
From: Bonnie Bricker <bonbricker@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 13, 2026 10:05 AM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: Public Garden

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The Public Garden deserves your support over the long term as it will not only be a place of learning, solace, and healthful physical and mental activity, it will also place another historical marker for the enslaved people (and their descendants) who toiled here in Howard County. This is especially important since we live in an era where such truth-telling is inhibited by our Federal government and others seeking to hide the truth.

This funding should, however, be placed in the context of the acute and chronic needs of the year-over-year underfunding of our formerly great public school system.

I hope that the priorities of the school system are taken into account when decisions for funding of all projects are taken into consideration.

Thank you all for your service to our county.

--
Bonnie Bricker
301-648-8939

pronouns:she/her/hers

From: Jean Xu <jean@jeanxu4council.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 14, 2026 11:43 AM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: FY2027 Capital Budget Testimony – Jean Xu
Attachments: Testimony on the County Capital Budget FY 2027.pdf

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Dear Chair and Members of the County Council,

Please find attached my written testimony on the FY2027 County Capital Budget.

In this testimony, I share thoughts on addressing school deferred maintenance more strategically, strengthening transparency and accountability in capital planning, and better aligning investments with growth. I also highlight the importance of moving approved projects forward so residents can see timely and tangible results.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and for your continued service to our community.

Sincerely,

Jean Xu
Candidate for Howard County Council, District 1

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Phone: 443-797-9588

Website: jeanxu4council.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/JeanXu4Council/>

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Jean

XU

DEMOCRAT *for*
COUNTY COUNCIL D1

By Authority: Friends of Jean Xu, Eric Zhang, Treasurer



Testimony on the FY2027 County Capital Budget: Priorities, Accountability, and Delivery

Jean Xu
Candidate for County Council D1
April 13, 2026

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the County's capital budget.

I want to begin by acknowledging the County Executive's decision to fully fund the school system's capital budget request. That is the right decision and an important step to maintain the quality of our public schools.

However, we must confront the larger issue. The HCPSS faces \$194 million in deferred maintenance needs. Too often, this has forced school communities into competing against one another for limited resources. That approach is not sustainable, and it is not equitable.

Deferred maintenance must be addressed through a comprehensive, countywide strategy, not a piecemeal process. The County should make full and strategic use of available resources, including PAYGO funding and budget surpluses, to make real progress on this backlog. This is not just a funding issue; it is a prioritization issue.

At the same time, decisions must be grounded in data, transparency, and consistent criteria. The public deserves to understand how projects are prioritized, and the County must ensure accountability so that investments are fair, efficient, and clearly communicated.

We must also align capital investment with how our communities are actually growing. Elkridge is one of the fastest-growing areas in our county. Elkridge families deserve their own high school so students are not traveling long distances every day and can grow up with a real sense of community. This is about planning ahead and investing where the need is clear.

More broadly, too many approved capital projects remain delayed. Residents have heard the plans. They are waiting to see results. It is time to put shovels in the ground and deliver on those commitments.

Our capital budget must align with growth and anticipate future needs. That means investing in infrastructure before development happens, not after we are already behind. It also means prioritizing connectivity and safety, sidewalks, bike lanes, and safe routes, especially in fast-growing areas where infrastructure has not kept pace.

In closing, Howard County has the resources to do this right. What is needed now is a more disciplined, transparent, and forward-looking approach that delivers real, visible results. Residents should not have to wait years to see progress on projects that have already been approved.

Thank you for your consideration.

From: Mr. Drew <mrdrew@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 14, 2026 10:43 AM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: FY 27 Capital Budget Testimony
Attachments: CB Capital Budget Analysis 27 (1).pdf

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Good morning County Council Members.

I've attached my analysis of the FY 27 Capital Budget.

I recommend these amendments:

1. The proposed Lakefront Library shall be scheduled after the higher-priority new library in the vicinity of Maple Lawn or Fulton.
2. The Lakefront Library shall also be scheduled after the expansion of the Elkridge library to full size.
3. The cost of the Lakefront Library shall be capped to not exceed the cost of the new library in Fulton/Maple Lawn.
4. The Indoor Track in Elkridge shall be removed and replaced with a Community Pool. The money for land acquisition for a high school in Elkridge shall remain, and shall be used to purchase land in the Elkridge Civic District for future use.

While a regional athletic facility in Elkridge would be desirable, there is no enthusiasm for an indoor track. The county government should conduct more outreach to the community to determine what type of facility local residents actually want. The Indoor Track proposal appears to be the result of advocacy by external lobbying groups at the state level, and it is being dumped in Elkridge because that's what the county does with projects nobody wants.

And it is a far lower priority than a high school and a public pool.

Drew Roth
443 459 1659
Elkridge.

An Analysis of Calvin Ball's Capital Budgets - FY 27 Update

Drew Roth

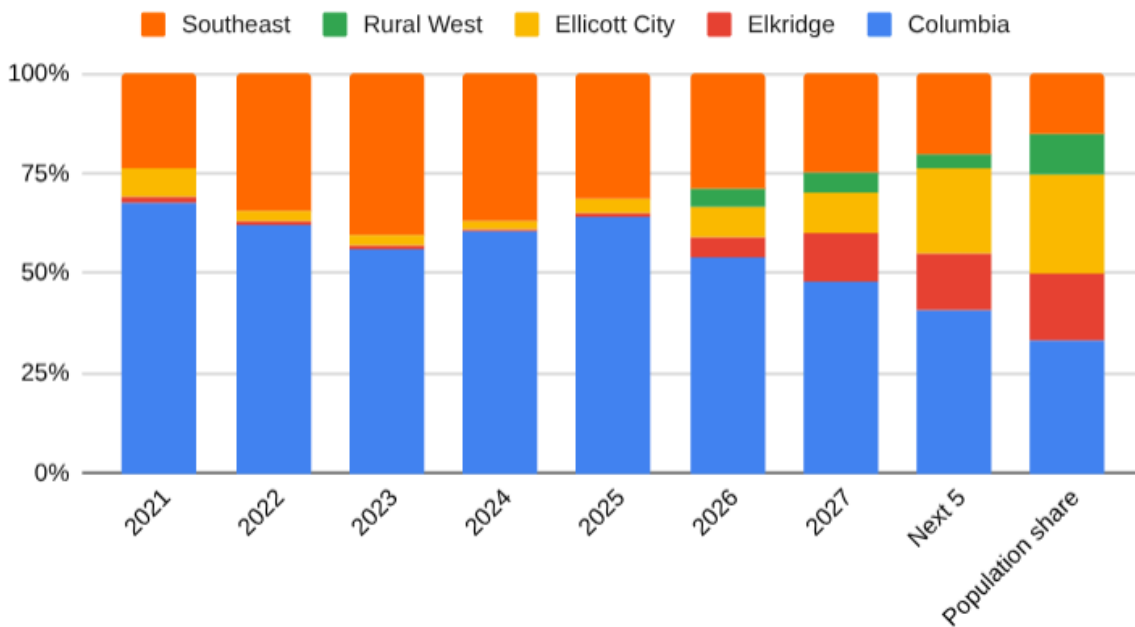
Version 0.0 April 14, 2026

County Executive Calvin Ball's capital budgets¹ demonstrate a heavy bias in favor of Columbia, at the expense of Elkridge and the Rural West. For the period 2020-2024, Columbia, which is $\frac{1}{3}$ of the county population, received $\frac{2}{3}$ of the capital investment in amenities. Ellicott City received little, and Elkridge and the Rural West received nothing.

For the capital budget in FY2025 and FY26, the previously neglected parts of the county receive some investment, but Columbia continues to receive far more than its fair share.

For FY27, the budget makes substantial movement in the direction of equitable treatment of all parts of the county. This reflects the decision to build a new elementary school in the Southeast region instead of the much-lower priority renovation and expansion of Oakland Mills High School in Columbia.

Cumulative Budget Share by Planning Area



Columbia still receives more than their fair share, and the budget still includes utterly inappropriate glamor projects in Columbia such as the Lakefront Library. While the introduction points out that the cost of the Lakefront Library has dropped by 10%, it is still twice as expensive as the much more necessary new library proposed for the Fulton area.

¹ <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/budget/budget-publications#previously-approved-budgets>

Furthermore, while long-neglected ElkrIDGE receives a substantial increase this year, \$95 million of this increase is for an indoor track for which local residents have no interest or enthusiasm, while long overdue, badly needed investments in a high school and public pool are nowhere to be found.

Projects Covered

The focus of the analysis is capital investment in amenities which provide a particular benefit to a particular region of the county. The analysis does not consider projects which equitably provide a county-wide benefit, such as training facilities, county offices, and prisons. Similarly, generic infrastructure and services which have historically been provided to all parts of the county without bias or favoritism are also not examined. Such projects include bridges, police, fire, water, sewer, storm drainage, and the community college.

Projects associated with the Ellicott City flooding, and subsequent repair and mitigation are treated as county-wide efforts and are not included in this analysis. These projects have been a very significant part of the budget, and total over \$300M. One would expect any response to a natural disaster anywhere in the county to be addressed as a county-wide effort.

What is covered are amenities, that is to say projects which provide a significant benefit to the areas where they are located. Such projects include schools, libraries, parks, recreational facilities, community centers, and transportation infrastructure to include roads, bike, pedestrian, and public transit. Amenity projects are often grouped into large categories such as “Bike Projects” (project K5066). Where possible, broad categories are broken out and allocated to regions.

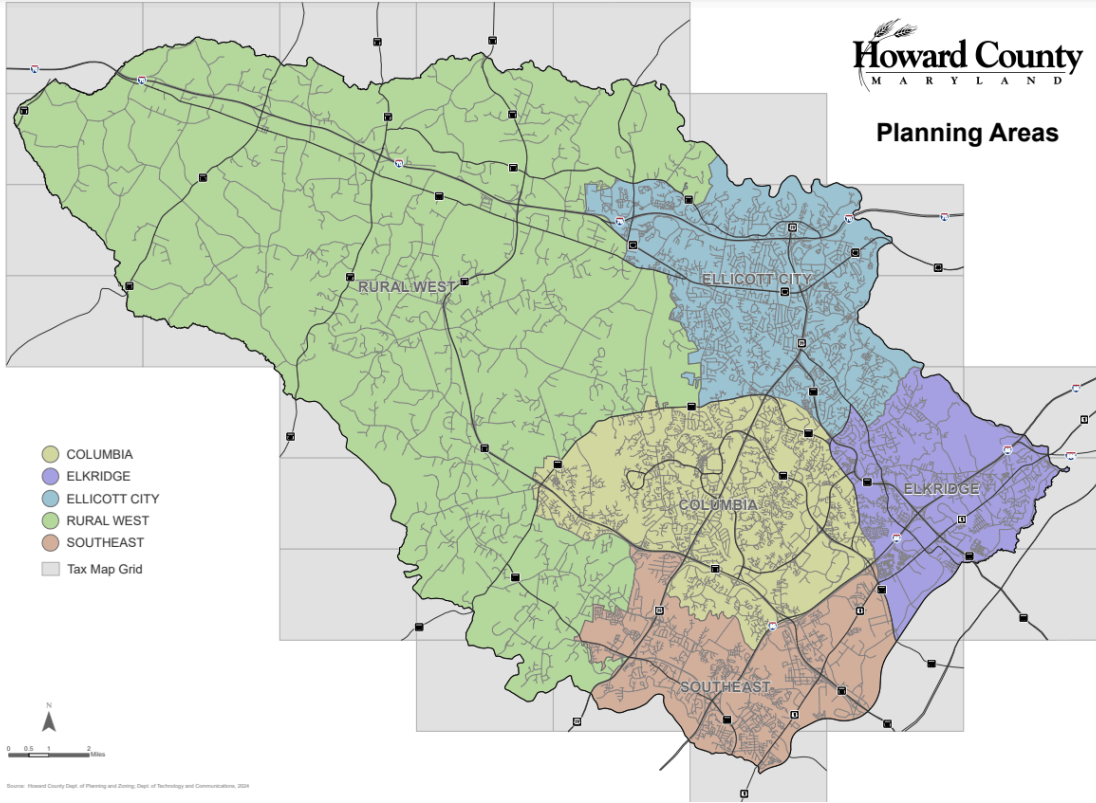
Time Period

Calvin Ball’s first budget was in 2020. The data analyzed comes from the approved capital budgets from 2020-2026, the proposed FY2027 capital budget dated March 31, 2026, and the five year projected spending from 2028-2032 in the FY27 proposal. The five year projection is analyzed in aggregate, and is not broken out by year.

Regions

Capital projects are assigned to regions based on two ways of dividing the county. The first is by planning area.²

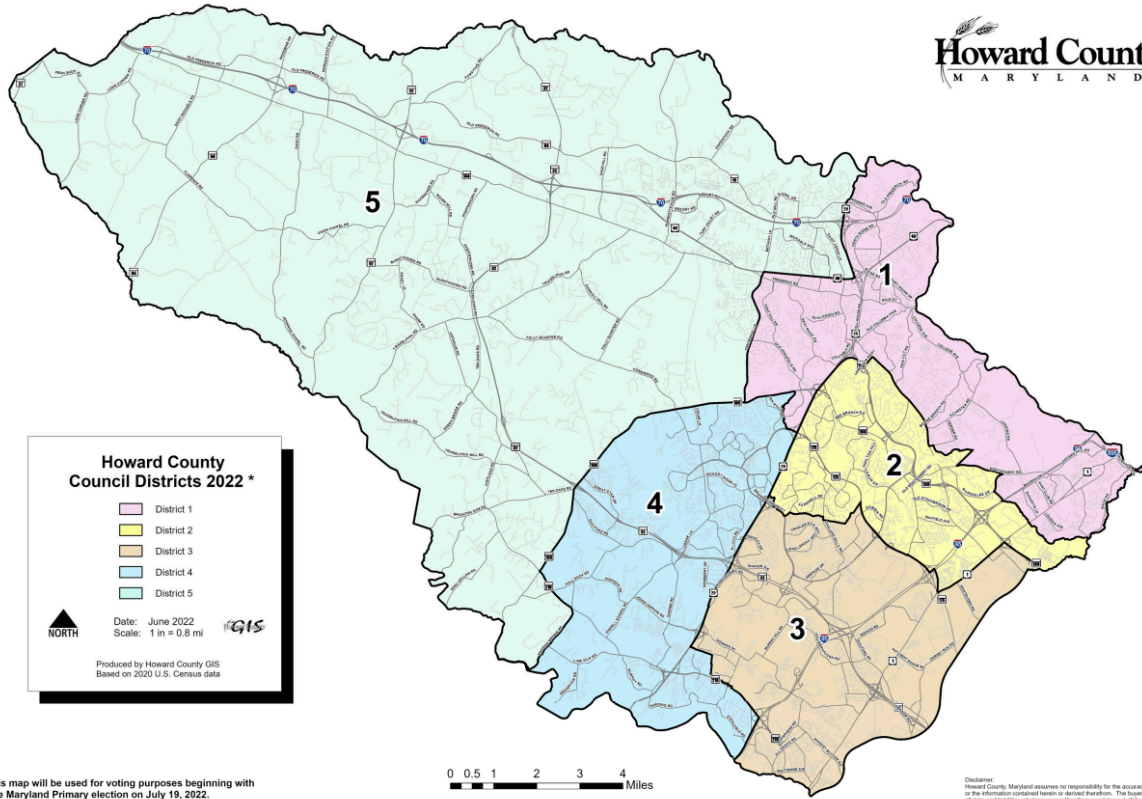
² <https://data.howardcountymd.gov/mapgallery/planning/PlanningAreasMap.pdf>



Planning areas are of differing size. The relative sizes of the planning areas are roughly as follows:

Columbia	33%
Elkrige	17%
Ellicott City	25%
Southeast	10%
Rural West	15%

The second way to analyze the data is by council district.³



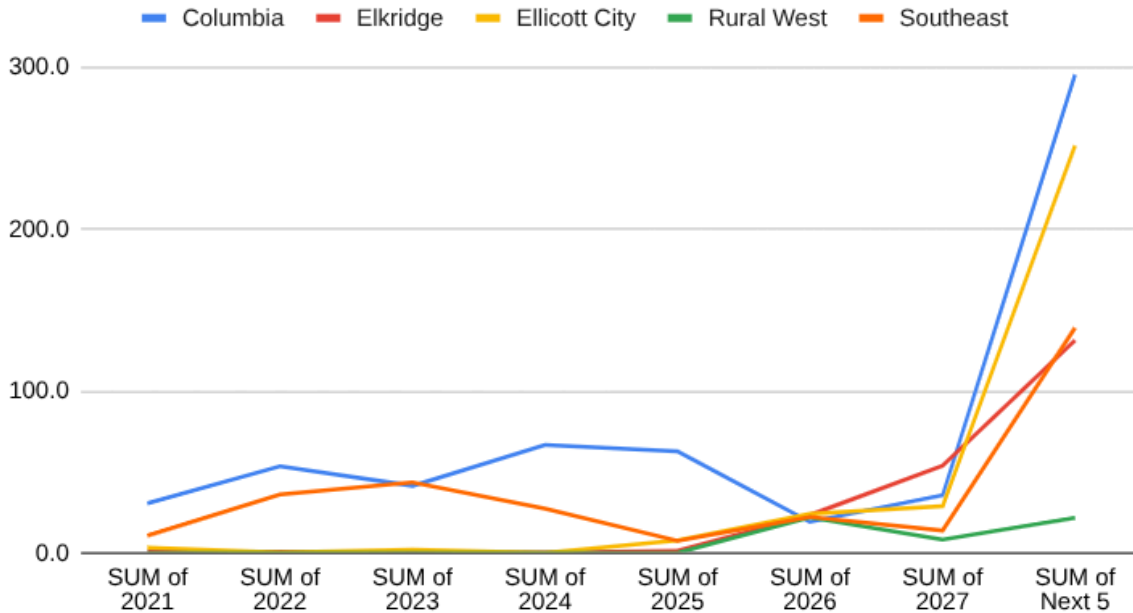
* This map will be used for voting purposes beginning with the Maryland Primary election on July 19, 2022.

All council districts are of equal size.

Results by Planning Area

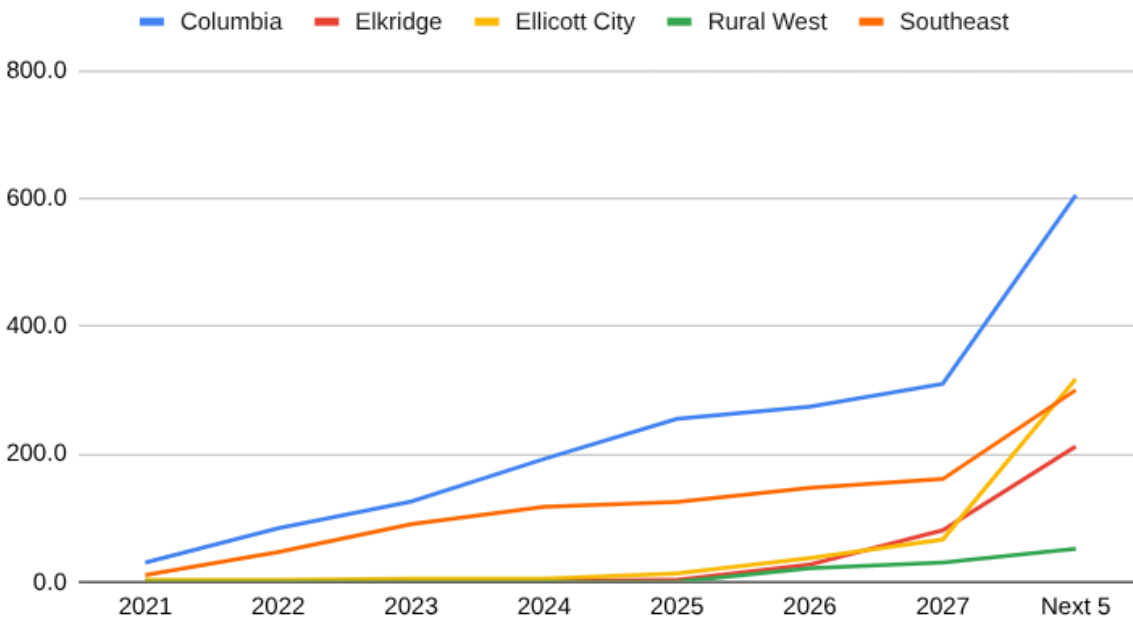
The next two figures show the budget amounts for each planning area in thousands of dollars. The next figure is year by year.

Capital Budget (thousands) by Planning Area



This is cumulative, meaning the value in each year is the sum of that year plus all previous years.

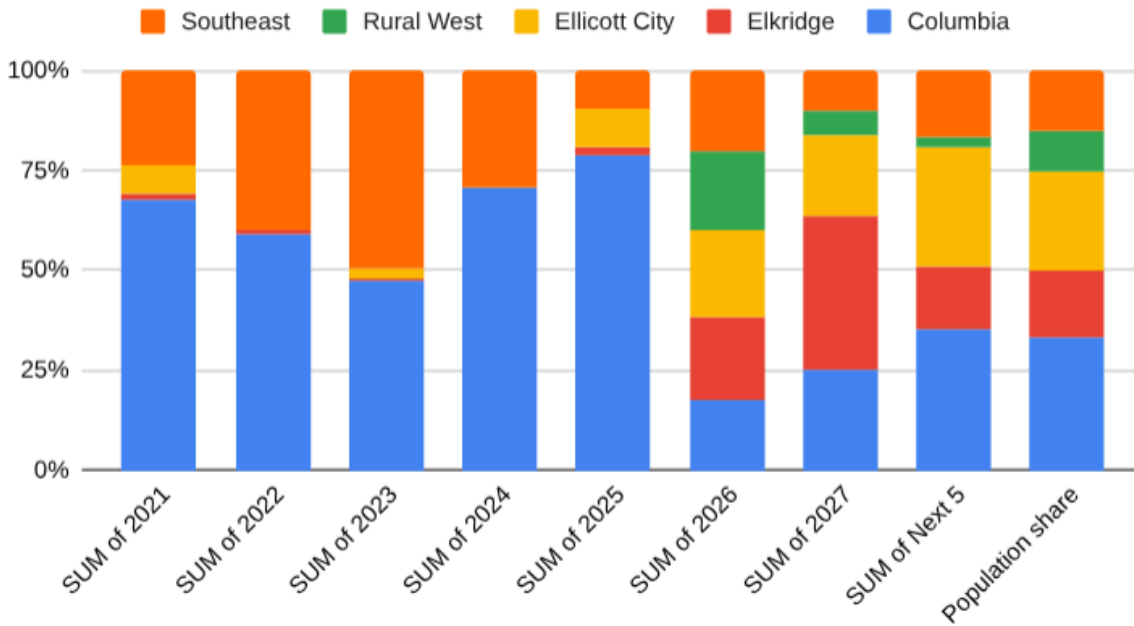
Cumulative Budget (thousands) by Planning Area



The “Next 5” column is the sum of the projected budget for the next five years, 2027 to 2031.

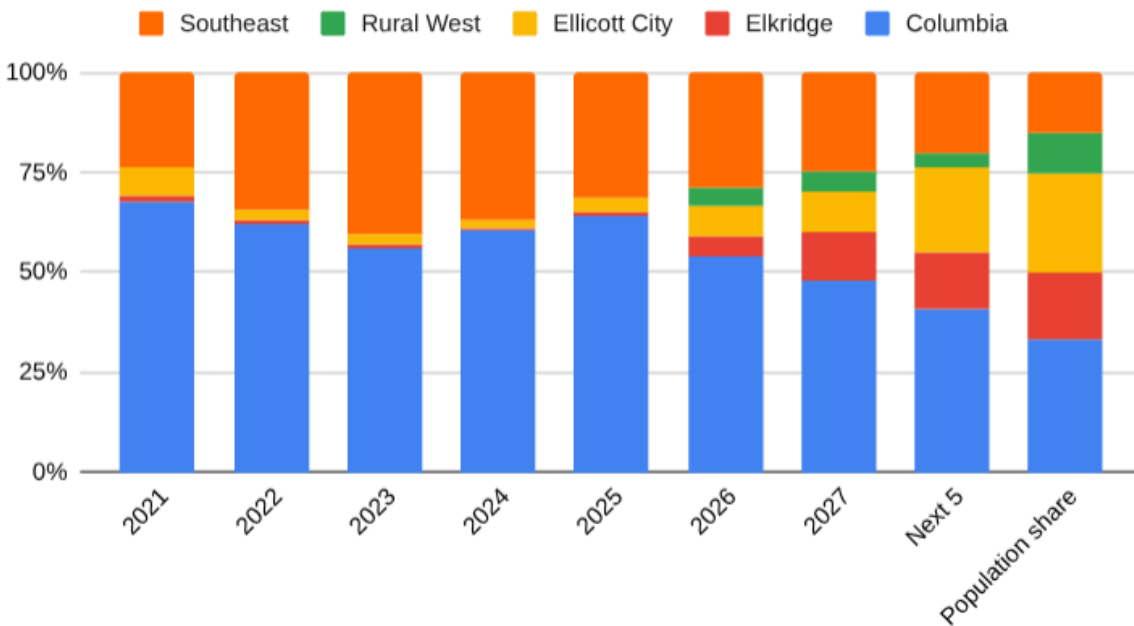
The next two charts show the budget share for each region as a percentage of the whole. The first is year-by-year.

Budget Share by Planning Area



The next one is cumulative.

Cumulative Budget Share by Planning Area



The population column shows each planning area's portion of the county population. If the budget were allocated fairly, the columns for each budget year would roughly match the share of the population.

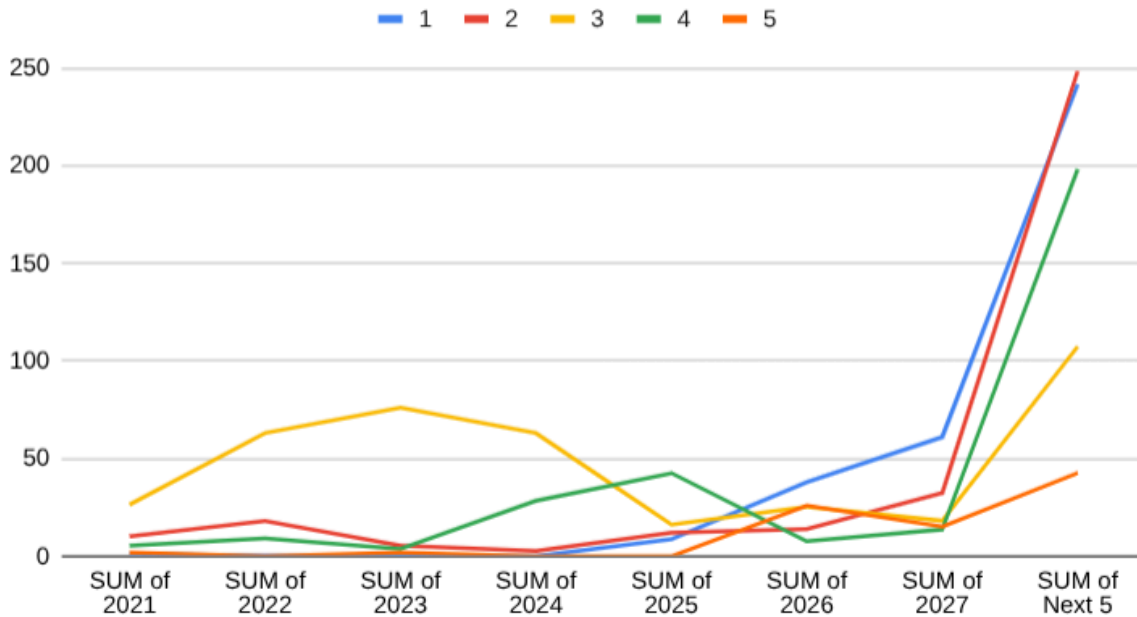
Interpretation of the Planning Area Analysis.

- It is glaringly apparent that Columbia receives far more than its fair share of the budget.
- The large share of the budget going to the Southeast in recent years reflects the construction of Guilford Park High School.
- The distribution of investment changes radically with the 2025 budget. This may be a response to the backlash and outrage over the extravagant proposal for a library on the Columbia lakefront.
- In 2027, Elkrige receives the largest share of the budget, which creates the impression of an attempt to compensate for the neglect of previous years. The cumulative budget chart shows Elkrige is still underinvested, but not nearly to the level previously.
- A deeper dive into the projects in the Elkrige region shows the bulk of this spending is for the long-overdue Community Center (\$34M), which does not include a pool, which other Community Centers have, and the Indoor Track project (\$95 M), for which Elkrige residents have little interest.
- The county has designated Troy Park as the Elkrige high school site, to be located on land the county already owns. The money previously budgeted for land acquisition for a high school for Elkrige has been reallocated into land acquisition for the indoor track.
- To bring Elkrige to parity with the rest of the county, a high school and a pool are the top community priorities. There is no project to construct either in the budget. Money spent in Elkrige should be spent on projects desired by Elkrige residents. Elkrige should not be a dumping ground for undesired projects driven by the priorities of others from elsewhere.
- The Rural West continues to receive little investment.

Results by Council District

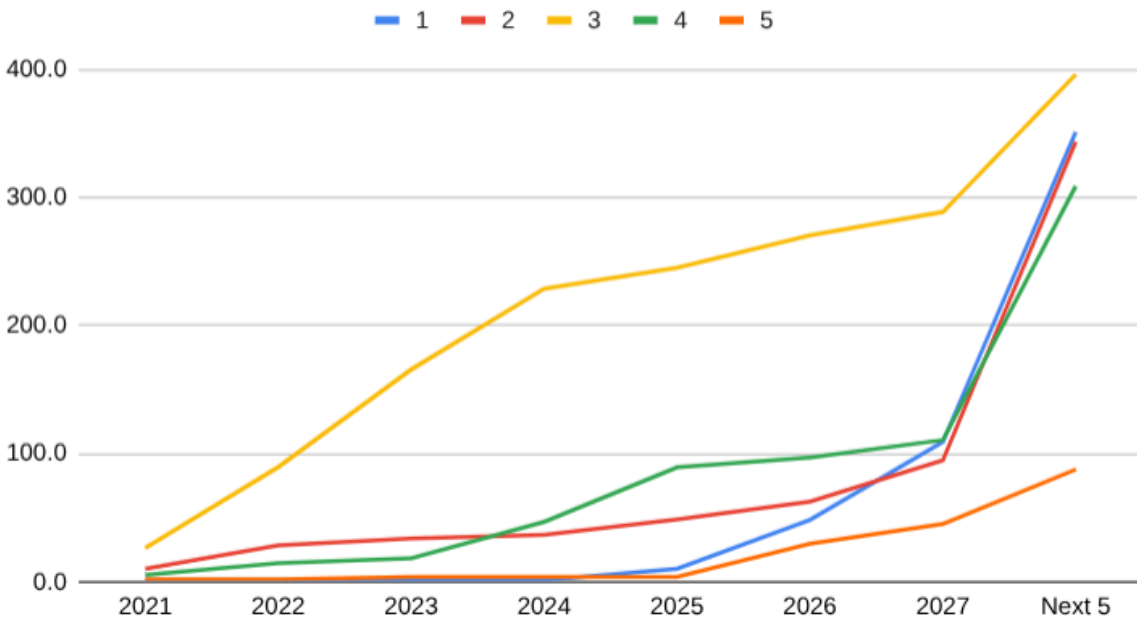
The next two figures show the budget amounts for each council district in thousands of dollars. The next figure is year by year.

Capital Budget (thousands) by Council District



The next graph is cumulative, meaning the value in each year is the sum of that year plus all previous years.

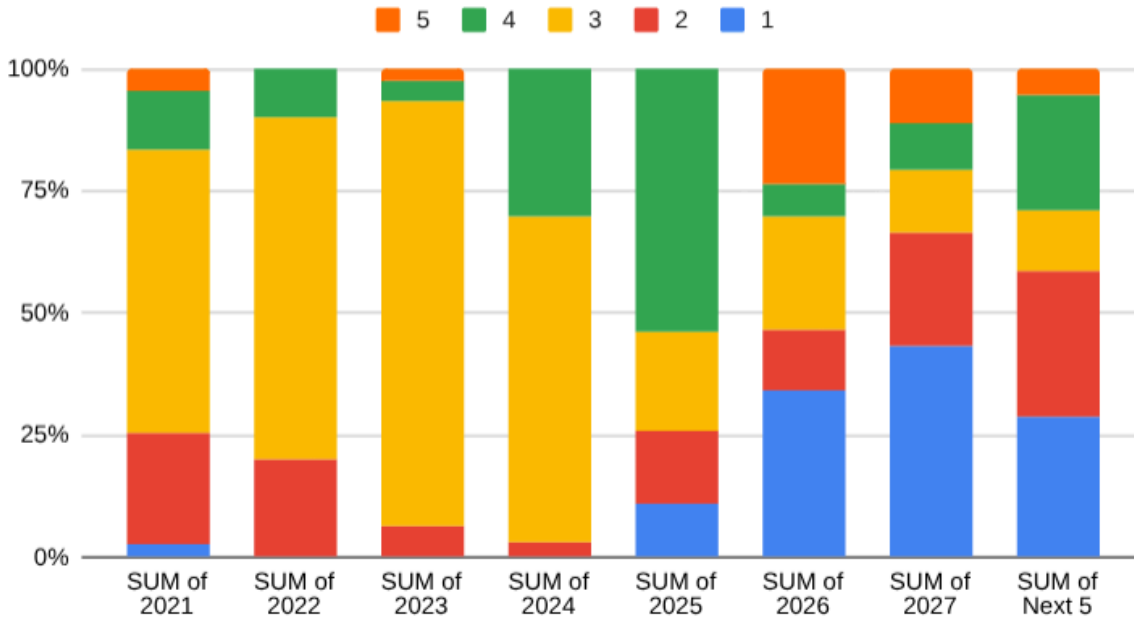
Capital Budget (thousands) by Council District



The “Next 5” column is the sum of the projected budget for the next five years, 2026 to 2030.

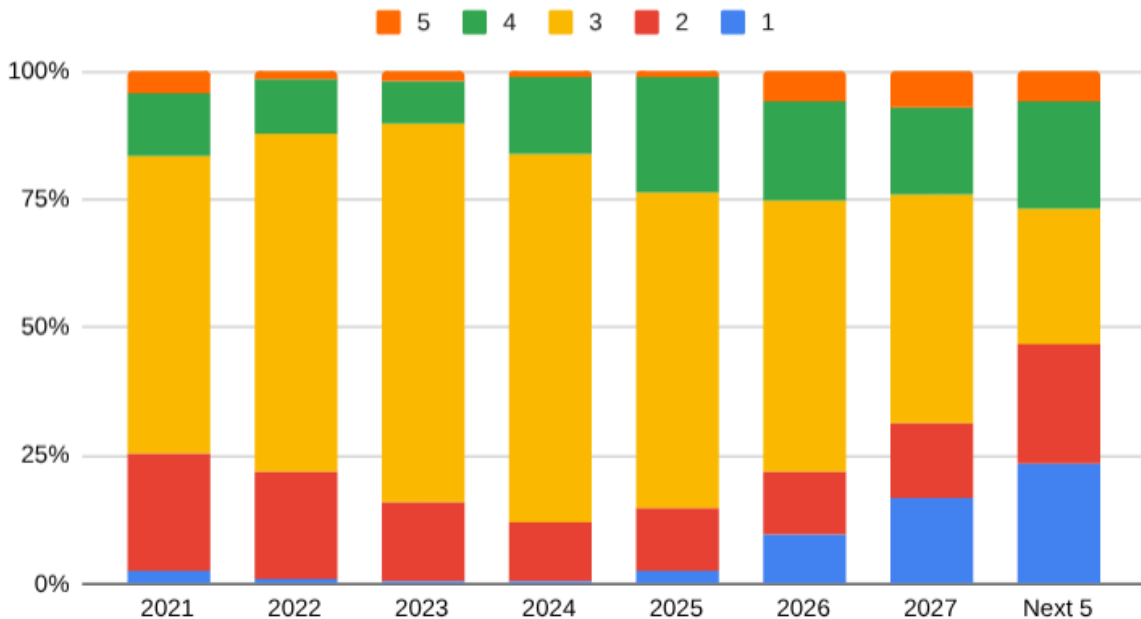
The next two charts show the budget share for each council district as a percentage of the whole. The first is year-by-year.

Budget Share by Council District



The next one is cumulative.

Cumulative Budget Share by Council District



Each council district has the same population. The share of the budget going to each council district should be approximately equal.

Interpretation of the Council District Analysis.

- The large share of the budget going to District 3 in recent years reflects the construction of Guilford Park High School and the Hammond High School renovation/expansion. Both schools are in the 3rd district.
- The surge in District 4 spending in 2024 is caused by the renovation of the Faulkner Ridge school.
- The surge in District 1 spending in 2025 reflects the land acquisition and construction of the long-delayed Elkridge Community Center.
- The surge in District 2 in 2026 and in the five year projection reflects the renovation and expansion of Oakland Mills Middle School in Columbia.
- Columbia's disproportionate share of capital spending is reflected in the breakout by Council District. Columbia constitutes a majority of the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th districts, and accordingly, these districts receive an overwhelmingly disproportionate share of capital investment in amenities.
- In 2027, spending is more balanced across council districts, which reflects the decision to build a new elementary school in the 3rd district, and to proceed with long-delayed renovation projects in the 1st district, instead of the low-priority renovation and expansion of Oakland Mills High School in the 2nd district.
- The underinvestment in the Rural West region correlates with the underinvestment in the Rural West region, which comprises most of the 5th district.

Conclusions

The budget data shows the long term inequitable effects of the system of privilege in Howard County. This system of privilege operates for the benefit of Howard County developers generally, and the Howard Hughes Corporation in particular. HHC is the prime developer of Columbia, and is the successor to the Rouse Corporation. HHC has boasted to their investors that they have monopolistic control over Columbia and the county government.

What that means is the taxes we all pay as Howard County residents are not spent on all our communities. They are spent on amenities in Columbia, which makes the property holdings of HHC more valuable and profitable.

It means that schools in Columbia are the priority, and those schools will always be up to date and renovated before the trailers in the rest of the county will be replaced with actual brick-and-mortar classrooms.

It means that most Columbia high school students will have walkable high schools in their

community, while those of us in Elkridge and the Route 1 Corridor will have long bus rides to fill the excess seats in those same high schools in Columbia. No Elkridge student can walk to any high school. Columbia has 7 of the 13 high schools. Elkridge has 0.

Howard County residents who don't live in Columbia are exploited to pay for the Columbia amenities we don't have and will never get. Our kids get to ride the school bus long distances to fill up the under-capacity Columbia high schools that most Columbia kids walk to.

This deep rooted Columbia privilege that exploits the rest of the county needs to end and end now. There should never be another press release about how Columbia is one of the best places to live unless there is an accompanying press release about how all of Howard County is one of the best places to live. About how Elkridge and Savage and North Laurel and Ellicott City and the other parts of the county are also the best places to live.

References

[The worksheet with the budget data and analysis](#)