



PLANNING BOARD

HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING
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Calvin Ball, County Executive

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Subject: Planning Board Recommendation for the Gateway Master Plan, an amendment to Howard County's General Plan, HoCo By Design

To: Liz Walsh, Council Chair
Opel Jones, Council Vice-Chair
Deb Jung, Council Member
Christiana Mercer Rigby, Council Member
David Yungmann, Council Member

From: Kevin McAliley, Chair, Howard County Planning Board

Initial
Km

Date: August 14, 2025

Background

HoCo By Design, the general plan for Howard County, envisions Gateway as a Regional Activity Center, which represents a major hub for employment, entertainment, and innovation in the County. HoCo By Design's implementing action EP-5.4 calls for DPZ to:

"Develop a master plan for Gateway that describes the area's desired future mix of uses, open space network, development phasing and intensity, building height range, and infrastructure approach. Build upon the general considerations included in the HoCo By Design Focus Areas technical appendix."

The Gateway Master Plan, a proposed General Plan Amendment, presents a comprehensive, actionable roadmap to guide the long-term transformation of Gateway into a thriving innovation district, a major hub for cybersecurity, defense, technology, artificial intelligence (AI), quantum, and other emerging industries that also offers residents a connected, vibrant, and thriving community in which to live, work, and play.

MEMBERS

Kevin McAliley, Chair
James Cecil, Vice-Chair
Lynn Moore

Barbara Mosier
Mason Godsey

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Lynda Eisenberg, AICP,
Director, Planning & Zoning

Process and Meeting Summary

Title 16, Subtitle 9, Section 16.900(j)(1)(iii) of the Howard County Code requires the Planning Board to prepare a recommendation and report to the County Council on proposed adoption of General Plan Amendments. The clause states that:

A bill proposing the adoption and amendment of the Comprehensive General Plan, regulations regarding the Planning and Zoning of the County, or the zoning map or zoning regulations shall not be added to the Council's legislative agenda until the County Council has received: a.) A final technical staff report and recommendation from the Department of Planning and Zoning; and b.) A recommendation and report from the Planning Board.

The Planning Board held a public meeting to consider the Gateway Master Plan on August 7, 2025. The Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) posted its Technical Staff Report on the Gateway Master Plan on the Planning Board webpage on July 24, 2025, two weeks prior to the Planning Board meeting.

At that meeting, DPZ staff presented an overview of the Gateway Master Plan and the process used to develop the plan, including technical analysis and public engagement activities. Throughout the presentation, the Board asked questions of DPZ staff and consultants and offered observations about the Plan.

The Planning Board members then received public testimony from 6 individuals and/or organizations. A recording of the proceeding is posted on the [Planning Board webpage](#).

During the meeting, the Planning Board complimented the thoroughness of the Plan. They expressed appreciation for the level of detail on topics such as green spaces, housing types, alternative zoning approaches, and potential student yields. They also recognized Gateway as a major opportunity for growth in the County as envisioned in HoCo By Design.

Board members discussed the need to manage future traffic, acquire sites for public facilities, and identify an economic development organization or champion to lead the implementation effort. Board members discussed how the plan is a long-term, 30-year vision, and that there will be opportunities in implementation for changes as well as additional input from the Planning Board and community members.

The Board discussed the inclusion of HoCo By Design affordable housing and accessibility targets in the Plan. They noted that community members suggested these targets be applied to recommendations for Gateway.

Planning Board Recommendation

Based on the information presented, public testimony provided, and the Board’s discussion, Mr. Cecil made a motion that the Board recommend the County Council approve the Gateway Master Plan as an amendment to the HoCo By Design general plan for Howard County, as presented at the August 7 Planning Board meeting, with suggestions to add the affordable housing definition suggested by the HoCo By Design-recommended Affordable Housing Working Group and align the MIHU requirement with the affordable housing target of 20% with 10% of that 20% required to be accessible. Ms. Moore seconded the motion, which passed 4-0.

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