



Be Safe and Feel Safe



County Executive Ball Presents: The Ball Bulletin



May 20, 2025

Dear Friends,

We joined families, instructors, and community leaders to celebrate the graduation of Howard County Police Department's Academy Class #50. These 16 new officers have completed more than 30 weeks of rigorous training – developing the skills, discipline, and heart required to serve our community with excellence. In 2014, we had 472 sworn positions, which grew to only 478 in 2018. Our police force now has 509 sworn officer positions who protect our communities and keep us safe.



This ceremony represents the beginning of a lifelong commitment to public service. Our recruits studied everything from Maryland law to crisis response, de-escalation, community relations, and first aid. But they've also already demonstrated something deeper: a spirit of service. From organizing school supply drives to volunteering in the community, they've shown us they understand what it means to protect and connect.

To our graduates – you are stepping into a noble profession. You will be mentors, protectors, educators, and changemakers. You were chosen because you represent the best of what our department – and our community – stands for. I know you will make Howard County proud.

To the families and loved ones who stood by you – thank you. Your support is essential to the strength of these officers and to the strength of our community.

Congratulations, Academy 50. We believe in you, we support you, and we thank you for choosing this path of courage, compassion, and service. Due to their dedication, our residents will not only be safe, but feel safe.

Sincerely,



Community Updates



Supporting Recovery Programs

By participating in various lawsuits against pharmaceutical companies involved in the opioid epidemic, Howard County has received Opioid Restitution Funds that are dedicated to local prevention and intervention programs.

In our FY26 Budget, Howard County will allocate approximately \$2.3 million in Opioid Restitution Funds to administer programs that will support residents with substance use disorders. This includes plans to hire two additional peer recovery

specialists to support our residents who may be struggling with addiction and are engaged in substance use treatment and prevention programs, as well as provide critical funding to service providers who are expanding care options.

This reflects another step toward a comprehensive approach to prevention, treatment, and recovery support for those affected by the opioid crisis.

Equipment for Children

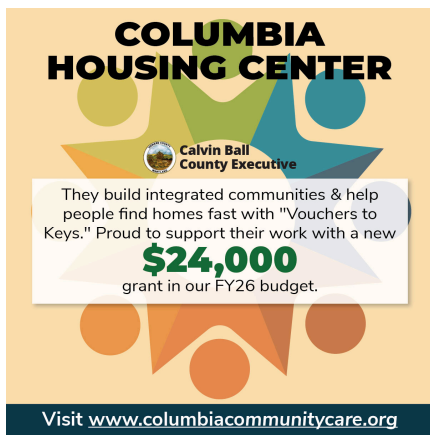
Every child deserves access to the tools they need to thrive. Equipment Connections for Children works to supply adaptive equipment for children living with disabilities. To support their essential services delivered in Howard County, our FY26 budget includes \$15,000 in nonprofit CSP funding. Learn more about their great work [here](https://www.equipforchildren.org).



Housing Champions

The Columbia Housing Center champions and works to sustain thriving, racially integrated communities in and around Columbia.

The Center's "Vouchers to Keys" program combats housing barriers by proactively connecting people with vouchers to housing opportunities across the county.



Our FY26 budget supports Columbia Housing Center's work with a \$24,000 grant through our dedicated nonprofit CSP funding. Learn more about the Center [here](#).

Kinship Care

In our FY26 Budget, we're partnering with the Department of Social Services to invest \$122,000 to launch a foster care pilot program—recruiting new guardians and training child welfare staff.

Every child deserves a safe, supportive, and loving home. Guardians and child welfare staff are at the forefront of efforts to ensure that children and youth in the foster care system are seen, valued, and supported. Through these programs, we will better support guardians and providers, strengthening our overall kinship care network in Howard County.



YEP! It's Making a Difference

Howard County's successful Youth Engagement Programming (YEP!) Grants promote youth activities and engagement in Howard County through free, accessible, and supportive programming developed by nonprofit and community organizations.

Since the program was launched two years ago, more than 10,000 young people have engaged in free YEP! programs hosted by more than 30 nonprofit organizations across Howard County.

YEP! programs ensure young people across the county have access to safe, enriching, and low-cost opportunities to grow, learn, and lead. In our Fiscal Year 2026 Budget, we're investing \$500,000 to continue this successful initiative and continue delivering accessible after-school and summer programs to our next generation.

STRIVING To Create a More Equitable World for Young People

Our Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) budget proposes

\$850,000 in one-time funds to support the Strategies to Reach an Inclusive Vision and Equitable Solutions program, or HoCo STRIVES.

Administered by our Department of Community Resources and Services and the Local Children's Board, HoCo STRIVES supports youth mental health, transportation access, and a summer teaching program intended to help close the achievement gap.

These local youth programs funded through HoCo STRIVES provide additional wrap-around services to Howard County students who need them most. With this investment, we're keeping students more engaged, connected, and ready to succeed in the year ahead.



Making Home Ownership Dreams Come True

With \$10.7 million in funding for housing programs as a part of our Fiscal Year 2026 Operating Budget, we're supporting homeownership, home rehab, homelessness prevention, and affordable housing.

These important programs are funded through our Department of Housing and Community Development, offering more residents the opportunity to build wealth through homeownership and become economically self-sufficient by promoting better access to affordable

housing. These investments are about more than housing—they're about dignity, stability, and opportunity for every resident.

Stepping Up

As part of our comprehensive community health strategy for Howard County, our proposed FY26 Budget Howard County provides critical funding of more than \$100,000 for the Stepping Up Initiative through our Howard County Health Department.

The Stepping Up initiative will create a specialized court docket for defendants with mental illness, enabling the County and the Health Department to better deliver healthcare services and interventions to meet an important need. This investment is part of a broader effort to ensure mental health and justice intersect with dignity, care, and support.



Prenatal Care = Healthier Outcomes



We're staying strong in our commitment to accessible maternal and infant care for Howard County families.

Our Fiscal Year 2026 budget includes a \$125,000 investment to fill gaps in the County's existing maternal and infant health program. This will expand support for expectant mothers, ensure healthier pregnancies, and provide vital wrap-around services to families as they welcome their young ones into the world.

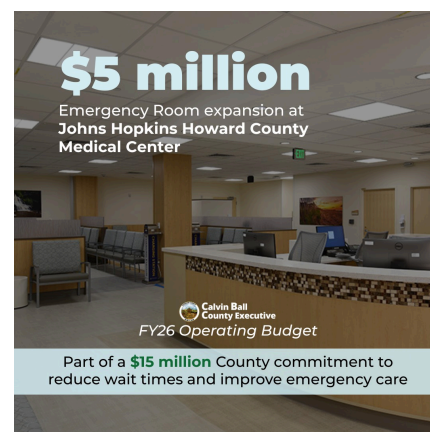
This successful program has helped promote our County's reputation as one of the healthiest jurisdictions in the nation, ensuring that we support all facets of community health.

Increase ER Capacity, Decrease Wait Times

Across our state, residents experience long wait times when visiting the emergency room. In Howard County, we are partnering with the Johns Hopkins Howard County Medical Center on a major capital project to expand Emergency Department capacity here in Howard County.

Howard County Medical Center is our only hospital, and has not expanded bed capacity since 2009. Our proposed FY26 budget allocates \$5 million in one-time funds to support the Emergency Room expansion at the Howard County Medical Center, which will create a much-needed 29-bed observation unit to add to hospital capacity.

This investment is part of a three-year, \$15 million County commitment to support this critical ER expansion project. When complete, the ER expansion will enhance the emergency department's capacity and reduce wait times for patients.



Making Bold Moves for the Baltimore Region

During this past National Economic Development Week, we joined leaders from across Maryland at the Greater Baltimore Committee Investment Summit on May 15th, where we explored the future of economic growth, innovation, and strategic investment across the Greater Baltimore region.

Howard County may not always be top of mind in conversations around logistics and supply chain – but our location, assets, and vision make us a key player in this evolving landscape. From the historic Route 1 corridor to our newly designated Eastern Howard County Enterprise Zone, we're creating real incentives for businesses to invest, expand, and thrive.

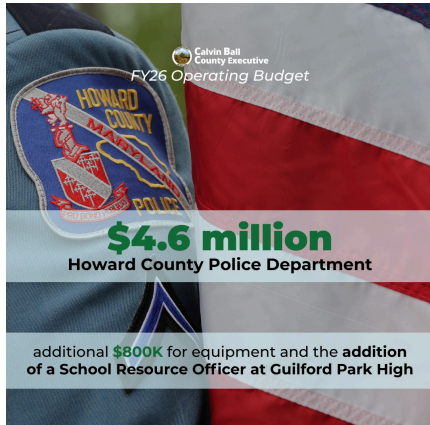
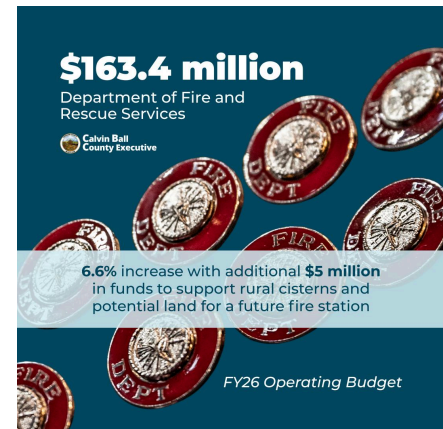
We were especially excited to highlight our partnership with Tradepoint Atlantic, whose \$100 million investment in Tradepoint at Savage Crossing will generate an estimated 500 new family-supporting jobs and position Howard County as a vital inland hub for supply chain and logistics in the Mid-Atlantic.

In Howard County, we're not just keeping up – we're moving boldly. We're building the infrastructure, workforce, and partnerships to ensure our local economy is ready for the opportunities of tomorrow.

Funding Fire & Rescue

In the Fiscal Year 2026 Operating Budget, we're bolstering our fire protection services and emergency response teams through an investment of \$163.4 million to support our Department of Fire and Rescue Services (DFRS).

This 6.6% funding increase prioritizes the Fire Department's staffing and equipment needs, as well as critical emergency management functions that keep our communities safe during natural disasters and crises. We will also allocate an additional \$5 million in capital fire funds for rural cisterns and land acquisition efforts to construct a new fire station in the northern part of the county. One dollar at a time, we're strengthening our public safety, and our response efforts.



Funding the Police

A safer community means that we continue to invest in our team of dedicated public safety professionals in the Howard County Police Department (HCPD).

That's why our proposed Fiscal Year 2026 Operating Budget boosts funding to HCPD by \$4.6 million to support staffing and services, bringing their total FY26 Budget allocation to more than \$162 million.

We're also allocating nearly \$800K in one-time funds for police equipment and materials, including costs associated with the addition of a School Resource Officer at Guilford Park High School. As we prioritize community safety, these investments provide the critical resources needed to support our first responders and ensure that all residents not only are safe, but feel safe.

Thank You for Your Service

This Armed Forces Day, we recognize the courage and commitment of the brave leaders serving in our nation's military. To my grandfather, my father, and all of those who have served, no thank you will ever

be enough.

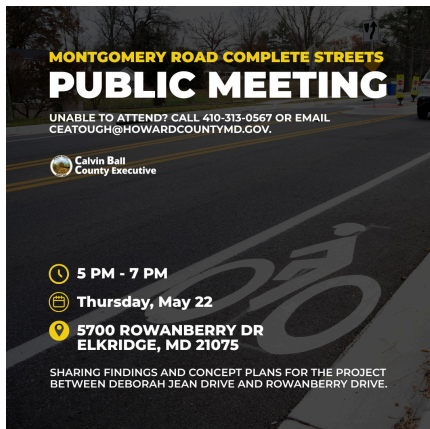
Your sacrifice, your strength, and your dedication to protecting our freedoms—both at home and around the world is an unpayable debt.

In Howard County, we take pride supporting our veterans, service members, and military families who enrich our community with their leadership and resilience.

To all those in uniform—past and present—thank you. Your service inspires us all.

**ARMED
FORCES
DAY**

Calvin Ball
County Executive



Montgomery Rd Public Meeting

We're taking the next step toward improving pedestrian and bicycle access along Montgomery Road in Elkridge!

This Thursday, May 22 from 5 to 7 p.m., our Office of Transportation will host a public meeting at the Elkridge Volunteer Fire Department Event Hall, 5700 Rowanberry Dr, Elkridge, MD 21075 to share findings and concept plans for the Montgomery Road Complete Streets project between Deborah Jean Drive and Rowanberry Drive.

To help us expand multimodal transportation in Howard County, including in our Elkridge community, our proposed Fiscal Year 2026 Capital Budget included \$13.8 million in County funding for sidewalks, bike lanes, pathways, and other Complete Streets infrastructure that makes projects like this possible. There will be no formal presentation—just an opportunity to view the concepts, ask questions, and share your feedback with our staff and project consultants.

Those unable to attend the meeting who would like to view the plans and/or have questions, should contact Mr. Chris Eatough with Transportation at 410-313-0567 or email ceatough@howardcountymd.gov.

OWN It!

Our innovative OWN initiative is designed to make homeownership more achievable, providing downpayment assistance, foreclosure prevention, and rehab loans that help families plant roots and build wealth.

Since FY24, we've:

- Helped 78 families purchase homes with over \$1.6 million in downpayment assistance loans.
- Provided foreclosure relief to 11 homeowners, preventing displacement and offering stability.

OVERVIEW & IMPACT

OWN
OPPORTUNITIES FOR WEALTH NOW

Calvin Ball
County Executive

Our OWN Initiative: Making homeownership achievable!

Since FY24:

- Helped 78 families buy homes with \$1.6M+ in downpayment aid.
- Prevented foreclosure for 11 homeowners.
- Supporting 5 home renovation projects (with 9 more coming!)

Learn how OWN can help you:
<https://bit.ly/3GMRwdu>

- Supported 5 home renovation projects underway with 9 more pending.

Explore how OWN can help you achieve your dream of homeownership on our [“OWN Initiatives” website](#).



The Future of Our Democracy

We joined students, staff, and families at Waterloo Elementary School for their 2025 Simulated Congressional Hearing. After a busy morning without little leaders, we can confidently say the future of our democracy is in very capable hands.

Each year, these hearings offer our 5th grade students the opportunity to step into the role of constitutional experts. They research our nation’s founding, explore civic responsibility, and then present what they’ve learned to a panel of judges – educators, attorneys, veterans, and local leaders alike.

This countywide tradition now reaches every single elementary school in Howard County. When we invest in education and civic engagement, this is the kind of growth that’s possible.

Thank you to Principal Dr. Edoho-Eket, the entire 5th grade team, and everyone at Waterloo for continuing this tradition. Our Wildcats truly rose to the occasion.

Life-Changing Recovery

We had the privilege of celebrating the 41st Commencement of Howard County’s Recovery Court—a program that, for more than two decades, has helped individuals overcome substance use and rebuild their lives with dignity, support, and hope.



Since 2004, Recovery Court has proven that accountability and compassion can work hand-in-hand to transform lives. Through rigorous structure, dedicated support teams, and the determination of our participants, this program continues to disrupt cycles of addiction, strengthen families, and improve public safety.

To our newest graduates, your journeys have been marked by challenge, courage, and remarkable perseverance. You’ve faced setbacks and risen again. You’ve done the hard work, and today, you stand not only as graduates, but as examples of what’s possible when we invest in people, healing, and second chances.

Thank you to Judge Brooks, our partners across the justice and behavioral health systems, and everyone who makes Recovery Court the life-changing program it is.

It's Electric

In 2020, we established the Green Fleet Policy, mandating that all Howard County

Government vehicles convert from gas to electric as they become eligible for replacement. Now, a quarter of the County's fleet is either electric or hybrid. To facilitate this influx, we have established 113 EV chargers on County property with a total of 198 ports for charging. These chargers support our fleet, but also incentivize our County employees to invest in EVs. More EV adoption means a dramatic reduction in fossil fuel dependence, an improvement in air quality, and a curbing of climate pollutant emissions from conventional vehicles.

In Howard County, we're working to build one of the most robust EV infrastructures in Maryland. All in the pursuit of a healthier county for all.



Let's Get innovative

The future is being shaped right here in Howard County—and you're invited to be a part of it.

Join us with regional leaders and innovators at the 2025 Innovation Summit for a full day of ideas, solutions, and action. This year's Summit is centered around Digital Evolution—how we innovate, inspire, and integrate technology to build smarter, more inclusive communities.

The 2025 Innovation Summit will feature:

- ✓ Thought-provoking panels on AI, cybersecurity, digital equity, and quantum computing
- ✓ A live pitch contest spotlighting local innovation
- ✓ Engaging fireside chats with industry change-

makers

- ✓ Big announcements about Howard County's tech, infrastructure, and transformative initiatives
- ✓ Powerful networking with decision-makers, creatives, and civic leaders

The event will be on Monday, from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, June 3, 2025 at the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Lab, Laurel, MD. Register for free TODAY at our [Innovation Summit Eventbrite registration webpage](#).

Whether you work in tech, public service, small business, or advocacy—this is your space to connect, learn, and lead. Walk away with new ideas, strategic tools, and the energy to make a real impact.

Howard County's Agricultural Landscape

We hosted the Maryland Agricultural Commission during their 2025 Spring Tour through Howard County.

Agriculture remains a vital part of our local economy, our heritage, and our future. From innovative agribusinesses and family-run farms to sustainability initiatives like The Roving Radish, Howard County continues to lead in advancing agricultural innovation, food security, and environmental stewardship.



Our time with the Maryland Agricultural Commission is always fruitful. We shared the stories of our hardworking farmers, showcased the partnerships that make our programs successful, and engaged in meaningful conversations about the role agriculture plays in building stronger, healthier communities across Maryland.



SENSORY FRIENDLY SUNDAY

Calvin Ball
County Executive

Howard County
Recreation & Parks

ROBINSON NATURE CENTER

6692 CEDAR LN, COLUMBIA

10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

CONTACT AT
410-313-0400 OR
WWW.HOWARDCOUNTYMD.GOV/ROBINSONNATURECENTER

Sensory-Friendly Sunday

Sensory-Friendly Sundays at our Robinson Nature Center are welcoming and inclusive events designed for families with children, teens, and adults with sensory-processing differences, autism spectrum disorder, or developmental disabilities. Attendees enjoy early access to the exhibits, trails, and outdoor nature play area before the center opens to the general public. Families can explore at their own pace while participating in calming, nature-inspired activities like sensory bins and pathways, scavenger hunts, crafts, and games. The

planetarium is also open for quiet exploration from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

For more information about Robinson Nature Center's Sensory-Friendly Sunday and other sensory available options, contact the center at 410-313-0400 or visit www.howardcountymd.gov/robinsonnaturecenter.

Your Flexible Transportation Option

HoCo RapidRide brings you flexible transportation that fits your schedule. Book your ride in seconds through the app and enjoy seamless travel across Elkridge, Jessup, and Savage. Rides are \$2 per trip, except for Howard County Public School System and Howard Community College students and seniors age 60 and older with a valid ID.

Learn more and download the app at <https://city.ridewithvia.com/rapidride> to get moving.



Hooah!



It was an honor to meet George D. Wood III, a graduating senior from Atholton High School, whose discipline and dedication to service are already far beyond his years.

George has accomplished more in his high school career than many do in a decade—balancing academics, athletics, Army JROTC leadership, dual enrollment, and community service. This spring, he

will report for Army Basic Training on May 27 as an 11B Infantryman in the Virginia Army National Guard.

George is choosing service over celebration, missing milestones like prom and graduation to protect and lead. It was a pleasure to stand with him in his cap and gown and recognize the extraordinary example he's setting for us all.

George, Howard County salutes you and wishes you the very best in this next chapter. You carry the heart of a soldier, the mind of a scholar, and the promise of a great leader. We'll be cheering you on every step of the way.

The Power of the Arts

We had a lovely time visiting the Whiteford, Taylor, & Preston Open House in Columbia, where we recognized the incredible talent of our local student artists whose work is displayed in its Columbia Gallery.



This special partnership with our Howard County Public School System reflects the best of what makes our community thrive. Education, the arts, and business come together to uplift young voices and showcase their creativity. Thank you to Elizabeth Fitch and the entire Whiteford team for creating space to honor our students and celebrate the power of the arts in shaping the next generation.



Breaking the Stigma

A mental health crisis doesn't follow a 9-to-5 schedule, and that is why Grassroots offers 24/7 support to residents experiencing a mental or behavioral health crisis.

Founded in 1969, Grassroots has grown into a life-saving nonprofit funded by local, state, and federal partners. Today, 92% of every dollar goes straight to programs helping real people in real need. They live by values of dignity, respect, empathy, and action.

This Mental Health Awareness Month, take a moment to share their information:

- If you or someone you know needs help, call 410-531-6677 or dial 988.
- Walk-ins are welcome at the Grassroots Crisis Center at 8990 Old Annapolis Road.
- Learn more: <https://grassrootscrisis.org/>.

Let's break the stigma and make sure everyone knows, help is available.

Bike to Work

Last week during Bike to Work Week, we celebrated the joy, freedom, and sustainability of cycling. Whether you're commuting to the office, heading to school, or simply enjoying the trails, biking offers a clean, healthy, and fun way to move through our community.

In Howard County, we're working every day to improve bike safety and infrastructure – from expanding our trail systems to building more bike lanes and promoting multimodal transit. These investments help us reduce emissions, support wellness, and strengthen connections between neighborhoods.

If you didn't have a chance this past week to bike to work, we encourage you to try it out this week! Every biker is one step closer to a more active and environmentally conscious Howard County.



Get on the Bus

Through Youth Engagement Programming (YEP!), Get on the Bus Soccer Program offers free soccer clinics, equipment, and mentorship to youth in Howard County. Last year, 250 of our young people participated in these after-school soccer programs through partnership with Title 1 schools in Howard County, with a particular focus on Elkridge, Columbia, and North Laurel. Through this program, young athletes receive professional coaching that helps them develop their technical skills and game strategy. The program also emphasizes teamwork,

discipline, and perseverance, helping students succeed on and off the field. Learn more about our 2025 YEP! programs by visiting our ["Youth Engagement Programming Grants" website](#).

Honoring our Brave Public Servants

During National Police Week this past week, we took time to honor the brave public servants of our Howard County Police Department who serve with courage, compassion, and dedication.

From community engagement to crisis response, our HCPD officers go above and beyond to keep our neighborhoods safe, and our residents protected. Whether it's ensuring our schools remain secure, helping youth make positive choices, or building



trust through transparency, our officers embody the very best of public service.

We are deeply grateful for your commitment, your sacrifice, and the integrity you bring to the badge every day. Thank you, HCPD, for keeping Howard County one of the safest communities in the nation.



Supporting Mental Health

Mental health support isn't one-size-fits-all. Access matters. Cultural understanding matters.

Explore a range of community and culturally informed mental health resources that reflect the diverse needs of Howard County residents at www.howardcountymd.gov/health/suicide-prevention.

Remember – support is available. If you or someone you know is in crisis, call 988 or 410-531-6677, or

text HOME to 741741.

Shine Bright Like a Diamond

We had a blast at the grand opening of [Smyth Jewelers new location in Turf Valley Towne Square](#)! A trusted name in fine jewelry for more than a century, Smyth has remained a family-owned business rooted in excellence and community.



From engagement rings to timeless gifts, Smyth continues to bring elegance and care to every moment—right here in Ellicott City. As they grow from their Baltimore beginnings to a nationally known brand, their commitment to giving back and staying connected to their customers never wavers.

We're proud to support local businesses like Smyth that shine brightly across generations. Congratulations to the entire Smyth team on this exciting new chapter – you truly help make Howard County the best place to live, work, play, and shop!



Fifty Years of Inspiring Jaguars

It was a joy to join our [Jeffers Hill Elementary](#) community in celebrating 50 years of learning, leadership, and legacy in Columbia's Long Reach Village, and beyond.

For half a century, Jeffers Hill has been a positive and diverse learning community where high academic and social expectations are the standard. Guided by a powerful vision to inspire lifelong learning and prepare every student for the future, Jeffers Hill

continues to shape generations through dynamic opportunities that help students succeed in an ever-changing world.

Thank you to principal Strong, the dedicated staff, families, and community partners whose contributions made this milestone possible. Your support reflects the heart of Howard County.

Here's to the next 50 years of Jaguars who learn boldly, grow confidently, and always inspire greatness.

Empowering Young People in the Fight Against Climate Change

Through the support of our Youth Engagement Programming (YEP!) initiative, the [Howard County Conservancy – Youth Climate Institute](#) educates and empowers young people to take action against climate change. Last year, more than 250 students participated in hands-on learning experiences, sustainability projects, and leadership training to develop an understanding of environmental conservation. Through YEP!, the Youth Climate Institute has been expanded to 12 high schools in Howard County, collectively delivering more than 1,700 hours of climate education to participants. By working together, young people develop real-world solutions to protect our planet. This program will continue in 2025 with support from YEP! Learn more about our 2025 YEP! programs by visiting our [“Youth Engagement Programming Grants” website](#).



Flipping the Script on Aging

Every May, we celebrate Older Americans Month, and this year's theme – “Flip the Script on Aging” – perfectly captures what we're doing right here in Howard County.

At our Art of Healthy Aging Showcase, hosted by our Office on Aging and Independence, we brought together hundreds of residents at The Mall in Columbia for a vibrant day filled with fitness, brain health, cooking demos, art, and community. From stroke screenings and posture assessments to live Zumba, interactive exhibits, and our “Own Your Age” photo booth, this event reminded us that aging well means staying active, connected, and empowered.

Howard County continues to lead the way in building an Age-Friendly community where residents of all ages can grow, thrive, and live with purpose. Whether it's outdoor fitness lots, digital inclusion, or intergenerational art, we're not just talking about healthy aging—we're living it.

Thank you to our incredible Office on Aging and Independence team, our partners, and every resident who helped us celebrate. We're flipping the script on what it means to age in Howard County.

Government Updates

Boards and Commissions

Applicants from Councilmanic District 4 Sought for Planning Board

I am seeking applicants from the heart of Columbia to Maple Lawn in [Councilmanic District 4](#) interested in serving on the Planning Board. Board member responsibilities include providing recommendations to the County Executive, County Council, and Zoning Board on matters relating to planning and zoning, including capital programs, capital budget, Zoning Map amendments, Zoning Regulation amendments, area and specific plans, and the County's General Plan.

To learn more about this Board and how to apply, check out our [“Howard County Executive Ball Seeks Howard County Resident from District 4 for Planning Board” news release online](#). The deadline to apply for this vacancy is next Saturday, May 31st.

Celebrating America's Semiquincentennial

As we gear up to celebrate our nation's 250th Anniversary near year, our [HoCo250 Planning Group](#) is hard at work planning events, programs, projects, and activities that reflect our nation's unique history and contributions to society.

If you are interested in being an integral part of Howard County's celebrations, here are ways that you can get involved:

- 1) Volunteer! If you are interested in serving on the HoCo250 Planning Group or any of its committees, email HoCo250@howardcountymd.gov and tell us a bit about your interest in this historic anniversary.
- 2) Attend a [HoCo250 Planning Group meeting](#)! Meetings are open to the public and all contain a virtual component if you are not able to join us in person.
- 3) As part of our nation's initiative, America250:
 - Nominate a [History Unsung Champion](#)! The American story is woven from the unique and varied narratives of our people, and every story is worth telling. Together, we can tell and celebrate these stories by nominating history's unsung champion.
 - [Share Your Story](#)! For nearly 250 years, Americans from all walks of life and every corner of the country have had a hand in shaping our nation's history. America's Invitation is your opportunity to get involved in the countdown to 2025 by sharing in your past, present, and future reflections to help tell the American story.
- 4) Plan an event! If you are a civic organization, school group, or non-profit that wishes to contribute to our celebration, email our HoCo250 Planning Group at hoco250@howardcountymd.gov to tell us about your activity, event, or programming. Special funding is available from many grant sources; learn more about Semiquincentennial related grants at [MD Two Fifty](#).

Stay tuned to our [HoCo250 Planning Group website](#) to learn more.

Department of Community Resources and Services



Celebrating Older Americans Month Through the Arts

If you missed our Department of Community Resources and Services' (DCRS) Office on Aging and Independence's (OAI) "The Art of Healthy Aging" showcase at [The Mall in Columbia](#) this past Friday, May 9th, have no fret, as you can still check out OAI's Art Show now

through May 29th, set up outside The Mall's former Lord & Taylor location on the second level. Created by county residents, aged 50 and older, this exhibit highlights the creativity of our local artists in a variety of mediums, including oil and watercolor paintings, pen and ink drawings, paper crafts (collage, scrapbook or card-art), and more.

Support for Children and Families

Through its family workshops, local resources, events, educational programs and more, DCRS' Office of Children and Families (OCF) aims to help Howard County families grow and thrive all year long.



This month, OCF's Family Support Center (FSC) staff invite families and their children, ages zero to five, to join them tomorrow, May 20th for a field trip to the B&O Railroad Museum in Baltimore from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Participants will learn all about the different types of railroad freight cars, enjoy an interactive story time, and get a chance to explore the museum's exhibits. To register you and your little one(s) for this FREE event, visit the [County's Active network event registration website](#) today! For questions and/or more information about this trip, contact Ashton Sullivan at 410-313-5987 or call asullivan@howardcountymd.gov.

To learn more about the latest happenings, activities, and programs for children and families being offered by OCF this May, [subscribe](#) to its latest [Parent Pages](#) newsletter. In each monthly issue, readers will find a full schedule of upcoming virtual workshops and in-person programs offered at its FSC. OCF's "[Parent's Guide to Howard County](#)" for 2025, is also a great resource for parents, caregivers, and others looking to learn more about and find services in our community to help children grow and thrive.

If you need individual assistance, such as finding childcare, guidance with parenting issues, mental and emotional health support, special needs resources, food access, housing, and more, contact OCF's free CARE line at 410-313-CARE (2273) to learn more about what's available.

Human Trafficking Town Hall for Deaf Community

Our DCRS' Office of Human Trafficking Prevention (OHTP) and its partners are working to prevent – and end – human trafficking in our community and provide support for survivors.



To build awareness, reduce misconceptions and support the deaf community in preventing human trafficking, OHTP and the Office of ADA Coordination have partnered together to host a community town hall at the [East Columbia 50+ Center](#) this Wednesday, May 21st from 6:00 to 8:00

p.m. The event will feature a panel of experts from the Maryland Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and TurnAround, Inc., as well as a survivor leader. Please note, while open to all, this event is heavily geared towards those closely connected to the Deaf community. Interpreters will be provided and while this event is free, [advance registration](#) is requested.

Honoring our County Veterans this Memorial Day

This Memorial Day weekend, DCRS's Office of Veterans and Military Families has teamed up with various local veteran service organizations to honor, remember, and pay tribute to our Howard County veterans who died while wearing a military uniform. I encourage everyone to try and stop by at least one of these 30-minute solemn ceremonies to honor those that made the ultimate sacrifice to protect our country's freedom:

- Saturday, May 24th, 12:00 p.m., 4225 V F W Lane, Ellicott City. Hosted by [VFW Post 7472](#), this ceremony will feature a keynote address by John Beakes, a U.S. Naval Academy graduate and co-author of the book "Cool Deliberate Courage - John Eager Howard in the American Revolution."
- Sunday, May 25th, 12:00 p.m., St. John's Episcopal Church, 9120 Frederick Road, Ellicott City. Hosted by [Adams, Hanna, Moore Memorial American Legion Post 156](#), this ceremony will feature a keynote address by US Marine Corps Lt. Col. Robert Spokarek.
- Monday, May 26th, 8:00 a.m., 8045 Harriet Tubman Lane, Columbia. Hosted by the County's Commission on Veterans & Military Families (HCCVMF) and Harriet Tubman Cultural Center and the [SSgt Karl G. Taylor, Sr. Detachment 1084 Marine Corps League of Howard County Maryland](#), this ceremony will feature a keynote address by Lisa Steptoe, a HCCVMF Commissioner and United States Military Academy West Point graduate.

For questions and/or more information about any of these ceremonies, please email the American Legion Public Affairs Officer at pao_legion_post_156_maryland@yahoo.com.



Family Support for Children's Behavioral and Mental Challenges

Lastly, DCRS' Office of the Local Children's Board (OLCB) has also partnered with the Maryland Coalition of Families (MCF) to host several informative behavioral and mental health support programs for county families and their children this Mental Health Awareness Month. To close out the month, OLCB and MCF will offer a

unique two-day Family Leadership Program training opportunity on Saturday, May 30th from 5:00 to 9:00 p.m. and Sunday, May 31st from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the [DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Columbia](#), for county parents and caregivers of school-aged children with mental health challenges. Program participants will learn how to navigate special education services and systems and find their voice to be the best advocate for their child, themselves, and their families.

This free training includes meals and overnight accommodations at no cost; however, you must [apply in advance to be considered for participation](#). Applicants must be a Howard County resident, a parent or caregiver to a school-aged child with mental health challenges, and must commit to attend both days of the event.

Office of Community Sustainability

Switch Together for Solar Savings

The County's Office of Community Sustainability (OCP) has partnered with Solar United Neighbors to help residents learn more about the Switch Together program, previously called Solar Switch. Switch Together is a hassle-free group buying program for rooftop solar installations that aims to make solar energy more accessible and affordable for all. The program uses the power of group buying to secure a competitive price through a reverse auction process in which vetted solar installers compete to offer their lowest price for a rooftop installation. The current program is expected to save the average Howard County household \$6,201 on a typical-sized solar installation and the 30 percent federal tax credit can help further reduce the overall cost.

Registration is free and there's no obligation to proceed with a solar installation. To learn more about Switch Together and/or to sign-up your home up for a free installation proposal, visit [Switch Together's website](#) by Wednesday, June 4th.

Ask an EV Driver

Did you know that Howard County's electric vehicle (EV) adoption rate is among the highest in Maryland and that by further increasing the percentage of EVs in Howard County, we can reduce out county's reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 28 percent by 2045.

If you interested in learning more about what it's like to own an EV and how you too can reduce your carbon footprint, I encourage you to check out OCS's "[Ask an EV Driver](#)" virtual forum this Wednesday, May 21st at 7:00 p.m. The first in a series hosted by OCS and its Clean Miles Club, the forum will feature a panel of local EV enthusiasts who will share their EV purchasing, driving, and ownership experiences, as well as field questions from participants. To register to participate in this online forum, visit OCS's "[Ask an EV Driver Webinar](#)" [registration website](#) today.

Office of Consumer Protection

Discount Medical Insurance Scam Alert

Our Office of Consumer Protection (OCP) is sharing this [public service announcement](#) from the



Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), warning the public about scammers posing as health insurance companies, offering phony discounted medical insurance scams by email, text, or phone.

Discount medical insurance scams involve misleading or fraudulent offers for medical insurance plans that promise reduced rates on legitimate medical insurance, but do not provide any actual medical insurance coverage, resulting in millions of dollars in losses annually. These scams often target people who are looking for more affordable healthcare options and use misleading tactics such as stating to be a legitimate medical insurance provider, pressuring people to sign up quickly due to time limited special rates, or promising free services with hidden fees to lure people to sign up. A typical discount medical insurance scam begins with unsolicited contact via calls, texts, or emails from unknown businesses offering special deals or discounted medical insurance.

To learn more about this scam, tips to protect yourself, and what to do if you believe you have been a victim of a similar fraudulent activity, visit the FBI's [Emerging Discount Medical Insurance Scams Public Service Announcement website](#).

Social Security Scam Alert

OCP is also alerting residents about a social security scam currently coming to emails. Per the Social Security Administration's (SSA) Office of the Inspector General, the email appears to be from SSA and includes a link to download one's Social Security statement. This email is an attempt to lure individuals to fraudulent sites that are not associated with SSA.

While there are variations to this scam, they all require you to click on a link, or an image, which connects you to a file ending in .exe. This is an executable file, which downloads malware and remotely connects criminals to your computer. Once connected, they can steal passwords, banking access, etc. To learn more about this scam, visit the SSA's ["Beware of Scam Emails Asking to Download Statements" online notice](#).



To learn more about scams, how to spot them, and 10 ways to avoid fraud, check out OCP's ["Scam Squad" website](#).

Department of County Administration

Memorial Day Holiday Closings

Howard County Government offices, courts, animal shelter, 50+ centers, and Alpha Ridge Landfill will be closed in observance of the Memorial Day holiday next Monday, May 26th. As there will be no Monday curbside trash, recycling, yard trim, or food scrap collection on Memorial Day, the County's [holiday "slide" schedule](#)

will be in effect for the remainder of the week.

While county parks and the Roger Carter Community Center (note, the center closes early at 5:00 p.m.) will be open on May 26th, the County's Department of Recreation & Parks' Cedar Lane and Schooley Mill Activity Rooms, Gary J. Arthur and North Laurel Community Centers, Kiwanis-Wallas Hall, Harriet Tubman Cultural Center, Robinson Nature Center, and county historic sites will be closed. Additionally, the Meadowbrook Athletic Complex will be open for planned programs only.

The Regional Transportation Agency (RTA) will operate on a "Sunday" schedule on Memorial Day; for more information on RTA, call 1-800-270-9553 or visit www.transitrt.com. All parking regulations and fees will be enforced on May 26th.

The 9-1-1 Center, Police and Fire departments remain staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week. For emergencies, call 9-1-1; for non-emergencies, please call 410-313-2200.

County operations will resume on Tuesday, May 27th, at regular business hours.

Department of Fire and Rescue Services



Knowing the Warning Signs of a Stroke

When it comes to a stroke, every second counts. Nearly two million brain cells die each minute a stroke remains untreated. Rapid access to medical treatment can often make a difference between full recovery and permanent disability.

This Stroke Awareness Month, our Department of Fire and Rescue Services is reminding residents of the importance of knowing the warning signs of a stroke to act F.A.S.T.:

- Sudden numbness or weakness in the face, arm, or leg, especially on one side of the body.
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking, or difficulty understanding speech.
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes.
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance, or lack of coordination.
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause.

If you think someone may be having a stroke, act F.A.S.T. and do the following test:

F – Face: Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?

A – Arms: Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

S – Speech: Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Is the speech slurred or strange?

T – Time: If you see any of these signs, call 9-1-1 right away.

Be sure to note the time when any symptoms first appear, as this information helps health care providers determine the best treatment. Also, do NOT drive to the hospital or let someone else drive you. Call 9-1-1 for an ambulance so that medical personnel can begin life-saving treatment on the way to the emergency room.

Prevent Brush Fires by Disposing of Smoking Materials Correctly

Brush fires can spread quickly, especially under extreme conditions like strong winds or dry fuel, i.e., dry vegetation like grasses, shrubs, and trees, that are more susceptible to ignition. As Howard County remains under a severe drought, as shown on the National Integrated Drought Information System's [Maryland drought webpage](#), DFRS is reminding the public to not toss cigarettes and other smoking materials into dried grasses, leaves, or other vegetation. Smoking materials should be discarded properly in a sturdy ash tray away from anything flammable.



Howard County Health Department

Sewage Overflow Public Notice

The Howard County Health Department (HCHD) is asking the public to please AVOID contact with the water in the stream behind Watchlight Court in Columbia, due to a break in a sanitary sewer line in the waterway. The public, including family pets, should also avoid the water continuing downstream, including Columbia Association's Lake Elkhorn.

The County's Department of Public Works' Bureau of Utilities has stopped the overflow and has begun work to replace the broken 14-inch sanitary sewer line in the stream and repair the stream embankment and pathway in the project area. Signs have been posted in the area to alert residents of the work, which is expected to take place Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and the corresponding pedestrian pathway closure between Old Montgomery Road and Footed Ridge. Weather permitting, the work is expected to be completed by July.

For questions and/or more information about the overflow, please contact HCHD at 410-313-6300. For questions and/or more information about the sewer line repair project, contact Public Works Customer Service at 410-313-3440 or email publicworks@howardcountymd.gov.

Department of Housing and Community Development

New Rental Assistance Program for Older Adult Households

Our Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) [has launched its new Older Adult Rental Assistance Program](#). This new program aims to assist low-income households consisting of at least one older adult that are housing cost burdened due to high rent payments, by providing a rental subsidy worth up to \$400 per month. The subsidy will be paid directly to the landlord for up to 24 months for a total assistance amount of \$9,600.

To administer this rental assistance program, DHCD has partnered with the United Way of Central Maryland. To be eligible for the program, income-eligible households must have at least one household member who is 62 or older and spend more than 30 percent of the household's gross monthly income on rent.

Residents interested in applying, can either self-refer by calling 211, emailing

housingquestions@uwcm.org, or completing the [“Howard County Older Adult Rental Assistance Program Referral Form” online](#), or be referred by agencies serving in the community. A case manager from United Way will respond to calls, emails, and completed referral requests. Program eligibility will be based on a review of household income and rent payment amount. Additionally, as program funding is limited, funding will only be available to the first 100 qualified applicants who meet the program guidelines.

Office of Human Rights and Equity



Know Your Local Leaders

Together, our Office of Human Rights and Equity's (OHRE), [Asian American & Pacific Islander \(AAPI\) Commission](#), and Howard Community College (HCC), have partnered to host a “Know Your Local Leaders” event on Wednesday, June 11th from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. in the Smith Theatre at [HCC's Peter and Elizabeth Horowitz Visual and Performing Arts Center](#). This event provides community members with the opportunity to connect with and learn more about their local elected offices, especially on issues impacting our AAPI community.

As light refreshments will be provided, advance registration is requested. To reserve your spot to this free event, visit OHRE's [“Know Your Local Leaders” Eventbrite webpage](#) today.

Department of Inspections, Licenses, and Permits

New Permitting Program and Inspection Process

As a quick reminder, our Department of Inspections, Licenses and Permits (DILP) now requires that all commercial building work have an HVAC/Mechanical permit. Previously, a permit was only required for residential HVAC/Mechanical building work. All HVAC/Mechanical permits can be applied for electronically online through DILP's [online citizen access portal](#) and information on how to apply and other related documents and fees, can be found on DILP's ["Forms & Fees" website](#) under HVAC. A user's corresponding license must be linked to their online citizen access portal account.

Additionally, DILP has expanded its Integrated Voice Response-based (IVR) inspection request/result software. In addition to submitting inspections requests/results online via DILP's online citizen access portal, residents and contractors can also utilize DILP's IVR system by calling 410-313-3800 to make these requests. DILP's vendor, Selectron, has also upgraded DILP's system to now allow for interactions via text message to 888-297-9841 through SelecText. These automated dial-up and texting systems provide 24-hour telephone access to inspection and permit information. [Instructions on how to use the IVR and texting systems](#) can be found DILP's [“Inspections & Enforcements” website](#).

Department of Planning and Zoning

APFO Public Hearing

The Adequate Public Facilities Act Review Committee will be hosting its second [public hearing](#) tomorrow, May 20th at 6:00 p.m. in the Banneker Room of the County's George Howard Building, to discuss the group's suggested recommendations for changes to Howard County's Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO). Open to the public, residents are encouraged to submit written feedback by the 20th, to be presented either at the hearing or emailed to



apfo@howardcountymd.gov. A full compilation of the Review Committee's votes to date can be found on the ["Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance Review Committee" website](#). The Review Committee will present its final report to myself and the Howard County Council in August.

APFO is a law adopted by a local government designed to pace new development with public infrastructure, particularly public roads and schools. The Review Committee is tasked with evaluating APFO, including current and anticipated development patterns and challenges, and developing legislative recommendations that ensure future development is tied to the adequacy of public facilities.

Police Department

Citizen's Police Academy, Apply Now!

If you are looking to experience an inside look into Howard County Police Department's (HCPD) day-to-day operations and gain an understanding of the kind of training police officers receive in our county, I encourage you to apply today for HCPD's 2025 Citizen's Police Academy. This free, interactive 12-week course, with classes taking place once a week from 7:00 to 9:30 p.m., is for Howard County residents and taught by police instructors in a police academy setting. To learn more about this program, its eligibility requirements and how to apply, visit HCPD's ["Get Involved" website](#).

The deadline to apply is this Friday, May 9th and classes begin Monday, June 23rd.

Department of Public Works

Phelps Luck Drive and High Tor Hill Traffic Calming Project Community Outreach Meeting

Tomorrow, May 20th, our Department of Public Works' (DPW) Bureau of Highways' Traffic Engineering Division will hold a [second community outreach meeting](#) to present its final traffic calming plans for Columbia's Phelps Luck Drive and High Tor Hill. The meeting will take place from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. in the cafeteria at Long Reach High School. The project will implement strategies available in the County's recently updated Howard County Neighborhood Traffic Calming Policy, to combat excessive vehicular speeds along these two roadways.

While there will be no formal presentation, DPW staff will be on hand to discuss the updated traffic calming design and construction work for the two roadways, as well as answer questions and gather public comments.

Those unable to attend the meeting or who would like to view the plans and/or have questions, should contact Natasha Aidoo with DPW at 410-313-2430 or email

Old Montgomery Road Bridge Replacement Project

On Thursday, June 5th, DPW will hold a [community outreach meeting](#) from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. in the media center at Jeffers Hill Elementary School, to discuss a project to replace the Old Montgomery Road bridge over the Lake Elkhorn Branch near 8910 Old Montgomery Road in Columbia. The proposed project includes the replacement of the existing weight restricted, steel beam bridge with a new concrete bridge, improvements to the roadway approach, and the installation of new traffic barriers within the project limits. During the work, a temporary one-lane bridge will be installed to maintain traffic flow in the area. Currently in the design phase, with 30 percent design completion, the project is scheduled to commence construction in the spring of 2027 and weather permitting, be completed by that fall.

While there will be no formal presentation, the design plans will be available for public viewing and staff members will be on hand to explain the proposed work, answer any questions, and gather public comments.

Those unable to attend the meeting who would like to view the plans and/or have questions about Capital Project B-3857, should contact Prasoon Shrestha with DPW at 410-313-1879 or email pshrestha@howardcountymd.gov.

An interpreter for people who are deaf or hard of hearing will be available if requested seven working days prior to the meeting. Please call DPW at 410-313-3440 (voice) or use Relay at 7-1-1, between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Bureau of Environmental Services



HoCoGro Bag-It Days

DPW's Bureau of Environmental Services' "Bag-It Days" are back! The Bureau hosted its first "Bag-It Day" of 2025 this past Saturday, May 17th, with the next day set to take place this Saturday, May 24th. Residents looking to scoop up some HoCoGro compost, mulch, and/or blended topsoil at a great price, should stop by our Alpha Ridge Landfill on the 24th, from 8:00 a.m.

to 4:00 p.m. to purchase the Bureau's locally made HoCoGro products in smaller quantities than the typical cubic yard. Cost is \$1.00 per bag or tub (cash only) and as this is a self-serve event, residents must bring their own shovel, gloves and containers of choice to collect material.

To learn more about the Bureau's HoCoGro products, visit its ["Wood Waste Area" website](#). For questions and/or more information about its Bag-It Days, contact the Bureau at 410-313-6444 or email help@howardcountyrecycles.org.

Memorial Day Holiday Slide Schedule

QUICK REMINDER, DPW's Bureau of Environmental Services' "[holiday slide](#)

[schedule](#)" will be in effect next week as next Monday's Memorial Day holiday is one of the six holidays that affects the County's trash, recycling, food scrap, and yard trim curbside collection schedule. As there will be NO curbside collection on May 26th, Monday's pickup will slide to Tuesday, Tuesday to Wednesday, Wednesday to Thursday, and so forth.

To learn more, visit www.howardcountymd.gov/holidayschedule or contact the Bureau at 410-313-6444 or email help@howardcountyrecycles.org for questions.

Putting an Stop to Windblown Recycling

To help prevent recyclables from blowing out of your recycling cart, the Bureau of Environmental Services recommends not overfilling your cart so that your lid closes properly. If you find that your cart is always overflowing, make sure you have the largest size the Bureau offers; the 65 gallon. If you don't, call 410-313-6444 or email help@howardcountyrecycles.org to ask the Bureau to swap!

If you have the largest size recycling cart, make sure you are breaking down your boxes to maximize space. If you are still generating more recyclables than the cart will hold, despite breaking down your boxes, you have options to keep your recycling organized at the curb.

Residents can purchase additional recycling carts/bins or use cardboard boxes, paper bags or any open-top reusable container to set out extra material. Why open top? So, the collection crew can quickly see that there is recycling in the container.

Lithium-ion Batteries Should NEVER be Put in Your Household Trash or Recycling Carts

The Bureau of Environmental Services is reminding residents, lithium batteries are considered Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) and should be properly disposed of in the Landfill's HHW's electronics section area, open Saturday's ONLY, April through November, or through a retail take-back program. As the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration notes, when lithium batteries fail to operate safely or are damaged, they may present a fire and/or explosion hazard.

Items that typically contain lithium-ion batteries include:

- Thermometers
- Remote car locks
- Laser pointers
- MP3 players
- Hearing aids
- Calculators
- Remote control toys
- Tablets
- Laptops
- Cell phones
- Smartwatches
- Vaping products

To protect yourself, property and those around you, please make sure you follow these battery disposal steps at www.howardcountymd.gov/bureau-environmental-services/resource/battery-recycling. For questions or more

information on battery disposal, contact the Bureau at 410-313-6444 or help@howardcountyreycles.org.

Bureau of Highways

Caution, WET PAINT!

Every spring and summer, as weather permits, DPW refreshes lane line marking paint to ensure that street markings are highly visible and our roadways are safe.



With DPW's 2025 painting season underway, the department is reminding motorists to show caution and patience when they come upon a paint truck convoy driving slowly in the roadway. To avoid wet paint:

- NEVER pass the paint truck or trail vehicle;
- NEVER change lanes behind the striping truck or trail vehicles;
- DO NOT swerve back and forth to see around the paint truck or trail vehicle; and
- If parked, wait five minutes before driving on the painted areas.

If you have questions and/or for more information, please contact DPW's Bureau of Highways at 410-313-7450 or email highways@howardcountymd.gov.

Construction Report

To learn about DPW projects currently underway, click [HERE](#). Searchable by project category and street name, from this site you'll find additional project details, including news releases about the project. You can also contact DPW's Customer Service Office at 410-313-3440 or email publicworks@howardcountymd.gov for further assistance.

If you have questions or are interested in finding out about a State road (numbered roadway) project in your area, visit the Maryland State Highway Administration's (SHA) ["Project Portal" website](#).

Maryland State Highway Administration



Operation Clean Sweep Maryland

With the Maryland State Highway Administration's (SHA) ["Operation Clean Sweep Maryland" program to pick up litter along State maintained \(numbered\) roadways underway](#), the County's Bureau of Highways is also hard at work keeping County maintained (named) roadways litter free. If you know of a County maintained roadway with a trash problem you'd like Highways to look into, please submit a service request via our "Tell HoCo" [website](#) and mobile application.

Keep in mind, numbered roadways such as I-95, I-70, US 29, MD 32, MD 100 and US 1, are State-maintained roadways. To report a trash concern along a numbered roadway, you'll want to complete SHA's "Service

Request Form" available on its ["Customer Service" website](#).

Also, help reduce the amount of trash on our roadways by always disposing of your trash in proper receptacles when you arrive at your destination and by securing your load to prevent litter and debris from flying out of the back of your vehicle.

Bureau of Utilities

Voluntary Water Restriction

Effective immediately, the Baltimore City Department of Public Works (DPW) has issued a **voluntary water restriction for public water**

customers in the surrounding area, including Howard County. Due to the ongoing lack of rain and overall below-average annual rainfall, Carroll County's Liberty Reservoir, one of our region's main drinking water sources, has dropped to its lowest point in nearly two decades.



While Baltimore City's DPW has made operational changes at its plants, reducing the amount of water it draws from Liberty Reservoir and increasing use of the Loch Raven Reservoir in Baltimore County, residential and commercial public water customers regionally are being asked to voluntarily reduce their non-essential water use until further notice. Customers can help conserve water to protect our regional water supply by:

- Postponing lawn and garden watering;
- Avoiding car, boat, or equipment washing;
- Refraining from washing outdoor surfaces like sidewalks and driveways;
- Repairing or replacing leaking faucets, hoses, and sprinklers;
- Running only full loads in dishwashers and washing machines; and
- Turning off taps while brushing teeth or shaving.

Additionally, as water leaks are one of the largest sources of water waste, if you see any signs of running water outdoors that may indicate a leak or break in the County's watermain, please contact our Bureau of Utilities at 410-313-4900 (Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) or 410-313-2200, select option #5 (afterhours).

Please remember, this voluntary water restriction applies only to Howard County residents who receive public water supply, i.e., a water bill from the County. It does not apply to properties on private wells.

For more information about this voluntary water restriction, visit Baltimore City's DPW website at <https://publicworks.baltimorecity.gov/voluntary-water-restrictions>.

Department of Recreation and Parks

Are You Still Looking for a Camp this Summer?

Our Department of Recreation & Parks team works year-round to ensure its **Summer Camp Guide** is packed with exciting new programs, while still offering everyone's favorites. If you still have a week or two where you are looking for a great camp



to keep your child or teen active and engaged this summer, be sure to check out Recreation & Parks' ["Camps By Week" webpage](#). Don't be disheartened if a camp is marked "Full," as Recreation & Parks might find they can accommodate more campers in a camp as its start date draws closer. So be sure to always join a camp's waiting list.

To register for a Recreation & Parks summer camp, simply visit the department's [online registration website](#) or give its registration line a call at 410-313-PARK.

Now Open!

With spring's warmer weather here and summer just around the corner, Recreation & Parks' Centennial Park's Adventure Shack & Boat Rentals, located in the park's south area next to Centennial Lake, is now open for the season!

Currently open 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays – weather permitting of course, park visitors are invited to rent one of the department's paddleboats, canoes, or kayaks to take out on a trip around the lake. An increased schedule will begin in June.



For complete rules and details, please visit www.howardcountymd.gov/adventure-shack-and-boat-rentals. In case of inclement weather, you can check on Adventure Shack's boat rental status by calling 410-313-7303!



An Evening of Good Vibes and Voices

Calling all current and former service members and families, I invite you to double time it over to [Rockburn Branch Park – West](#) for a night of FREE music, entertainment, healing conversations, lawn games, food, and fun! Recreation & Parks' ["Good Vibes and Voices Concert and Event"](#) is set to return Thursday, June 5th at 6:00 p.m. and will

feature the 229th Maryland Army National Guard rock band Live Fire, other performers, and fun activities, as well as the opportunity to learn about local resources for service members, veterans, and their families.

To learn more about this event, visit www.howardcountymd.gov/goodvibes.

The Cinema Returns to Belmont

Recreation & Parks' [Belmont Blockbusters Series](#) movie nights are set to return Thursday, June 12th, with the cinematic showing of Disney's *Moana*. Held at dusk on select Thursdays throughout this summer and fall, I invite you to gather up your family and friends and join our Belmont staff for a



family-friendly, outdoor movie night in Belmont Manor & Historic Park's picturesque formal gardens, located just behind the manor house.

Advanced registration is encouraged as parking is limited and while the event is FREE, donations are welcome to help with future community programming.

To learn more about Recreation & Parks' Belmont Blockbusters Series, including upcoming event dates and movies, visit www.howardcountymd.gov/belmont-blockbusters today.

When Lightning Strikes, the Horn Alerts

With summer storms just around the corner, here's a quick reminder about our Recreation & Parks' [regional parks](#). Our eight regional parks, i.e., Blandair, Centennial, Cedar Lane, Rockburn, Savage, Schooley Mill, Troy, and Western, are each equipped with an outdoor lightning alert system. What this means is that anytime a unit senses lightning within 10 miles of its designated park, the unit's horn and light will activate for 15-seconds. After the unit has been activated, all in-park activities, including games and practices, will cease so visitors may seek shelter (whether within a structure with a roof and four walls or a vehicle). Once lightning is no longer a threat, the horn will sound in three five-second bursts to alert visitors that activities may resume.

Remember, "When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors!" Thunderstorms can produce deadly lightning capable of striking up to 10 miles away. So, if you hear thunder, you are likely within striking distance of the storm, even if it's not raining where you are. For more information about lightning safety, check out the U.S. National Weather Service's "[Lightning Safety Tips and Resources](#)" website.

Office of Transportation



Let's BikeAround Downtown Columbia

This Bike Month, our Office of Transportation (OoT) has once again partnered with the Downtown Columbia Partnership to host its annual Block Party to kick off BikeAround Downtown Columbia. A weekend long event, running from 9:00 a.m., Saturday, May 31st to 6:00 p.m., Sunday, June 1st, BikeAround Downtown Columbia takes riders on a relaxing ride along the trails, pathways, and bike lanes of Downtown Columbia, Wilde Lake, and Harper's Choice. Participants can join in the fun at any time during the event.

To get in gear for this spring's BikeAround Downtown Columbia, be sure to first stop by OoT's kick off Block Party event on the 31st from 9:00 a.m. to noon at the Merriweather District's Color Burst Park. The party offers attendees the opportunity to learn more about how they can add bicycling to their everyday routines. Attendees will also have the opportunity to join members from HCPD's Community Outreach and Pathways Section on a group lead ride along this year's BikeAround Downtown Columbia route starting from Color Burst Park. These group rides will start at 9:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. and are a great way for younger and/or less

experienced riders to enjoy the course with seasoned cyclists as guides.

To learn more about BikeAround Downtown Columbia and/or to register, visit the [BikeAround Downtown Columbia event webpage](#).

Flash Bus Rapid Transit Update

In addition to learning how to make cycling a bigger part of your commute and recreation routines at BikeAround Downtown Columbia's Block Party, OoT and DPW's Transportation and Special Projects Division staff members will also be on hand to provide an update on the new [extension of the US 29 Flash Bus Rapid Transit](#) (Flash BRT) from Montgomery County to Howard County. At this [community engagement opportunity](#), staff will present the proposed Flash BRT Downtown Columbia station locations and concept plans, answer questions, and gather public comments. As the event is weather-dependent, be sure to check [OoT's website](#) for event updates in case of inclement weather.

Currently in the engineering design phase, the Flash BRT extension project will increase mobility options by connecting transit riders to activity and employment centers within Howard County to Montgomery County and beyond. Service within Howard County is anticipated to begin in 2026, with stops at Maple Lawn, Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory (APL), and Downtown Columbia. The two proposed stations in Downtown Columbia are along Little Patuxent Parkway and Merriweather Drive. Construction is anticipated to begin in early 2026 and weather permitting, will take approximately six months to complete.

Those unable to attend the engagement event who would like to view the plans and/or have questions specifically on the station design, should contact Caitlin Kovel with DPW's Transportation and Special Projects Division at 410-313-6142 or email ckovel@howardcountymd.gov. For questions about the transit service extension and/or for more information on Capital Project C-0332, please contact David Cookson with OoT at 410-313-3842 or email dcookson@howardcountymd.gov.

This is the second series of community outreach events that DPW and OoT have hosted on the Flash BRT, having [previously held a community outreach meeting in September 2024](#). During this meeting, the public had the opportunity to preview the design plans for the Maple Lawn and APL stations, ask questions, and provide feedback.

Ride to 1 Million

[In celebration](#) of Howard County's local transit service, the Regional Transportation Agency of Central Maryland (RTA), being on track to provide 1,000,000 passenger trips this fiscal year, OoT, RTA, and its regional partners are hosting several fare-free days now through June. On Wednesday, June 18th, RTA passengers may ride for free.



In addition to these fare-free days, RTA, OoT, and its partners will also be hosting pop-up events these next several months leading up to a 'Ride to 1 Million' event this June.

To learn more, visit OoT's [Ride to 1 Million website](#).



Let's Ride with HoCo RapidRide

Since its launch in March, our new microtransit pilot program, [HoCo RapidRide](#), has provided more than 500 rides to residents living in Elkridge, Jessup, and Savage. This technology-enabled public transit service connects residents living in the county's Route One Corridor with a low-cost ride to a number of nearby popular destinations. Offered weekdays, Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., this shared ride service operates corner to corner instead of door to door, matching passengers headed in the same direction with a nearby "virtual bus stop" a short walking distance

away. HoCo RapidRide branded vans will then pick up multiple passengers from one location to take to a selected destination, without adding a significant amount of time to each rider's journey, creating efficient, shared trips.

The cost to RapidRide is \$2 per trip (credit or debit card only), EXCEPT for Howard County Public School System and Howard Community College students and seniors age 60 and older with a valid ID will continue to ride HoCo RapidRide for free.

HoCo RapidRide also offers wheelchair accessible trips. Passengers who use a wheelchair, simply need to visit their account in the app, click 'Special Settings' and select 'Wheelchair Accessibility' to unlock a wheelchair accessible vehicle, or call 443-348-9572 to request an accessible ride.

To learn more about HoCo RapidRide, visit <https://city.ridewithvia.com/rapidride> or download the app today at [Apple Store](#) or [Google Play](#) to schedule your ride.

New Montgomery Road Complete Streets Improvement Project Public Meeting

I invite you to join our OoT this Thursday, May 22nd, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. in the Event Hall at the [Elkridge Volunteer Fire Department](#), to learn more about the office's initial feasibility study findings and proposed [Complete Streets](#) pedestrian and bicycle concept improvement plans for Montgomery Road between Deborah Jean Drive and Rowanberry Drive.

Earlier this year, OoT began a study to evaluate the feasibility of installing pedestrian and bicycle facilities along Montgomery Road in the project area. This public meeting will share the initial findings of the study and gather public feedback to help guide the study's final phase, which is expected to be completed in fall 2025.

Montgomery Road Pedestrian & Bicycle Facility Feasibility Study Public Meeting



Thursday, May 22nd, 5-7PM
Elkridge Fire Hall
5700 Rowanberry Drive, Elkridge

While there will be no formal presentation, the concept plans will be available for public viewing and OoT staff members and project consultants will be on hand to explain the proposed work, discuss the study's progress, answer any questions, and gather public comments.

Those unable to attend the meeting who would like to view the plans and/or have questions, should contact Mr. Chris Eatough with Transportation at 410-313-0567 or email ceatough@howardcountymd.gov. Immediately following the public meeting, the meeting materials will be available on OoT's "[Montgomery Road Pedestrian & Bicycle Facility Feasibility Study](#)" website. From this same [site](#), community members will also be able to access an online survey to share their thoughts and feedback about the project concepts; the survey will be available through Friday, June 6th.



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