared athletic facilities, co-locating school facilities with other public amenities (such as parks or libraries), and reuse of commercial real estate



## Land Use Considerations – Continued

- SAG concluded that the **land reservation process** (in the Subdivision Regulations) could be improved – to better align to **current development patterns**, **HCPSS planning timelines**, and the **development review process**
- HCPSS has had **challenges with regulations** such as setback, height limits, and other bulk regulations that limit the **developable footprint** for buildings, athletic fields and other site amenities
- School facilities could co-locate with other public amenities (like libraries, park and recreational facilities, community centers, affordable housing, police or fire stations, and athletic fields)
- Educational facilities can be **integrated into mixed use activity centers**

## Policies and Actions – Land Use Considerations

- **Policy PS-3:** The County and HCPSS should collaborate on future school siting and develop tools to allow for alternative school designs, flexible site requirements, and adaptive reuse of underutilized properties
  - **Action:** Consider adaptive reuse of commercial real estate
  - **Action:** Consider leasing space for early childhood or other HCPSS programming
  - **Action:** Evaluate integrating public pre-k into government and commercial centers
  - **Action:** Evaluate using smaller HCPSS properties for regional programs, athletic facilities
  - **Action:** Examine alternative school design models (such as higher capacity buildings, smaller footprints, shared site amenities, modular design, and/or vertical construction)
  - **Action:** Explore opportunities for co-location of school facilities with other public amenities

# Policies and Actions – Land Use Considerations – Continued

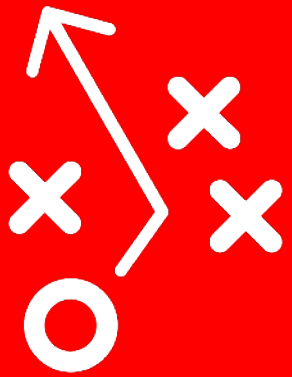
- **Action:** Ensure future redevelopment of Gateway includes thorough evaluation of school capacity and that any deficiencies created are mitigated by providing school facilities
- **Action:** Ensure development of activity centers includes a review of school capacity needs and opportunities to address those needs within the activity center



# Policies and Actions – Land Use Considerations – Continued

- **Policy PS-4:** Revisions to Zoning and Subdivision Regulations should provide more flexibility for school site development and remove barriers to efficient use of school sites
  - **Action:** Allow administrative approval of zoning variances as they relate to school facility development
  - **Action:** Evaluate the applicability of the code provisions governing reservations of land for public facilities to determine appropriate changes that would increase utilization





# **Accommodating Future School Needs**

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# Accommodating Future School Needs

- Planning and APFO – the General Plan and APFO establish the land use plan, policies, and growth management tools. HoCo By Design proposes updated policies to better integrate school planning needs in relation to changing demographics, market conditions, and land use patterns
- School funding and construction – new and proactive approaches to funding school construction and property identification, evaluation, and acquisition for public school use needed

## Policies and Actions – Future School Needs

- **Policy PS-5:** The need for school facilities—particularly to support regional early childhood programs in the near term—warrants a more proactive approach to property identification, evaluation, and acquisition for public use
  - **Action:** Review and update policies and regulatory tools to better align school planning needs to changing demographics, market conditions, and land use patterns
  - **Action:** Consider a right of first refusal strategy to purchase properties proposed for sale in certain priority geographies
  - **Action:** Research models for government and private sector partners to acquire and amass small parcels into sites large enough for school use
  - **Action:** Utilize data/intelligence from the real estate industry to monitor leasing and sale opportunities for site acquisition
  - **Action:** Consider purchasing available properties in the near term with leaseback options to tenants as a means to hold land for future school needs



# Managing Growth Chapter Overview

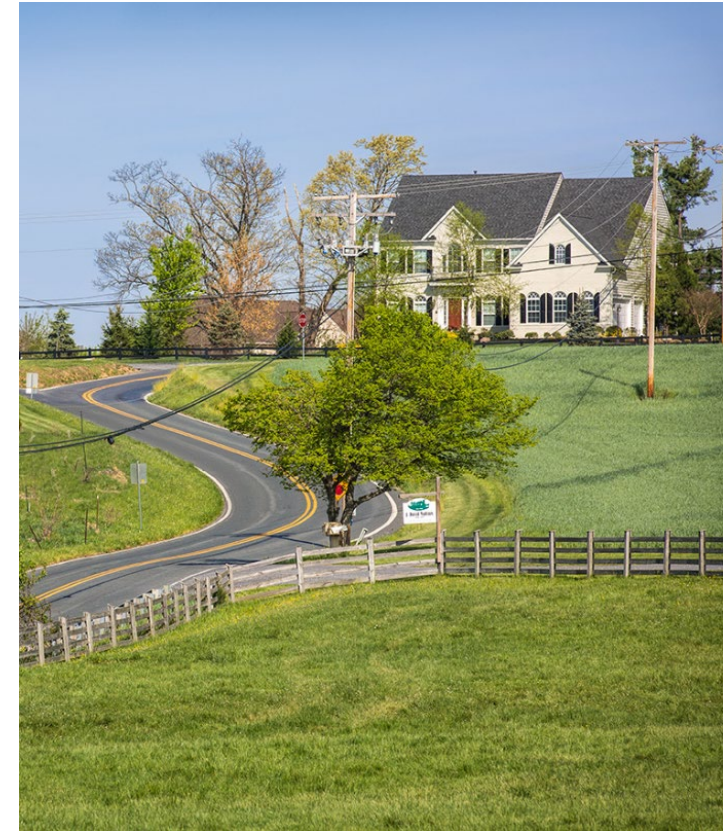
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# Managing Growth – Chapter Overview

Managing Growth Topics	
Residential Growth Targets, 2020-2040	APFO: Housing Unit Allocations
APFO: Adequate Transportation Facilities	Residential Growth Trends
Indicators of Future Development	Managing Growth into the Future

# APFO Background

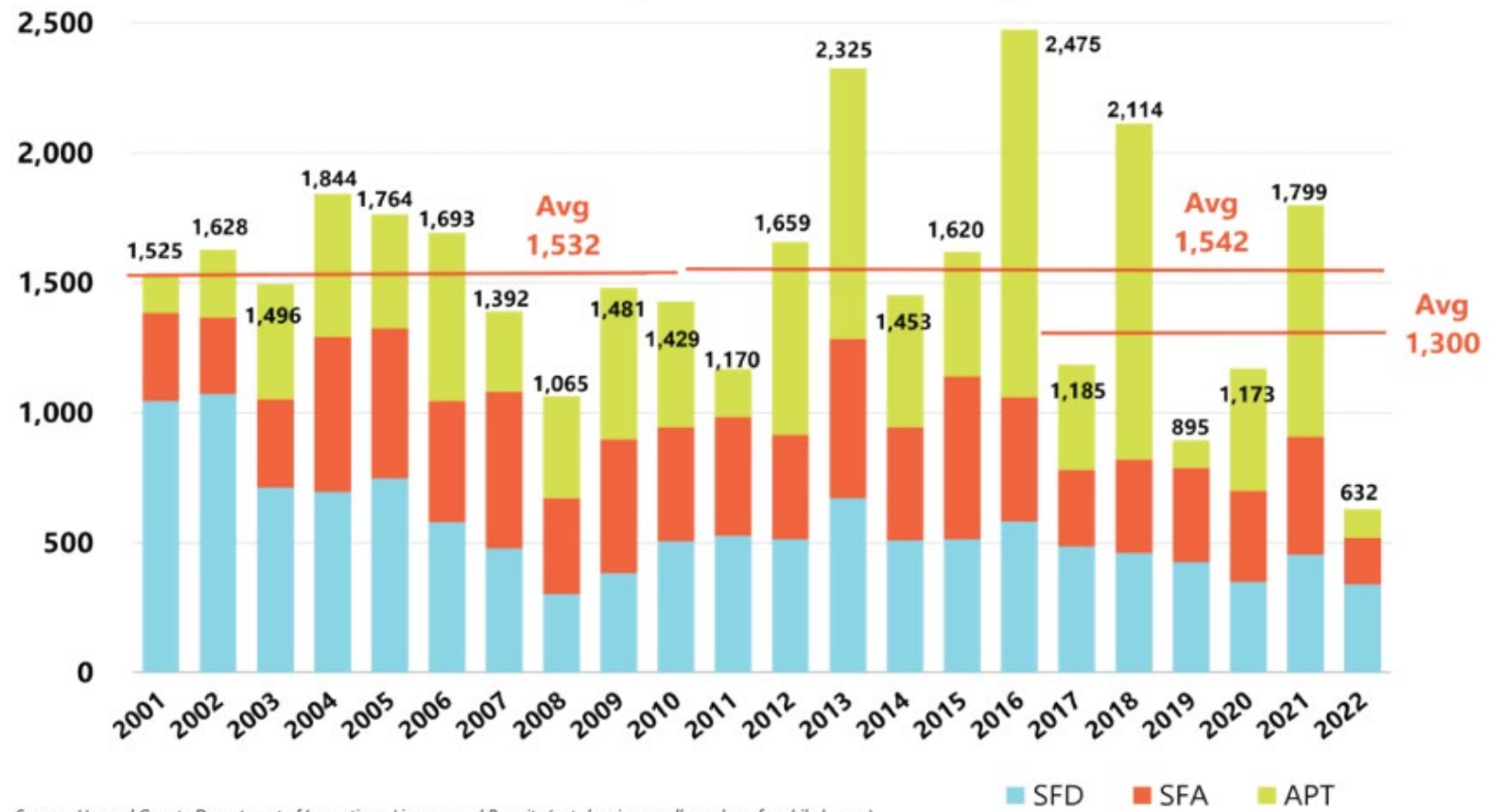
- Howard County adopted the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) in 1992
- Controls the pace of residential development
- Aims to ensure adequacy of road and school capacity in relation to growth
  - Residential development:
    - General Plan sets pace of residential growth through the housing allocation chart, which is updated annually
    - School Capacity chart restricts growth in closed school districts
  - Road Capacity:
    - Traffic impacts – mitigated for residential and nonresidential development
- APFO amended after adoption of new General Plan



# Growth Trends

- In the 1980s, prior to APFO's adoption, residential growth exceeded 4,000 homes per year
- Since the 1980s growth has been slowing
- Over the past 20 years, growth was 1,537 units per year

**Graph 10-1: Residential Building Permits Issued 2001 through 2022 Howard County**



Source: Howard County Department of Inspections, Licenses and Permits (not showing small number of mobile homes)

# Residential Growth Targets, 2020-2040

- HoCo By Design has set a target of 1,580 units per year, a similar pace to the 1,537 new units built annually over the last 20 years
  - Does not include Gateway, the subject of a forthcoming master plan
  - Once Gateway's growth targets are identified, HoCo By Design will need to be amended to include them
  - Separate, specialized APFO program should be created for Gateway to address transportation needs and school capacity



# Housing Unit Allocations

- Annual APFO allocations chart paces new housing growth
- The allocations proposed average 1,580/year (less than the 2,084/year in PlanHoward 2030)
- Geographic regions in the chart include: Downtown Columbia, Activity Centers, Other Character Areas, and the Rural West
- There is 150/year set-aside for Green Neighborhoods (same as PlanHoward 2030)
- New set-aside of 150/year for affordable housing (further described in Dynamic Neighborhoods chapter)

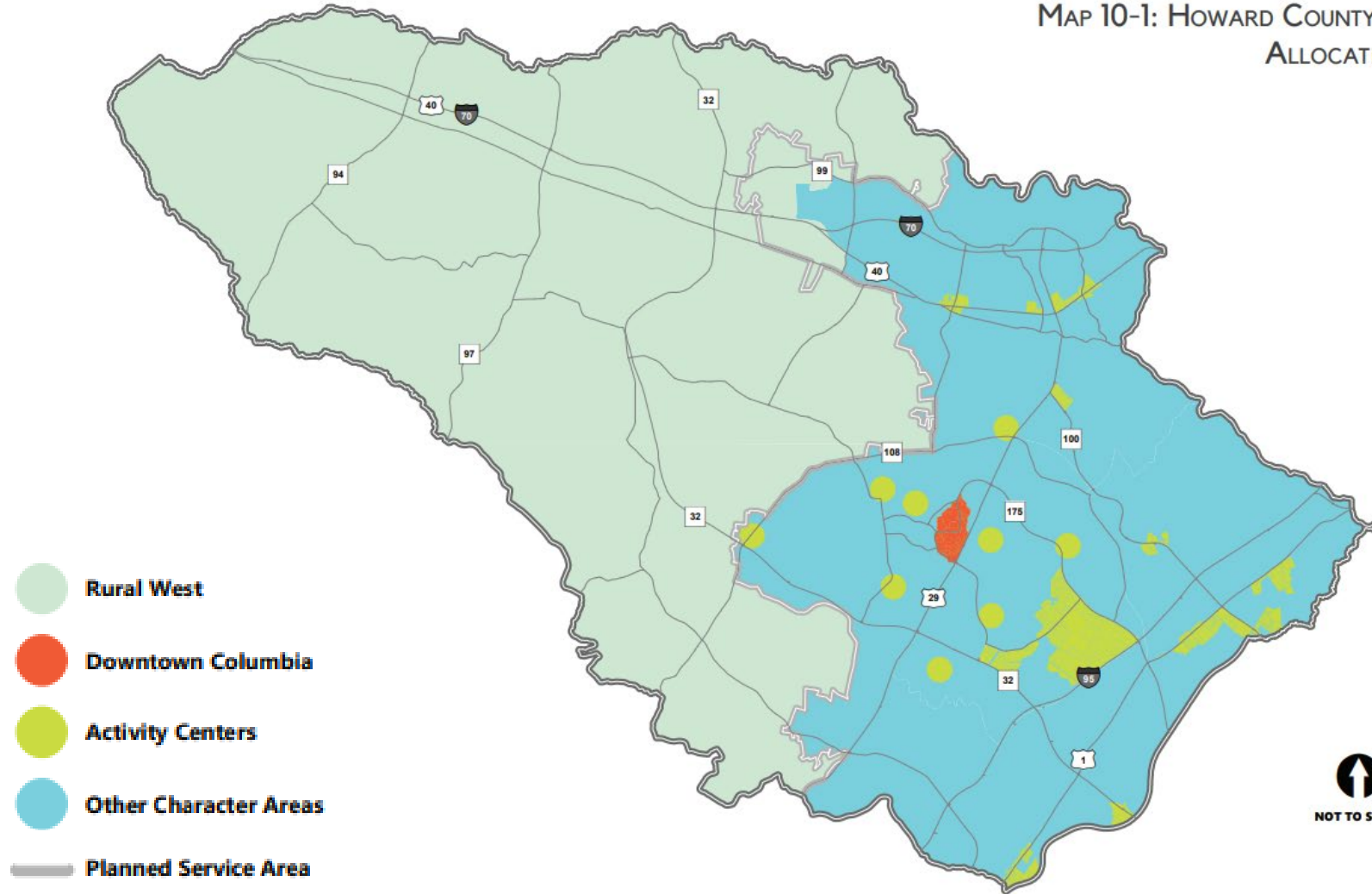
**Table 10-1: Howard County APFO Allocations Chart - HoCo By Design**

Year	Downtown Columbia (1)	Activity Centers	Other Character Areas	Rural West	Total	Green Neighborhood	Affordable Housing
2026	335	600	365	100	1,400	150	150
2027	335	600	365	100	1,400	150	150
2028	335	600	365	100	1,400	150	150
2029	335	600	365	100	1,400	150	150
2030	335	600	365	100	1,400	150	150
2031	155	600	365	100	1,220	150	150
2032	155	600	365	100	1,220	150	150
2033	155	600	365	100	1,220	150	150
2034	155	600	365	100	1,220	150	150
2035	154	600	365	100	1,219	150	150
2036	154	600	365	100	1,219	150	150
2037	154	600	365	100	1,219	150	150
2038	154	600	365	100	1,219	150	150
2039	154	600	365	100	1,219	150	150
2040	154	600	365	100	1,219	150	150
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,219</b>	<b>9,000</b>	<b>5,475</b>	<b>1,500</b>	<b>19,194</b>	<b>2,250</b>	<b>2,250</b>
<b>Annual Average</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,280</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>150</b>

(1) The allocations for Downtown Columbia align with the phasing chart in the approved and adopted 2010 Downtown Columbia Plan.

# APFO Allocation Map

MAP 10-1: HOWARD COUNTY APFO ALLOCATION MAP



# School Capacity Test

- To pass this test, local rated capacity where the project is located must be under:
  - 105% (the elementary school district)
  - 105% (the elementary school region)
  - 110% (the middle school district)
  - 115% (the high school district)
- If capacity does not exist at any level, the project is placed on hold
- Projects may proceed after a maximum of five tests (roughly 3-4 years - this holding period to allows HCPSS to plan, fund, and build new schools and additions)
- More than 23,000 units put on hold since APFO began

Table 10-2: Total Units on Hold Allocations & School Capacity Waiting Bin			
Allocation Year	Allocations	School Capacity	Total
1995	0	0	0
1996	63	0	63
1997	832	62	894
1998	688	533	1,221
1999	869	0	869
2000	109	0	109
2001	74	51	125
2002	484	154	638
2003	360	0	360
General Plan 2000 Adopted			
Allocation Year	Allocations	School Capacity	Total
2003	461	75	536
2004	497	376	873
2005	654	706	1,360
2006	676	782	1,458
2007	994	966	1,960
2009	1,002	756	1,758
2010	2,925	363	3,288
2011	553	0	553
2012	261	0	261
2013	248	16	264
2014	211	850	1,061
2015	37	13	50
PlanHoward2030 Adopted			
Allocation Year	Allocations	School Capacity	Total
2015	17	151	168
2016	111	60	171
2017	485	182	667
2018	0	509	509
2019	0	851	851
2020	0	804	804
2021	0	662	662
2022	0	411	411
2023	0	533	533
2024	0	736	736
<b>Total Units Paused Since Beginning of APFO</b>			<b>23,358</b>

# School Capacity Test

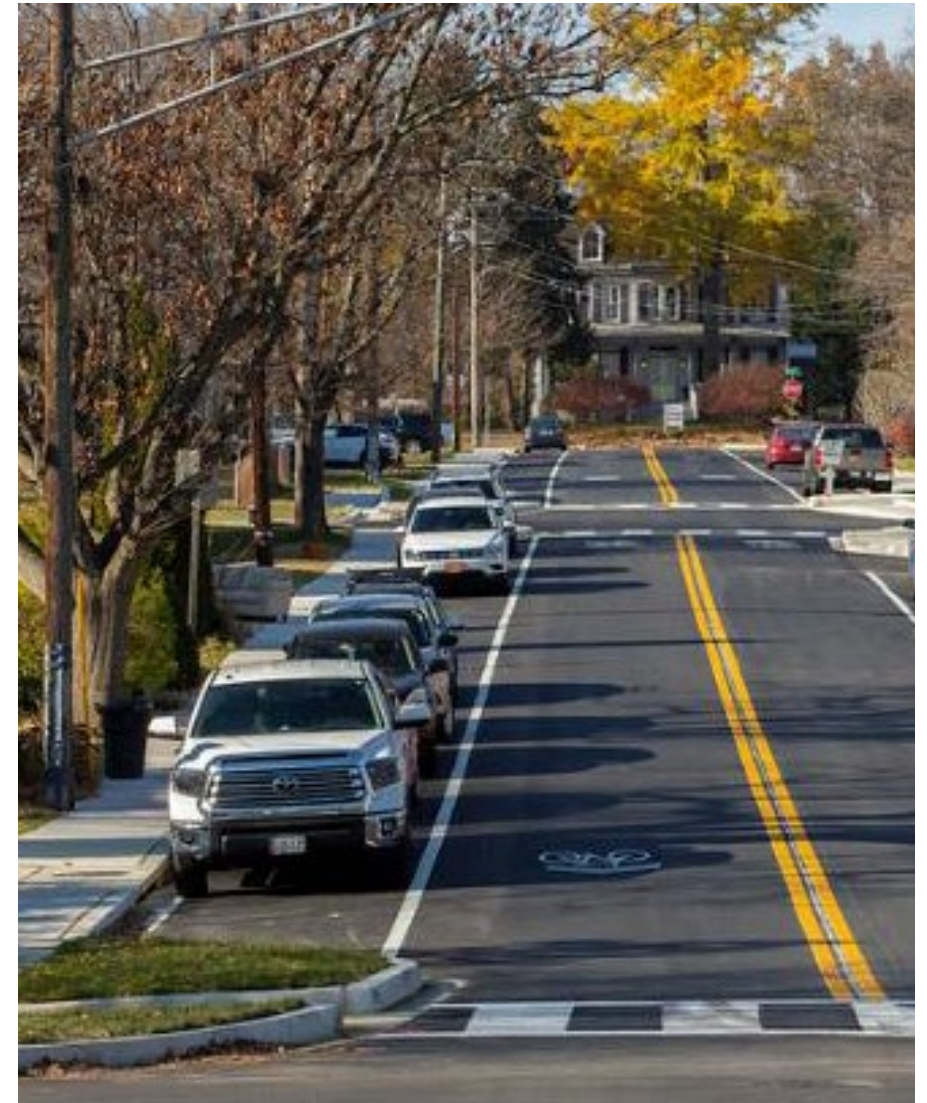
# Adequate Transportation Facilities

- APFO requires a “roads test” for adequate road infrastructure for new development
  - The County requires mitigation measures when needed based on the test
- In accordance with the Complete Streets Policy, developers also submit pedestrian access and bicycle level of stress studies
  - However, APFO remains singularly focused on motor vehicle travel – and mitigation measures resulting from APFO have not always considered the impacts to pedestrians and cyclists



## Adequate Transportation Facilities – Continued

- APFO currently does not include a mechanism to mitigate the impact of small development projects (those that generate less than 5 peak hour trips)
- And, APFO only requires a project to mitigate its direct impact on an intersection
  - AFPO does not account for the larger network benefit that could occur at some other location further from the development
- Some jurisdictions pool funds over time to build more substantial projects that have an overall network benefit and advance multi-modal policy goals
  - Transportation plan can establish projects to be funded by fees in a specific subarea



# Managing Growth into the Future

- APFO task force will be convened within one year of the adoption of HoCo By Design
- This is an opportunity for a comprehensive review and assessment of APFO
- The assessment should account for future land uses shifting to infill and redevelopment
  - Suburban greenfield development, the predominant type of past growth, will be less prevalent given limited land supply
  - APFO was designed to manage suburban greenfield development
  - APFO needs to be updated to reflect the County's future – mixed-use activity centers, missing middle housing, ADUs

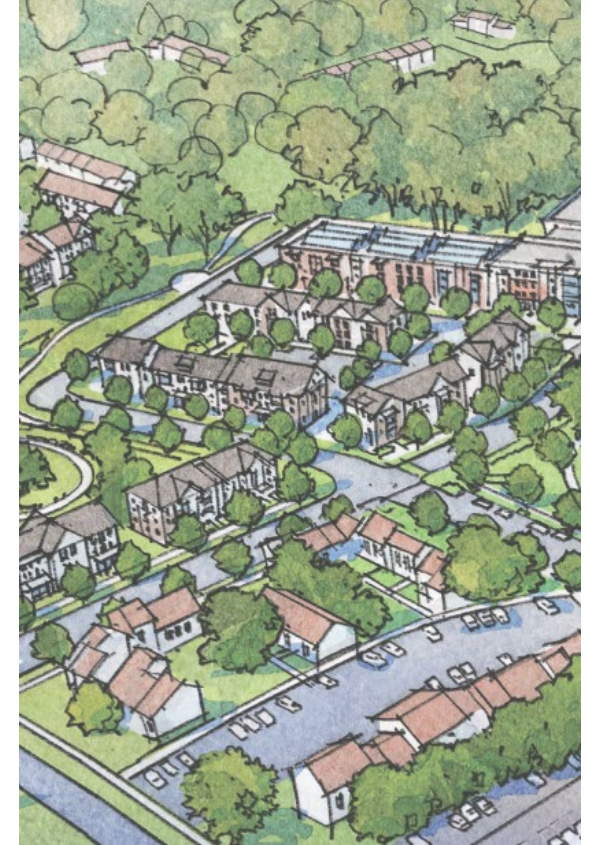


# Policies and Actions – APFO

- **Policy MG-1:** Evaluate and amend APFO to support HoCo By Design’s vision and policies
  - **Action:** Research **models in other jurisdictions** that account for infill and redevelopment
  - **Action:** Assess applicability of APFO to **Accessory Dwelling Units**
  - **Action:** Evaluate opportunities to grant automatic or limited exemptions to incentivize **affordable, age-restricted, and missing middle housing** developments (a recommendation from the Housing Opportunities Master Plan)
  - **Action:** Evaluate the necessity of a housing allocation chart (goals, design, appropriate place)

# Policies and Actions – APFO and Schools

- **Action:** Collection of data on school demands in the County – including a **life cycle evaluation of new and existing neighborhoods** to better understand student growth
- **Action:** Evaluation of extent to which new growth generates revenues for school infrastructure and review of alternative financing
- **Action:** Evaluation of the school capacity test and recommendations to better pace development with available school capacity
- **Action:** Examination of alternatives to APFO waiting periods through additional voluntary mitigation payments
- **Action:** Evaluation of the timing and process of the school capacity chart



# Policies and Actions – APFO and Transportation

- **Action:** Evaluation of context-driven transportation adequacy measures
- **Action:** Analysis of APFO standards for geographic subareas
- **Action:** Study of fee-based approach to advance significant projects
- **Action:** Evaluation of APFO standards to enhance investments in bicycling, walking, transit, roads, and safety

