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Award Tour

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# County Executive Ball Presents: The Ball Bulletin



July 7, 2025

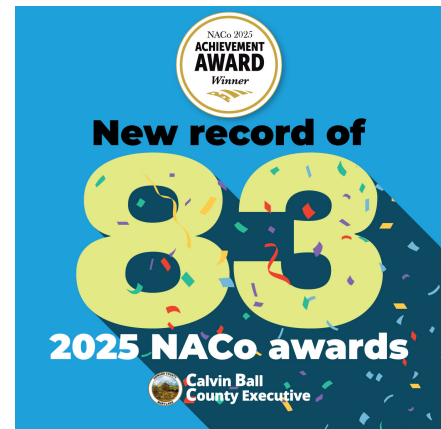
Dear Friends,

Howard County has done it again. This year, we have earned a record 83 NACo Achievement Awards; the most for a single year in State history. In addition, our Office of Emergency Management's Call Center Training won "Best in Category," taking home the top honor in Risk & Emergency Management, for innovative and high-quality County services.

These awards celebrate programs that enhance resident services, drive economic growth, protect public safety, and champion sustainability. They serve as proof that our Office of Workforce Development, Health Department, Recreation & Parks, Technology & Communication Services, and every corner of County government is raising the bar, nationally.

This wouldn't be possible without our stellar County workforce, nonprofits, and partners who collaborate to set the national standard of excellence. Your creativity and hard work make Howard County a premier national model of excellence.

To read more about our award winners, check out our ["Howard County Awarded the Most Annual NACo Achievement Awards in Maryland History with a Record 83 2025 Awards, Including One 'Best in Category'" news release.](#)



Sincerely,

# Community Updates



## Sprucing Up Seabird Way

Howard County's Street Tree Replacement Initiative brought fresh energy and greenery to Seabird Way, where newly planted street trees are already making a difference. As part of our comprehensive tree planting strategy for Howard County, these plantings help fulfill our vision to enhance environmental health and neighborhood aesthetics.

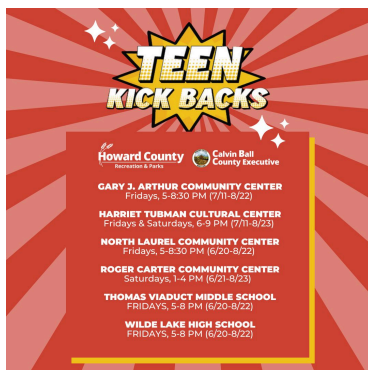
The new trees along Seabird Way will offer shade, cleaner air, and a stronger urban canopy, making this residential area more vibrant and resilient for years to come.

## Happy Disability Pride Month!

This July, we celebrate Disability Pride Month in Howard County. It's a time to recognize and honor the diverse contributions of individuals with disabilities in our community. Disability Pride Month promotes inclusion, awareness, and the importance of accessibility for all.

This month, we encourage you to celebrate the achievements and resilience of our community members with disabilities and continue to advocate for a more accessible and equitable society.

Together, we can make Howard County a place where everyone feels valued and empowered. Happy Disability Pride Month!



## Teen Kick Backs

Saturdays just got better at Roger Carter!

Teen Kickbacks are open for ages 11-17 with food, games, and a place to chill. Join us, Saturdays, from 1 to 4 p.m.

Learn more at [www.howardcountymd.gov/teenkickbacks](http://www.howardcountymd.gov/teenkickbacks).

## On this Independence Day

Happy 4th of July!

From honoring our veterans at Pointers Run Elementary School to walking in the 55th Annual Longfellow Parade with Governor Wes Moore and many others, we connected with Boy Scouts to band members decked out in red, white, and blue.

These community gatherings never fail to lift our spirits. They're a lovely reminder of the unity and opportunity that can bind our County and our Country.



### See a Pothole?

One pothole can turn a good drive into an expensive repair. If you spot one, say something. Tell HoCo helps Howard County fix it fast. You can report road concerns by visiting: [www.howardcountymd.gov/tell-hoco](http://www.howardcountymd.gov/tell-hoco).

### Providing Expert Urgent Care

Concentra provides expert urgent care, ensuring you and your family get the attention they need when your regular doctor's office might be unreachable. With locations on Dobbin Rd, and Route 1, they accept walk-ins and appointments. Their hours are Monday through Friday from 8 am to 5 pm. Learn more and find your location at [www.concentra.com/patients/urgent-care](http://www.concentra.com/patients/urgent-care).



### Happy 4th of July

On Friday, July 4th, we celebrated the independence, unity, and freedom that defines all our nation can be. In Howard County, we work to build a community that embodies those values: where every voice is heard and every resident belongs.

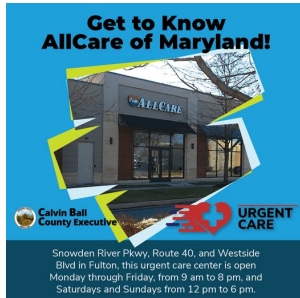
I hope you and all of your loved ones had a safe, joyful, and reflective Fourth of July!

### A Tree-mendous Upgrade Along Montgomery Road

Our DPW contractors recently completed tree planting work along Montgomery Road, adding new life and shade to one of Howard County's well-traveled corridors. These plantings are part of our FY25 program to replace dead or removed trees and revitalize key public areas.



Beyond just beautification, these efforts help absorb carbon, reduce urban heat, and provide vital habitat for birds and pollinators – making Montgomery Road not just a place to pass through, but a place to thrive.

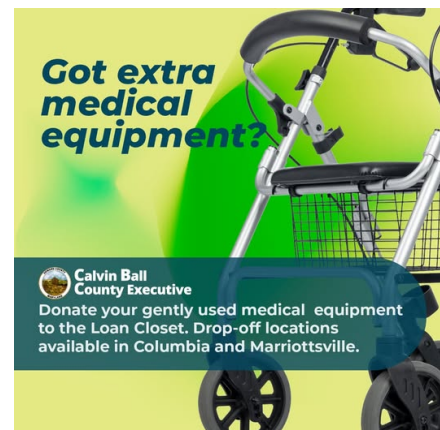


## AllCare for Your Urgent Care

Get to Know AllCare of Maryland! With locations on Snowden River Pkwy, Route 40, and Westside Blvd in Fulton, this urgent care center is open Monday through Friday, from 9 am to 8 pm, and Saturdays and Sundays from 12 pm to 6 pm. They offer walk-in access every day of the week. Learn more about them at <https://allcarefamilymed.com>.

## Got Extra Medical Equipment

Have a cane, hospital bed, or rollator you no longer use? Consider donating it to the Loan Closet of Howard County. Your donation can make a world of difference for someone in our community. Equipment donations are accepted at 7125 Riverwood Drive in Columbia on weekdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., or at the Durable Medical Equipment Shed at Alpha Ridge Landfill in Marriottsville, Monday through Saturday. Learn more at [www.howardcountymd.gov/loancloset](http://www.howardcountymd.gov/loancloset).



## Helping Families Become Homeowners

Our Opportunities for Wealth-Building Now (OWN) initiatives are designed to make homeownership more achievable...providing downpayment assistance, foreclosure prevention, and rehab loans that help families plant roots and build wealth.

In FY25, we've helped nearly 40 families become homeowners in Howard County through the Settlement Downpayment Loan Program (SDLP), providing more than \$1.25 million in financial assistance across MIHU, non-MIHU, and workforce

housing loans.

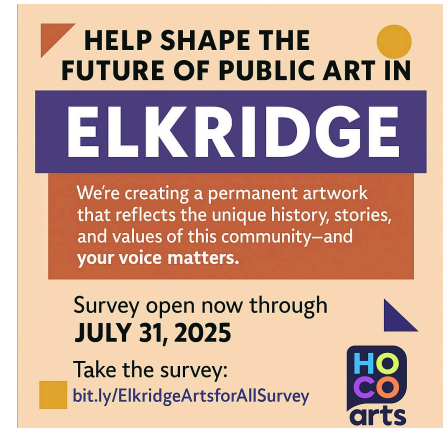


If you are interested in SDLP, we encourage you to visit <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/DHCD-SDLP>.

## Bringing Public Art to Elkridge

Arts for All is Howard County's brand-new permanent public arts program and Elkridge will be the first community to have this art! In partnership with the Howard County Arts Council, we're creating an iconic installation at the future Community & 50+ Center. We need your input.

Do you live or work or play in Elkridge? Tell us what story our art should tell. Take the 5-minute survey by Jul 31 at [www.bit.ly/ElkridgeArtsforAllSurvey](http://www.bit.ly/ElkridgeArtsforAllSurvey).



**HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC ART IN ELKRIDGE**

We're creating a permanent artwork that reflects the unique history, stories, and values of this community—and your voice matters.

Survey open now through **JULY 31, 2025**

Take the survey: [bit.ly/ElkridgeArtsforAllSurvey](http://bit.ly/ElkridgeArtsforAllSurvey)

**HO CO arts**

Learn more at <https://www.hocoarts.org/support/arts-for-all/>.



## Keeping Howard County's Economy Strong

In response to the uncertainty of federal downsizing and potential government shutdowns, we launched the ECON (or Economic Competitiveness & Opportunity Now) Task Force by Executive Order 2025-03. Bringing together industry leaders, university partners, and Cabinet members, ECON will recommend strategies to keep

Howard County's economy strong, no matter the federal climate.

ECON's mandate is urgent: identify actionable policies, fast-track business-friendly regulatory reforms, and craft a cohesive resiliency plan by year's end. Our goal is to turn potential economic headwinds into opportunities for innovation, job creation, and long-term growth right here at home. Learn more about ECON at [www.howardcountymd.gov/boards-commissions/economic-competitiveness-and-opportunity-now-econ-task-force](http://www.howardcountymd.gov/boards-commissions/economic-competitiveness-and-opportunity-now-econ-task-force).

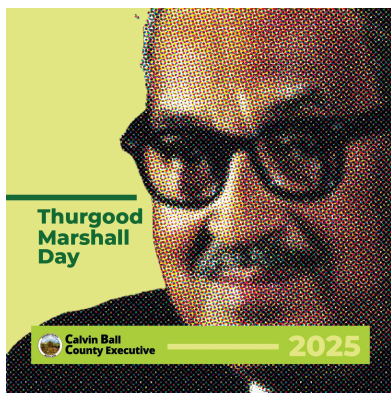
## Life Feels Heavy Sometimes

Everyone deserves a life filled with hope and stability. Call 988 for support whenever you need it. We see you. We support you. We're here for you.



## A Man that Shaped Our Fight for Justice

Born in Baltimore and raised in Maryland, Thurgood Marshall's legacy continues to shape the fight for justice in our country. As the first African American Supreme Court Justice, his work broke barriers and defended the constitutional rights of all Americans.



On Thurgood Marshall Day, we honor and work to embody his leadership, his commitment to civil rights, and his lifelong pursuit of equality under the law.

## Keeping Our Residents Safe

Free gun locks are now available at Howard County Library System's (HCLS) East Columbia and Elkridge Branches, thanks to a Howard County Health Department partnership with HCLS, Howard County Police Department, and VA Maryland Health Care.

We are glad for the championing of safety initiatives that keep all our residents safer. The use of firearms is a constitutionally protected right that we must respect with common sense approaches like this gun lock program.



Firearms are involved in over one-third of our county's suicide deaths. Simply adding a gun lock even for a few extra seconds can save a life.

According to a 2020 study published in JAMA Network Open, delaying access to a firearm during a crisis can significantly reduce the likelihood of a fatal outcome. Gun locks serve as a critical barrier, creating time and space between a moment of impulse and a tragic decision.

No IDs are required. Walk in to pick up a lock while supplies last:

- East Columbia Branch at 6600 Cradlerock Way
- Elkridge Branch at 6540 Washington Boulevard

Learn more about safe storage and support resources at [www.howardcountymd.gov/health/free-gun-locks](http://www.howardcountymd.gov/health/free-gun-locks).



## Need a Walker or a Wheelchair?

If you or a loved one in Howard County needs a walker, wheelchair, shower chair, or other durable medical equipment, help is just around the corner. The Loan Closet of Howard County provides residents with free access to gently used medical equipment that promotes independence, mobility, and dignity. Whether you're recovering from surgery or supporting a family member, the Loan Closet is here to help. Call 410-313-0363 to schedule an appointment or visit [www.howardcountymd.gov/loan closet](http://www.howardcountymd.gov/loan closet) to learn more.

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## Empowering Our Residents

Our Community Ambassador Program empowers Howard County residents to help neighbors access county services by serving as trusted local resource guides.

Sometimes, county resources are here, but our neighbors don't know how to find them. As a Community Ambassador, you'll bridge that gap! Whether it's housing support, health services, or emergency preparedness, you'll become the go-to person to help neighbors connect with what they need.



Ready to serve your community? Join us at [www.howardcountymd.gov/county-executive/community-ambassador-program](http://www.howardcountymd.gov/county-executive/community-ambassador-program).

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## Celebrate Parks and Recreation Month

Happy July, Howard County. July is Parks and Recreation Month! This month, we're celebrating the incredible impact of our Department of Recreation & Parks team. From preserving green spaces to providing enriching programs for residents of all ages, their work helps keep Howard County active, connected, and thriving.

Let's take a moment show appreciation of the dedicated team behind our award-winning trails, playgrounds, classes, and community events. Thank

you for making Howard County a healthier and happier place to live, grow, visit, and thrive!

Check out all the fun we have planned by visiting [www.howardcountymd.gov/recandparksmonth](http://www.howardcountymd.gov/recandparksmonth).

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## Energy Bill Assistance

At the end of the month, energy bills come due. If you are facing a higher energy bill this summer, MyBGE offers multiple support tools to help you manage summer costs:

- Use the Assistance Finder to see which programs you're eligible for
- Set up payment arrangements or extend your bill due date
- Try Budget Billing to smooth out monthly payments

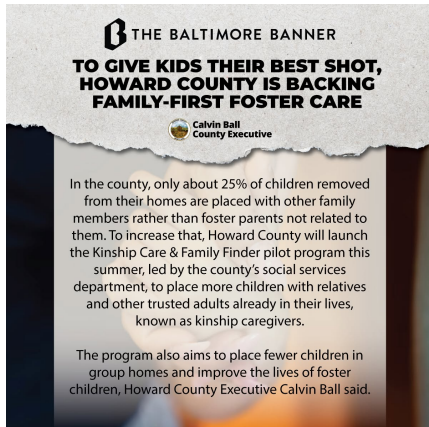


Access these tools and more at [www.bge.com/heretohelp](http://www.bge.com/heretohelp) or call 800-685-0123



for personal support.

Extra support may also be an option through the new Customer Relief Fund, which launched July 1st. Apply at <https://www.bge.com/relief>.



## Kinship Care & Family Finder

We're delighted to introduce Howard County's new Kinship Care & Family Finder pilot! This initiative puts family first and gives every child their best shot at thriving. Our Department of Social Services will identify relatives and other trusted adults who are ready to open their homes.

Nationwide, research shows children placed with relatives enjoy better mental and behavioral health, maintain cultural and familial connections, and heal more quickly. Under Maryland's new "kin-first"

approach, we aim to make even more of a positive difference.

This pilot will help us place more children with people they already know and love and also provide caregivers the training and support they need so no one is overwhelmed by sudden responsibility. We're also investing in professional development for our social workers, because keeping caseloads manageable and morale high means we can serve our families better.

Read more by checking out *The Baltimore Banner's* ["To give kids their best shot, Howard County is backing family-first foster care"](#) article online.

## Support for Federal Workers Facing Career Changes

With many federal agencies spread throughout the DMV area, Howard County is home to a large federal workforce. With mounting uncertainty over federal budget cuts in 2025 we responded with support. Our April career fair drew an estimated 1,300 attendees and 75 businesses ready to hire. Free childcare, expert-led workshops, and hands-on networking helped our federal workers chart their next steps. Howard County's robust public-private partnerships have proved to be a powerful antidote to uncertainty.



If you are still concerned about job uncertainty, visit [www.howardcountymd.gov/workforce-development/support-federal-workers-facing-career-changes](http://www.howardcountymd.gov/workforce-development/support-federal-workers-facing-career-changes).

## Howard County Arts & Culture Plan

Art should belong to everyone.

The Howard County Arts Council's Arts & Culture Plan



helps ensure ALL voices are heard and ALL residents can participate in our creative future.

Take the survey and make your voice count at [www.hocoarts.org/support/arts-culture-plan](http://www.hocoarts.org/support/arts-culture-plan).

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## Fearless Fireside Chat

I recently sat down with Fearless CEO Delali Dzirasa to kick off an exciting new chapter in Howard County.

Through a fireside chat at the Maryland Innovation Center, we officially welcomed Fearless and Hutch to our ecosystem—marking a year-long partnership designed to help local entrepreneurs launch and grow GovTech businesses with structured mentorship, training, and peer support.

Launched right here in Howard County, Fearless is an organization that works toward building technology to support social good. They run on three basic tenets: building more dynamic governments, improving human life, and providing equity, access, and opportunity for everybody.

Hutch is their incubator. In the past six years, they have helped about 40 companies, spanning from cyber analytics to machine learning grow, scale, and thrive.



Together with the Howard County Economic Development Authority, this partnership will:

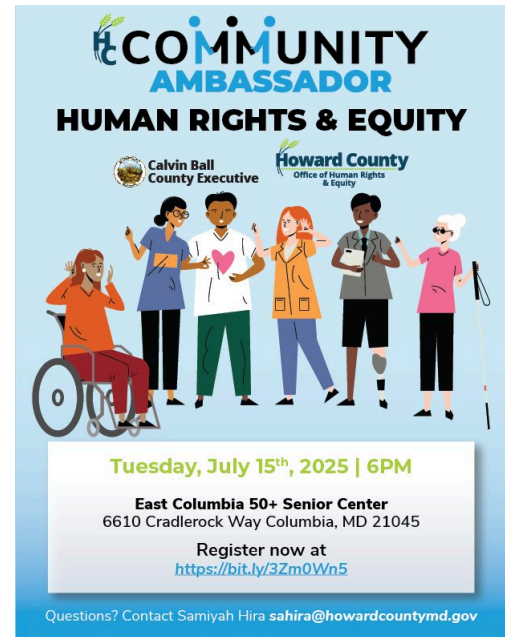
- Support startups and small businesses through the Hutch Incubator
- Help federal workers and residents transition into GovTech via bootcamps and workshops
- Expand regional GovCon presence with office hours, networking events, and a local industry day
- Fuel inclusive economic mobility and workforce resilience

With two Howard County companies already in the 2025 Hutch Cohort, this initiative is already making an impact. At the heart of this effort is a shared belief: We are better together. With Fearless, we're building smarter, more inclusive solutions for the future.

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## Community Ambassador Program: Human Rights and Equity

Join our [Community Ambassador Program](#) for its upcoming session, next Tuesday, July 15th from 6:00 to 8:00 a.m. at our [East Columbia 50+ Center](#), to learn more about human rights and equity. Joined by staff members from the County's Office of Human Rights and Equity (OHRE), participants will explore key topics including recognizing and addressing various forms of discrimination and harassment and discuss strategies for promoting equity in our daily interactions and decision-making processes. To register to participate in this session, visit our ["Community Ambassador Program: Human Rights and Equity" Eventbrite webpage](#).



Our Community Ambassador Program aims to empower residents to become trusted messengers and community experts in county programs. Ambassadors gain first knowledge of Howard County resources and services – from safety to housing to parks – and help bridge the gap between county government and the communities it serves.

## Government Updates

### Boards and Commissions

#### *Applicants Sought for Advisory Board on Consumer Protection*

Howard County has robust programs to protect consumers from bad business practices and scams. The more public collaboration we can engage in, helps to identify and find resolutions to ever-evolving scams and address negative business issues as they emerge. If you are interested in stepping forward to enhance our efforts to improve available consumer protection services in the county, promote education and support for vulnerable consumers in the community, and are affiliated with a civic group that advocates for consumer issues in Howard County, I encourage you to apply today for our Advisory Board on Consumer Protection. To learn how, check out our recently released ["Howard County Executive Ball Seeks Community Advocates to Serve on Advisory Board on Consumer Protection" news release](#).

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#### *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](mailto: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](mailto: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 50 Years*

Join our Department of Community Resources and Services' (DCRS) Director Jackie Scott and her staff, as they celebrate DCRS's 50 years of excellence in providing vital human services. DCRS began as the Bureau of Citizen Services in 1975 and since then, has expanded its offerings to address the needs of

multiple generations, tailored its services to encompass different cultural values, and pushed for the full inclusion for individuals with disabilities.

To mark its golden anniversary, DCRS is holding a celebration of open houses and outreach events all year long, with its next open house tomorrow, July 8th, from 10:00 a.m. to noon at the [Office of Disability Services' Loan Closet](#) in Columbia. If you have not yet checked out the Loan Closet and all the incredible resources and services that it offers our residents, I encourage you to stop by for a tour tomorrow to meet its staff and onsite community partners.

For more anniversary events and updates, stay tuned to DCRS's website at [www.howardcountymd.gov/DCRS](http://www.howardcountymd.gov/DCRS) and its social media platforms at @hococommunity.

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### *Join in on the Fun at Our 50+ Centers this Summer*

Summer fun isn't just for kids; it's for all ages! This summer, I invite our county residents age 50+ to join in the fun by checking out all the wonderful fitness, arts, cultural, and health programs DCRS's Office on Aging and

Independence (OAI) has going on to keep you active and engaged in the hotter months. In the [July issue of its \*The 50+ Connection\*](#), residents will find information about chair yoga, high energy Zumba, creative arts, history and live music programs, nutrition and health resources, and so much more.



Next Tuesday, July 15th, from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m., OAI's [Bain 50+ Center](#) staff will be joined by George Washington University Doctoral student in Counseling Ghonva Ghauri, BA/MA, for a discussion on "[Emotional Wellness in Communities of Color](#)." Held in honor of National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month, participants will learn how unique cultural experiences impact the mental health of different communities of color, including generational trauma, racial trauma, and cultural stigma. Participants will also learn how to navigate these challenges and explore culturally relevant practices to support emotional wellness. To register to participate in this FREE discussion, check out the event's [Active Network registration page](#).

To learn about and/or to register for other OAI programs taking place this summer, visit the County's [Active Network registration site](#) today!



#### *Support for Children and Families*

Through its family workshops, local resources, events, educational programs and more, DCRS's Office of Children and Families (OCF) offers in-person activities at its Family Support Center, plus virtual programs to help Howard County families learn, grow and thrive all summer long.

If you are expecting a baby but have not yet had the opportunity to learn about all the resources available to you and your growing family in Howard County, I encourage you to check out OCF's Community Baby Shower on Saturday, July 26th. Set to take place from 10:00 a.m. to noon at [OCF's office in Columbia](#), parents-to-be are invited to come learn about maintaining a healthy pregnancy, breastfeeding, fatherhood, and safe sleep for newborns. Attendees will also receive vital supplies to help give their baby a strong start in life. As space is limited, parents-to-be must complete this [online survey](#) by next Wednesday, July 16th to reserve their spot. Please note, you must be a Howard County resident to participate.

To learn about the latest happenings, workshops, activities, and programs for children and families being offered by OCF this July, [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.

### *Vendor Applications Now Being Accepted for Veteran-Owned Small Biz Expo*

Calling all local veteran and military spouse business owners, vendor applications are now being accepted for DCRS's Office of Veterans and Military Families (OVMF) **Veteran-Owned Small Biz Expo and Fall Festival**. Set to take place Saturday, September 27th from noon to 4:00 p.m. at the Maryland Innovation Center, this free family-friendly event will feature live entertainment, food trucks, games, giveaways, videogaming, and an opportunity to interact with service dogs. If you are interested in showcasing your business, I encourage you to complete the **event's interest form online** today.



For questions and/or more information about the Veteran-Owned Small Biz Expo and Fall Festival, please contact OVMF manager Lisa Terry at 410-313-0821 (voice/relay) or email [lbterry@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:lbterry@howardcountymd.gov).

### **Office of Community Sustainability**

#### *Community Charging Connections Grant Applications Open*

If you are a non-profit townhome or condo community association interested in adding electric vehicle (EV) chargers in your community's common parking areas, I encourage you to check out our Office of Community Sustainability (OCS) new **Community Charging Connections** pilot program. Funded by a grant from the Maryland Energy Administration, this limited pilot program is designed to address barriers to EV charging faced by townhome and condo communities that lack private garages and/or driveways. The program supports townhome and condo communities by reimbursing participants up to \$10,000 for costs associated with their community's EV charger installation.

Program participants will be asked to provide feedback about the County's permitting and approval process to help OCS identify further opportunities to streamline and simplify the process. Complete details and the online application can be found on OCS's **"Community Charging Connections" website**. Applications are due by Thursday, July 31st.

### **Office of Consumer Protection**



#### *Learn Your Rights at Our Second Annual Landlord-Tenant Conference*

Calling all landlords, property managers, and realtors, I invite you to join our Office of Consumer Protection (OCP) next Wednesday, July 16th from 1:00 to 6:00 p.m. at DCRS's **East Columbia 50+ Center**, for its second annual Landlord-Tenant Conference. Featuring representatives from the Maryland Department of Housing and Community



Development's new Office of Tenant and Landlord Affairs, the County's Department of Inspections, Licenses and Permits and Office of Human Rights and Equity, and the Howard County Housing Commission, this conference will provide attendees with valuable insights on navigating the rental market, the latest guidance on new state laws affecting rental properties and landlords, and information on your rights, responsibilities, and how to foster a positive landlord-tenant relationship.

To register to participate in this FREE event, visit OCP's "[Howard County Landlord Conference](#)" [Eventbrite website](#) to snag your ticket today. For questions about the event, contact OCP at 410-313-6420 or email [consumer@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:consumer@howardcountymd.gov).

## **Office of Emergency Management**

### *How to Stay Weather Aware*

With summer weather season underway, our Office of Emergency Management (OEM) is reminding Howard County of the importance of being prepared. To make sure you and your family stay weather aware this summer season and all year long, be sure "Emergency Alerts" are activated on your mobile devices; visit [www.ready.gov/alerts](http://www.ready.gov/alerts) to learn how. You can also subscribe to receive weather alerts to your email, phone and more through the U.S. National Weather Service's website at [www.weather.gov/enterprise/](http://www.weather.gov/enterprise/).

To learn more about the potential hazards that could affect Howard County and how you and your family can be/stay prepared, check out OEM's Ready HoCo website today at [www.howardcountymd.gov/readyhoco](http://www.howardcountymd.gov/readyhoco).

## **Department of Finance**

### *Excellence in Financial Reporting*

As I [shared last week](#), our Department of Finance has once again been recognized with the prestigious [Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting](#) from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) of the United States and Canada for its "[Annual Comprehensive Financial Report](#)." The highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting, this recognition is a testament to the outstanding work and commitment our finance team continuously puts forward to maintain the highest accounting standards. Howard County remains committed to openly sharing our government spending activities with our taxpayers and ensuring our fiscal policy decisions are sound and responsible. Through these efforts, we remain accountable and responsible stewards for the taxpayer dollars entrusted to us.

## **Department of Fire and Rescue Services**

### *Staying Safe at the Pool*

With summer pool season officially underway, our Department of Fire and Rescue Services is reminding parents/guardians to always keep an eye on kids in and around bodies of water as drowning can be quick and silent. If you own a pool, make sure your pool has secure barriers and rescue equipment is always kept nearby. Parents, if able,

teach your children to swim early and when visiting a pool, establish pool rules.

For more water safety tips, be sure to check out the American Red Cross' ["Water Safety" website](#).



## Department of General Services

### *Introducing Our New Department of General Services*

Today, I announced the opening of our new Department of General Services (DGS), consolidating the functions of the Department of Public Works' Bureau of Facilities and Division of Real Estate Services under one singular leadership. The creation of this new department will transfer and blend the key real estate, building operations, and maintenance functions of the County under a new Director, providing the opportunity for greater communication, collaboration, and strategic coordination. The consolidation of these functions under one leadership structure will help ensure a cost-effective, efficient, and responsive delivery of services for years to come.

To learn more about our new DGS, check out our ["Howard County Executive Calvin Ball Unveils New, Transformation Department of General Services" news release](#).

## Howard County Health Department



### Calling All Doulas

### Calling All Doulas!

Earlier this year, the Howard County Health Department (HCHD) launched its Doula Partnership Program to support and grow the network of certified and Medicaid credentialed doulas serving Howard County. Certified doulas working in Howard County that enroll in the program will receive in-depth Medicaid credentialing and billing training, direct reimbursement for serving eligible Howard County clients, and have access to:

- Promotion and marketing through HCHD network;
- Ongoing client referrals;
- Client screening and coordination;
- Continuing education and training; and
- Quarterly meet-ups and networking opportunities.

If you would like to learn more about this program visit HCHD's ["PEACE Project" webpage](#) and complete the [Doula Partnership Interest Form](#).

## Department of Housing and Community Development

### *MIHU July Open Enrollment*

Our Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) is now accepting applications for its Moderate Income Housing Unit (MIHU) program July open enrollment period. Held quarterly, DHCD's MIHU is an inclusionary zoning program that offers quality new homes at reduced sale prices and rents to income eligible families.



To purchase an MIHU home, individuals must apply to DHCD during an open enrollment period to be placed in the database. **Applicants with a combined annual household income of a minimum of \$55,000 are eligible to apply; applicants who do not meet this minimum amount are not eligible for this program.** Additionally, applicants must meet credit score requirements and household income must be sufficient to qualify for a mortgage based on industry standards (visit DHCD's ["MIHU Homeownership Program" website](#) for more information). For more details regarding our MIHU homeownership program, be sure to visit DHCD's ["MIHU Open Enrollment" website](#) or contact DHCD at 410-313-6318 (select option two) or email [moderateincomehousing@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:moderateincomehousing@howardcountymd.gov).

To rent an MIHU unit, a qualified applicant's household income may not exceed 60 percent of the Howard County median income (visit ["I Want To Rent A Home In Howard County" website](#) for more information). MIHUs are rented on a first-come, first-served basis, are interspersed throughout each community and residents enjoy the same amenities of community life as market rate tenants. Visit DHCD's ["I Want To Rent A Home In Howard County" website](#) for more information.

MIHU homeownership applications are available on ["MIHU Open Enrollment" website](#) and completed applications can be either submitted [online](#), mailed to 9820 Patuxent Woods Drive, Suite 224, Columbia, MD, 21046, or dropped off at DHCD's Patuxent Woods Drive office. Applications will be accepted through 4:00 p.m., Thursday, July 31st.

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#### ***Rental Assistance Program for Older Adult Households***

DHCD's [Older Adult Rental Assistance 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](mailto: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.



## Department of Planning and Zoning



### *Final Days to Review Gateway's Master Plan Draft*

If you have not yet provided the County's Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) with your [feedback](#) regarding its visionary [Gateway Master Plan Public Draft](#), make sure you do so before 11:59 p.m. tomorrow, July 8th night when the public comment period comes to end. DPZ's Gateway Master Plan Public Draft presents a comprehensive, actionable roadmap to guide the long-term transformation of Gateway into a thriving innovation district providing an opportunity to attract up to 8,100 new jobs in targeted industries like cybersecurity, defense, technology, artificial intelligence, quantum, and other emerging industries.

Be sure to share your feedback before it's too late by going to [www.surveymonkey.com/r/gatewaypublicdraft](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/gatewaypublicdraft). If you have any questions, please email DPZ at [gateway@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:gateway@howardcountymd.gov).

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### *Adequate Public Facilities Review Committee Meeting*

This Wednesday, July 9th at 6:00 p.m., the [Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance \(APFO\) Review Committee](#) will host its next committee meeting. The Committee has been convened to evaluate APFO, including current and anticipated development patterns and challenges, and develop legislative recommendations that ensures future development is tied to the adequacy of public facilities.



To learn more about this meeting, how to watch, APFO and the APFO Review Committee, visit the [Committee's website](#).



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### *Planning Board Meeting*

This Thursday, July 10th, the County's [Planning Board](#) will be hosting a hybrid meeting, in person at 3430 Court House Drive in Ellicott City and virtually via WebEx, starting at 7:00 p.m., to discuss the following [agenda](#) items:

[2024 Development Monitoring Systems Report and Planning Board Letter of Consistency with the General Development Plan](#) – an annual

planning report is required as part of the County's Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO), as well as the State's Smart, Green and Growing Legislation. The report summarizes residential and nonresidential development and related activities in Howard County over the last calendar year.

To register to testify, visit the County's ["Planning Board" website](#). Registration must be completed prior to 7:00 p.m. the night (July 9, 2025) before the scheduled meeting to participate. If you do not wish to testify, but would simply like to watch the meeting, visit the [Howard County Council's "Watch Us" website](#).

A five-member board, the Planning Board makes recommendations to the Zoning Board or County Council on matters related to planning and zoning and renders a final decision on selected development proposals. To learn more about the Planning Board, including upcoming meeting dates and details about procedures for testifying at a meeting, visit the County's ["Planning Board" website](#).

## Police Department

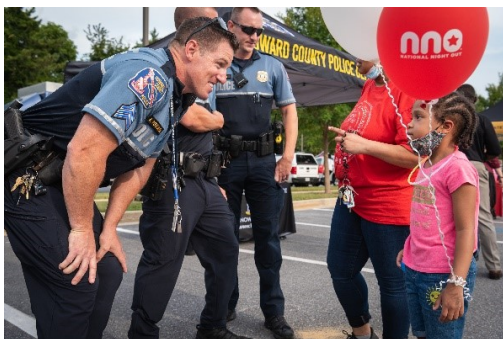
### *Needed: Cat Food, Litter, and Dog Food*

Your help is needed! Our Howard County Police Department (HCPD) Animal Control Division's Pet Food Bank is in critical need of cat food and litter and dog food, as its supply is running extremely low. If you are able and interested in helping the Division restock its Pet Food Bank, please considering donating through the [Division's Amazon wishlist online](#) or dropping off supplies at its Adoption Center at 8576 Davis Road in Columbia.



The County's Pet Food Bank allows the Division to assist county pet owners who may be on a fixed income, in between jobs or due to other financial strain, care and feed their pets instead of having to surrender or re-home their furry friend.

We thank you in advance for your generosity.



### *National Night Out 2025*

SAVE THE DATE and join HCPD on Tuesday, August 5th for this year's National Night Out (NNO). This annual community-building campaign aims to enhance the relationship between neighbors and law enforcement by promoting police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie in an effort to make our neighborhoods safer, more caring places to live.

If you are planning a neighborhood block party and would like HCPD or Department of Fire and Rescue Services resources or elected officials to visit, be sure to [register your party online on the County's "National Night Out" registration page](#) by no later than next Friday, July 18th. Parties registered by that date will receive priority for police attendance.

## Department of Public Works

### Bureau of Environmental Services

## *Mystic Court Pond Repair Project Community Outreach Meeting*

The County's Department of Public Works (DPW) Bureau of Environmental Services, in coordination with the Columbia Association, will hold a community outreach meeting next Tuesday, July 15th at 6:00 p.m. at Kahler Hall, to discuss a project to repair the storm drain outfall behind 5517 Mystic Court in Columbia. The proposed project includes the stabilization of approximately 125 feet of the storm drain outfall channel behind 5517 Mystic Court using wood and rock structures. Bio-engineered plantings will also be used to enhance the storm drain outfall area, reduce erosion, improve water quality, and protect the newly stabilized stream downstream of the storm drain outfall channel. The project is currently in the design phase, with construction expected to begin in the summer or fall of 2026.

To learn more, visit [www.howardcountymd.gov/News070225](http://www.howardcountymd.gov/News070225).

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### *Do You Live in a Condominium?*

DPW's Bureau of Environmental Services is currently researching how best to expand its "[Feed the Green Bin](#)" curbside food scrap collection program to condominium communities in the county. To help the Bureau gauge the level of program interest in these areas, the Bureau is seeking feedback from county residents currently residing in a condominium community through this quick [online survey](#). We thank you in advance for your participation.



### *Backyard Composting*

Did you know that almost 30 percent of what we send to the landfill could be composted. Whether in your own backyard or through the Bureau of Environmental Service's "[Feed the Green Bin](#)" curbside collection program, turning kitchen scraps and yard trim into useful compost positively impacts our soil and climate. If you are interested in learning how to compost in your backyard, our Bureau encourages you to check

out one of the Howard County Master Gardeners [backyard composting demonstration events this summer](#). Participants will learn how to recycle kitchen scraps and yard trimmings in their backyard, feed their garden organically, and improve their soil's health.

## Construction Report

Below are details regarding new, upcoming, completed and/or delayed Capital Projects and/or maintenance project(s) that have been announced.

### **Columbia**

- [Painted Rock Pond Repair](#) (Capital Project D-1177) – Project to repair and improve a stormwater management pond near 8304 Painted Rock Road. Flagging operations will be in place to assist construction vehicles entering



and exiting the project site during construction hours, Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Weather permitting, the project is expected to be completed by late February 2026.

- [Snowden River Parkway Southbound Bridge](#) (Capital Project B-3857) – Project to perform preventative bridge maintenance and improvements on Snowden River Parkway southbound over Robert Fulton Drive. Flagging operations will be in place to direct traffic as one lane of southbound traffic will be closed throughout construction as each phase of the project is completed. Two southbound travel lanes will however remain open. Weather permitting, the project is expected to be completed by February 2027.
- [Tamar Drive Bridge Repair](#) (Capital Project B-3857) – Project to perform preventative bridge maintenance on Tamar Drive over Elkhorn Branch trail between Phelps Luck Road and Sweet Wind Place. Signs will be posted to alert motorists and residents of the work as the existing four travel lanes within the project limits, will be reduced to two lanes for the duration of the project. Weather permitting, the project is expected to be completed by May 2026.

### **Ellicott City**

- [Furrow Avenue Sewer Extension](#) (Capital Project S-6699) – Project to install 1,651 feet of eight-inch sewer line along Furrow Avenue between Twiford Court and Elmonte Woods Way. Flagging operations will be in place to direct traffic through the work zone as only one lane of traffic will be open during construction hours, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Weather permitting, the project is expected to be completed in early November.

To learn about our Department of Public Works' (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](mailto: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](#).

### **Bureau of Utilities**

#### ***Voluntary Water Restriction Lifted***

Effective immediately, Baltimore City DPW has LIFTED its [voluntary water restriction for public water customers](#) in the surrounding area, including Howard County. Thanks to record-setting rainfall this past month, the water levels at Liberty, Loch Raven, and Prettyboy reservoirs have significantly recovered to near-normal seasonal conditions.

While conditions have improved, Baltimore City DPW is still emphasizing the importance of responsible water use year-round and offering up these everyday water conservation tips to help safeguard our region's long-term water supply and reduce your water bill at home.

- Delay lawn and garden watering when possible;
- Turn off the tap while brushing teeth or shaving;
- Fix leaks in faucets, toilets, hoses, and sprinklers;
- Run dishwashers and washing machines only with full loads;
- Sweep driveways and sidewalks instead of using a hose; and
- Water plants during early morning or evening to reduce evaporation.

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).

## Department of Recreation and Parks

### *Teen Summer Fun Program is Back*

Calling all Howard County tweens and teens, age 11 to 17. If you are looking for a fun way to spend your free time this summer, be sure to check out our Department of Recreation & Parks' Teen Kick Backs program at the County's Gary J. Arthur, North Laurel, and Roger Carter community centers and Harriet Tubman Cultural Center and Howard County Public School System's Thomas Viaduct Middle School and Wilde Lake Middle School, now through August. This FREE drop-in program features pizza and snacks, sports, video games, and lots of fun.



To learn more about this program, including this summer's kick back schedule, check out Recreation & Parks' ["Teen Kick Backs" website](#).



### *Get Wild for Water at Robinson*

Beat the summer heat by joining Recreation & Parks' [Robinson Nature Center](#) for its biggest summer event, "[Wild for Water](#)." Set to take place this Sunday, July 13th from 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., participants will enjoy water games and experiments, a river treasure hunt, the chance to meet live creatures that depend on rivers and

streams, and the opportunity to explore the wonders of snow, ice, and water in the "stages of water" area for little ones.

Participants should come dressed to get wet; closed-toe shoes are required to enter the water and don't forget to bring a change of clothes and shoes and a towel. All ages are welcome and the cost to participate is \$8 for members and \$10 for non-members; children zero to two are free.

To learn more about this event and/or to register to participate, visit [www.howardcountymd.gov/wild-water-day](http://www.howardcountymd.gov/wild-water-day).

### *Are You Still Looking for a Camp this Summer?*

If you are still looking for a camp to kid you 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 [registration website](#) or give its registration line a call at 410-313-PARK.

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### *New, Low Price for Ultimate Sports and Games Camp*

If you are looking for the ultimate camp experience that keeps your child going, even on days that are unusually hot, check out Recreation & Parks' Ultimate Sports & Games at Cedar Lane Park West Area. Participants enjoy this "games approach" camp that develops skills in basketball, bocce ball, court hockey, disc games, flag football, kickball, lacrosse, soccer, tennis, wiffle ball, and volleyball, with mini-tournaments, fitness activities, team-building exercises, and group games.

The cost to participate for campers age eight to 13 is \$249 per week, Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.; to register, visit the County's [Active Network registration website](#). The cost to participate for campers age five to seven is \$125 per week, Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to noon; to register, visit the County's [Active Network registration website](#).

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### *July is National Park and Recreation Month*

July is National Park and Recreation Month and all month long, Recreation & Parks has a ton of great activities and programs planned to help celebrate, including summer concerts, bocce ball, Play for All Fest, a performance by Shakespeare Beyond, and more. These free, family-friendly events highlight our wonderful team of dedicated staff and our pristine parks.

To find out more and/or for a full list of event, visit our ["July is Rec & Parks Month" website](#).

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### *Summer Concerts are Back!*

Recreation & Parks' free [summer concert series](#) is back and ready to rock your socks off Wednesday nights starting at 7:00 p.m. at the [Centennial Park South amphitheater](#) and at [West Friendship Park](#) on Thursday, July 31st. This year's summer concert performance schedule features:

- Wednesday, July 9th: Grayson Moon (Soul & Motown)
- Wednesday, July 16th: Sons of Pirates (Jimmy Buffett Tribute Band)
- Wednesday, July 23rd: I & I Riddim (Reggae)
- Thursday, July 31st: Southland (Country)
- Wednesday, August 6th: Bach to Rock (Rock School Showcase)



To learn more about this FREE concert series, open to all ages, check our Recreation & Parks' ["Summer Concerts" website](#).





### *Belmont Blockbusters*

This summer and fall, be sure to check out Recreation & Parks' [Belmont Blockbusters Series](#) movie nights! Held at dusk on select Thursdays now through October, I invite you to gather up your family and friends, grab a picnic dinner and blanket or lawn chair, 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. This year's schedule and feature movies are:

- July 17th, *Clifford The Big Red Dog*
- August 21st, *Ratatouille*
- September 18th, *Lilo & Stitch*
- October 30th, a to be determined Halloween-themed feature film

[Advanced registration](#) is encouraged as parking is limited and while the event is FREE, [donations](#) are welcome to help with future community programming. Snacks, water and lemonade will be for sale, with all proceeds going to the preservation of our beautiful Belmont.

To learn more about Recreation & Parks' Belmont Blockbusters Series, visit [www.howardcountymd.gov/belmont-blockbusters](http://www.howardcountymd.gov/belmont-blockbusters) today.

### *Play For All Fest*

Join Recreation & Parks on Sunday, July 27th from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. as it celebrates equity and inclusion of all at its annual "[Play For All Fest](#)." Set to take place near Laura's Place Playground at [Blandair Regional Park – North](#), this event promotes disability awareness by providing an opportunity for children, adults, their families, and the general community to come together for a day of fun activities for all ages and abilities. Featuring Story Yoga, Spirit Club Fitness and Zumba, a bounce house/obstacle course, outdoor and adventure archery, playground bingo, crafts, face painting, tasty treats, and so much more, I invite you to come celebrate and reaffirm our commitment to being an accepting and inclusive community for all.



To learn more about this FREE event, visit [www.howardcountymd.gov/play-all-fest](http://www.howardcountymd.gov/play-all-fest).

### *Public Garden Public Meeting*

I invite you to join Recreation & Parks and our Public Garden Focus Group for a public meeting on Tuesday, July 29th from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at our [Gary J. Arthur Community Center](#), to present concept plans for Howard County's first-ever Public Garden destination and to gather public feedback. The County's consult team, Micheal Graves and EDSA, Inc., will be on hand to present its plans.

Residents who are unable to attend the meeting may submit testimony online

anytime between 6:00 p.m., Tuesday, July 15th and 3:00 p.m., July 29th. Please keep in mind that all public testimony is considered public information and is subject to the [Maryland Public Information Act](#).

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 Susan Potts with Recreation & Parks at 410-313-4628 (voice/relay) between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, or email [spotts@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:spotts@howardcountymd.gov) to submit your request.

The County aims to create a premier public garden destination featuring beneficial flowering native and non-native plant species for visitors to develop a greater understanding of and appreciation for the value of plants to sustain human life and a healthy environment. A focus group consisting of experts and resident volunteers met multiple times in 2024 and presented recommendations towards the garden's preliminary concept plan that can be found on the ["Public Garden Focus Group" website](#). On this same site, visitors can also find additional information about the public garden project, including future meeting dates and meeting notes.

## Office of Transportation



### *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.

