

Message from Director Lynda Eisenberg

July 2025

Dear Community Member,
As we reach the halfway point of 2025, it's been an exciting and productive six months for the Department of Planning & Zoning (DPZ)!



Together, we've made meaningful progress: securing a \$250,000 restoration grant for the 1850s Enslavement Quarters at Blandair Park, launching the NewTown Zoning Task Force, and releasing the draft Gateway Master Plan.

We're also thrilled to have relaunched our popular **PlanHoward Academy** this spring after an 18-month hiatus. The course has been refreshed and aligned with our award-winning general plan, **HoCo By Design**—and we're excited about the renewed interest and energy it's generated.

In this issue, you'll see a little about zoning code enforcement do's and don'ts, our Design manual update status as well as an introduction to new team members. We also take a moment to remember a dedicated community advocate, Grace Kubofcik.

As always, thank you for staying connected. This newsletter includes updates, resources, and highlights of how DPZ works to make Howard County an even better place for all.

We hope you enjoy reading!



DPZ at Work



\$250,000 Grant Awarded for Restoration of 1850s Enslavement Quarter

Tucked away in the still undeveloped northwestern corner of Howard County's sprawling 300-acre Blandair Park, stands a quietly powerful relic of the past: a weathered duplex clad in wood and stone. At first glance, it may seem unassuming – but this structure is one of the few remaining, remarkably intact examples of an enslavement quarter from the 1850s.

Local historians have taken great interest in the building's rare features: a double-pen, saw plank exterior set atop a raised stone foundation. Inside, the home retains original whitewashed walls, a large hearth, and board partition walls on the second floor – features that speak to both the everyday lives and forced labor of those who lived there nearly two centuries ago.

Recognizing the significance of this often-overlooked piece of Howard County's history, The Department of Planning and Zoning and the Department of Recreation and Parks partnered to apply for a grant from the African American Heritage Preservation Program (AAHPP) and the Maryland Historical Trust. AAHPP is committed to preserving buildings, communities, and sites of historical and cultural importance to the African American experience in Maryland. Earlier this year, the County was awarded **the full \$250,000 grant** to restore the structure and create an immersive, educational exhibit.

Just a stone's throw from a stately brick manor house built in 1857, the quarters was once home to individuals enslaved by Commodore Isaac Mayo and his wife. Historical records suggest that as many as 20 enslaved people, ranging in age from infants to the elderly, may have lived in the duplex during the plantation's operation.

With funding now secured, DPZ and DRP plan to prioritize the funding for restoring the Blandair Enslavement Quarter and making it accessible to the

public. Once completed, visitors will be invited to walk the grounds and explore the historic structure, where exhibits will tell the layered stories of those who lived, labored, and endured there.

The project aims to provide a comprehensive look at the people connected to the site, including enslaved individuals, free Black residents, and white and black tenant laborers and how their lives shaped both Howard County and Maryland History.

“This project represents an important step toward telling the full story of our community’s past,” explains Beth Burgess, the head of DPZs Resource Conservation Division. “By restoring the Enslavement Quarter and partnering with Department of Recreation and Parks to create a space for education and reflection, we honor the lives and contributions of those too often left out of the narrative.”

The larger park, located just south of Route 175, was the last undeveloped agricultural parcel in Columbia. While much of it has been transformed into athletic fields and playgrounds, the northern acreage – home to this historic structure – holds a rich collection of 19th and 20th century outbuildings. The area will ultimately serve as the park’s historical core, designed to connect visitors to a vital chapter in Howard County’s history.

Although a formal restoration timeline has yet to be finalized, work is expected to begin later this year. The grant supports a two-year restoration and development effort. To view the interior of the Blandair Enslavement Quarter, view this recent [interview with WJZ-TV](#).

ZONING CODE ENFORCEMENT

Some common violations that we can assist with are:



Disabled & unregistered vehicles on property



Businesses operating out of homes without a permit



Excessive outdoor storage of trash, clutter, equipment, and more



Report violations via the Zoning Complaint Form found at:
<https://www.howardcountymd.gov/planning-zoning/zoning>

Zoning Enforcement Starts with You

Did you know that Howard County operates on a complaint-driven system when it comes to zoning enforcement? That means we rely on you, our residents, to be our eyes and ears in the community. Every month, our Code Enforcement Team handles around 185 cases, with about 70 active at any given time — all starting with a tip from someone like you.

So, what exactly does zoning enforcement involve? In simple terms, it's how we make sure properties are being used safely and appropriately. This includes investigating things like inoperable/unregistered vehicles on private property, businesses running out of homes without proper permits, and excessive debris or clutter in yards.

When a potential violation is reported, our Code Enforcement Team gets to work. They investigate, follow up, and — most importantly — collaborate with property owners to find solutions. The goal isn't to hand out penalties, but to provide education, encourage communication, and help people understand the zoning rules that keep our neighborhoods safe, clean, and livable.

If you notice a possible zoning issue in your neighborhood, we encourage you to submit a [zoning complaint form](#) available on our website. You can return it by email, mail, fax (yes, we still check those!), or in person at our George Howard

Building service counter. Complainants can be submitted anonymously, but if you choose to include your contact information, we'll keep you updated as the process moves forward.

Zoning enforcement is a team effort—and the community is the at the heart of it. Thank you for helping us keep our neighborhoods vibrant, compliant, and welcoming for everyone.



PlanHoward Academy Spring 2025 Graduating Class

Congratulations to our **Spring 2025 Academy graduating class!** Each of the participants took part in the award-winning planning course designed by the Department of Planning and Zoning that educates residents on how the planning and land development process works.

Our free, five-week course includes in-class instruction, hands-on learning exercises and take-home materials. PlanHoward Academy gives residents a closer look at the County's planning processes through interactive presentations, group discussions, role playing, and fun table exercises. Participants are able to learn how planning really works - and why their voices

matter. Even better, it's a chance to connect with neighbors and build relationships with County staff. From the beginning, PlanHoward Academy was designed to make planning more approachable and inclusive.

Whether you're a longtime resident or new to civic engagement, you will leave better informed, more connected, and ready to help shape what comes next for our community.

PlanHoward Academy will be back Fall 2025! Join our PlanHoward Academy [interest list](#) to stay informed and be notified when the application period is open.

HoCo By Design Implementation



New Town Task Force for Zoning Convenes

DPZ is excited to share that a new group is coming together to help shape the future of zoning in New Town! This cooperative effort will bring together community members, local experts, and industry professionals to take a fresh look at how New Town's zoning policies can support the long-term goals of the district.

This initiative is an important part of putting the County's newly adopted General Plan, HoCo By Design, into action. The General Plan lays out a bold vision for how we grow and adapt in response to changing economic, environmental, and social needs.

Currently, New Town's zoning includes 268 approved Final Development Plans (FDPs). These plans guide how land can be used (residential, commercial, industrial, open space, and more) while setting limits on overall density. The current system offered flexibility in the town's early development phases with the standards remaining relatively unchanged until 2009 and 2010 when the focus was breathing new life into the village centers and revitalizing Downtown Columbia.

The New Town Task Force will hold meetings, conduct stakeholder interviews, facilitate public engagement sessions, and provide feedback on key elements of the district's zoning. A final report with detailed recommendations is expected within the next 12 months.

A [complete list](#) of the 21 New Town Task Force members can be found in the Executive Order issued by Howard County Executive Calvin Ball.



DPZ Unveils Master Plan Draft

The [Master Plan Draft](#) for the proposed Gateway Innovation District is now available for public review and comment. Community members are encouraged to share feedback that will help shape the final version now through Tuesday, July 8th.

The Gateway Master Plan Draft builds on the vision established in the County's General Plan, HoCo By Design. The Gateway Master Plan offers a detailed blueprint for Gateway's transformation into a leading innovation district. Envisioned as a vibrant, mixed-use area that fosters research, entrepreneurship, and inclusive economic development, the district spans approximately 1,100 acres of strategically located business and industrial land.

The planning process has been a deeply collaborative effort shaped by an appointed Advisory Committee composed of local stakeholders and subject matter experts. This diverse group includes Gateway-area property and business owners, representatives from Columbia Association, and leaders in housing, sustainability, infrastructure, and economic development. Their expertise and perspectives have played a critical role in ensuring the draft plan reflects the core elements of a successful innovation district – including multi-modal transportation, affordable housing, resilient and sustainable infrastructure, and strategies for job creation and equitable economic growth.

To review the Gateway Master Plan Draft, supporting documents, and to submit your comments, please visit the [Gateway website](#).



APFO Finalizes Recommendations

The Adequate Public Facilities Act Review Committee presented their proposed recommendations for changes to Howard County's Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) at a public hearing on May 20th. After receiving public feedback, the group is currently refining their recommendations before presenting a final report to the County Executive and the County Council in August.

The Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) is a growth management tool that helps ensure new development doesn't outpace essential public infrastructure like roads and public schools. This framework ensures that growth happens where infrastructure already exists, or is planned, by requiring both residential and commercial development to meet specific tests as part of the subdivision or site plan approved process.

While the County's new General Plan, HoCo By Design, sets the vision for where and when growth should happen the projects to pass certain tests as a condition of subdivision or site development plan approval. The general plan guides where and when growth occurs while the adequate public facilities process and standards manage that growth.

First established in 1990, a Review Committee is established every five years with the current one convening in August 2024. The existing Committee was established following the 2023 adoption of the County's new General Plan, HoCo By Design, and was created to consider and provide recommendations for changes to Howard County's existing APFO. Consisting of fifteen members, appointees include two from each member of the County Council, one from Howard County Public School System, one from the Board of Education, and three individuals appointed by the County Executive.

Ultimately, the group is tasked with conducting at least two public hearings, and, within one year of its first meeting, submitting a report with recommendations on the Adequate Public Facilities Act to the County Executive and the County Council.

Howard County's APFO establishes standards and tests for housing allocations, schools, and public roads. The APFO Review Committee has been charged with determining if any changes need to be made to the standards and tests used to regulate public facilities. These tests are ultimately responsible for

determining the allocations allowed in a given year with appropriate phasing established. Throughout the process, the group has heard directly from various county Departments as well as other boards and commissions that could potentially impact the decisions being made.

Watch meetings, review materials, and learn more about APFO on our [website](#).



Route 1 & Route 40 Design Manual Updates

The Department of Planning and Zoning has begun the Route 1 and Route 40 Design Manual updates to better reflect the County's current vision and long-term goals. These revisions will align with the County's General Plan, HoCo By Design, and the Route 1 Street Plan, both adopted in 2023, and the County's Complete Streets policy enacted in 2019.

The manuals will incorporate the latest best practices in architecture, landscaping, signage, and streetscape, both locally and nationally. The goal is to shape streets that are more attractive, functional, and sustainable for residents and businesses.

Originally adopted in 2005, the Route 1 Manual provides design guidance for the Corridor's zoning districts. Since then, new policies have introduced a stronger focus on placemaking, sustainability, and design that reflects the Corridor's unique history and industrial legacy.

As Route 1 continues to evolve, there is growing potential for adaptive reuse, walkable streets, and vibrant mixed-use spaces. This Corridor Plan envisions preserving the area's manufacturing roots while welcoming new commercial, light industrial, and residential development. It also calls for distinctive architecture, recognizable gateways, and consistent branding to make the Corridor more recognizable and inviting. Safer streets for walking, biking, and transit and a future civic district for South Elkridge. are also a major priority.

The Route 40 Design Manual, first adopted in 2010, was created to support more consistent development, improve street connectivity and reflect the area's changing character. Route 40 is also known for its cultural vibrancy. In 2016, a 5-mile stretch with more than 1,600 Korean-owned businesses was officially designated as "Korean Way." The revised manual will feature design elements that highlight this identity and represent the County's growing diversity.

The updated Manuals will evaluate the existing zoning, land use patterns, and General Plan guidance in the corridors and present requirements and recommendations to establish the desired design character.

The project is expected to begin in June 2025 and will take approximately 18 months to complete before being presented to the County Executive and County Council for adoption. For more information on the projects, visit the [Route 1 Design Manual website](#) and the [Route 40 Design Manual website](#).

Openings on Boards & Commissions



The Historic Preservation Commission is looking for a few good members

If you have professional experience or training in fields such as **architecture**, historic preservation, urban design, history or related disciplines, and have a demonstrated interest in the preservation of historic areas of the County - please consider serving on the Historic Preservation Commission.

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) plays an important role in the preservation of Howard County's history. Committee members provide advice regarding historic sites and historic districts; ensure changes to the appearance of a historic district or site are in compliance with County code and architectural design guidelines; and provide advice regarding the design of development in relation to historical resources.

To be eligible for consideration, candidates must be a Howard County resident, meet the qualifications of the Commission, and be able to attend the Commission's meetings, which are generally held on the first Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. The Commission is seeking up to three members, one of

whom must live or own property in the Lawyers Hill Historic District. Architectural experience/knowledge preferred but not required.

Cemetery Preservation Advisory Board Seeks Committee Members

Help the Cemetery Preservation Advisory Board (CPAB) foster the preservation of Howard County's historic cemeteries and burial grounds. Spots on the CPAB are now available for professionals with a background in the **development-building industry** or have special interest or knowledge in fields such as history, architecture, preservation or genealogy.

The CPAB assists in maintaining and updating a cemetery inventory, may provide advice on development and subdivisions involving historic cemeteries, supports the County's cemetery restoration grant program, and helps make determinations regarding the discovery of previously unknown burials.

The Board is currently seeking three members. To be eligible for consideration, candidates must meet the professional qualifications of the Board and be able to attend the Board's meetings held the second Tuesday of every other month at 10:00 a.m. at the George Howard Building in Ellicott City.

To view the application process for applying to serve on the HPC and CPAB, please visit the County website for [Boards and Commissions](#). Under the "Serve on a Board or Commission" section, select "Application Process" and then "Apply to Serve" where a Login is required.

If you have any questions about the application process to become a Commission member, please email ApplyBC@howardcountymd.gov.

Building the Future



New Hires



**Maurice Blanding,
Regulation Inspector I**

Experience tops Maurice's resume with almost 15 years of service as an Inspector including 12 years serving Baltimore City and several with Baltimore County. Maurice enjoys the opportunity to explore different areas of Howard County and working with the community to address concerns.



**Everett James,
Planning Supervisor**

Everett relocated to Howard County from Daly City, California where he previously worked as a Code Enforcement Supervisor. The James family has settled in Jessup and are currently enjoying discovering all of the things to love about their new community.



**Bobby Jones,
Regulation Inspector I**

Bobby, a 9-year veteran of Howard County Government, comes to DPZ from Department of Public Works. A Howard County resident, Bobby enjoys learning about operations in government, working with the public, and acting as an all-around problem solver.



**Jim Witmer, Chief
Development Engineering Division**

DPZ is thrilled to welcome Jim Whitmer back to Howard County Government! Jim was with DPZ for over 14 years as an Engineering Specialist III and has returned as head of the division. What Jim loves most about DPZ is his ability to continue to grow as an engineer with diverse project types, industry professionals, and the various community groups. When he's not working, Jim can usually be spotted in the stands of Camden Yards, watching his kids' sports, or traveling with the family for quick weekend getaways.

Employee Spotlight



**Q&A with Sarah Latimer
Special Projects Coordinator**

What exactly does a Special Projects Coordinator do? I work in the Comprehensive and Community Planning Division (DCCP) within the Department of Planning and Zoning. We have two primary types of projects that fall into two different categories: master planning and special projects. All DCCP project managers are responsible for coordinating across a lot of different teams, divisions, and agencies.

What are a few of the special projects that you have managed? Currently I am working on the New Town Task Force which is evaluating present New Town zoning regulations — and Route 1 and Route 40 Design Manual updates which are recommendations for improvements to the design goals of the Corridors as we evaluate how the areas have changed over the past 15 years. Each of these projects are being implemented as part of the County's most recent General Plan, HoCo By Design, that was adopted in October 2023.

What is your professional background? I earned a degree in planning from the University of Maryland. They have a graduate assistant program which allows you to get hands-on experience with different organizations. One year I worked for the Center for Smart Growth doing scenario modeling with geographic information system (GIS). The next year I had the opportunity to work with Montgomery County Government when they implemented the Downtown Silver Spring Master Plan. Both were great opportunities to put everything I was learning into real world scenarios and see the impact of what I was creating. Upon graduating I was hired by Howard County Department of Planning & Zoning as a Planning Specialist II. I was promoted to Special Projects Coordinator in 2024.

What do you love most about your job? I love the variety—no two projects are alike. I also love doing technical work, like GIS, and being able to translate the complexity of that work to non-technical people. Some of the work we do is intense and complicated and when you can effectively communicate that to people and you see them begin to understand the information it's a very satisfying feeling.

What is the most fulfilling project that you have worked on at DCCP? That would be the CommunityViz (modeling software) work that I did for Howard County's most recent General Plan, HoCo By Design. It was a huge challenge tackling the modeling (including housing, schools, and infrastructure) for the area over the next 30 years, but it was also a lot of fun.

What would people be surprised to know about you? My undergrad degree is in international conflict analysis and resolution with a focus on refugee law. I studied abroad at Oxford and traveled to Turkey to work with Syrian refugees there. I also speak a little bit of Arabic.

What is your dream project? I have two, one traditional, and one more imaginative. **Let's go with imaginative first.** I would love to be an Olympic course designer for three-day eventing (one of the equestrian sports). **That's a thing?** Yeah. It's a highly specialized field so I don't know if I will ever get to do it, but I love horses, competition, and landscape plans, so that would allow many of the things I love to intersect. Definitely a dream project.

How about the traditional dream project? I would love to have a part in planning a community in line with Frank Lloyd Wright's Broadacre City concept.

Of the early 20th century 'utopian city' design concepts, there have been master planned communities aspiring toward Ebenezer Howard's Garden City (we even have one of our own in Columbia), and several aspiring toward Le Corbusier's 'Radiant City'. But, as someone who has always spent as much time as I possibly could on a farm, I love the idea of a city that grants everyone access to produce and sustain themselves on their own land.

In Memoriam

Grace Kubofcik

We fondly remember Grace Kubofcik, a tireless advocate for Howard County since the 1970s. From housing and education to environmental justice, her work uplifted lives and strengthened our community.

A driving force behind countless local initiatives, Grace inspired collaboration and lasting change. Her legacy of dedication, leadership, and service will not be forgotten. Grace's absence will be deeply felt throughout the community.



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