



# HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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The Honorable Dr. Opel Jones  
Chairperson, Howard County Council  
3430 Courthouse Drive  
Ellicott City, MD 21043

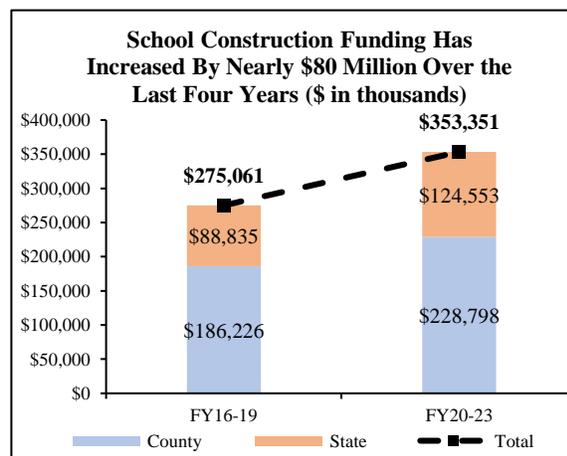
Dear Chairperson Jones,

We are pleased to present our proposed Fiscal Year 2023 Capital Improvement Program for Howard County to the Howard County Council. This thoughtful and strategic plan, totaling \$377.7 million, provides resources needed for critical projects that will improve the quality of life for Howard County residents in areas such as education, public safety, flood control and stormwater management, technology, roads and water and sewer infrastructure and many other areas.

This budget is the product of an intentional and focused effort to create a sustainable capital plan which supports and enhances the county’s critical infrastructure despite challenges from limited debt capacity and economic uncertainty. Our plan calls for these projects to be funded through a combination of \$75.5 million in General Obligation bonds – an amount which remains near a 10-year low – along with \$45 million in one-time Pay As You Go funding, state funding commitments and other dedicated revenue sources, as part of our ongoing efforts to reign in County debt levels as recommended by the Spending Affordability Advisory Committee.

### Important Highlights of the FY23 Capital Improvement Plan include:

Highest Level of Public School Capital Funding in 20 years: The FY23 capital program contains \$105.9 million in combined county and state funding for school construction projects, the highest amount in the last 20 years. This budget fully funds the Howard County Board of Education’s capital request. Over the past four years, total county funding commitments for K-12 education projects have increased by \$43 million, and funding from all sources has grown by over \$78 million.



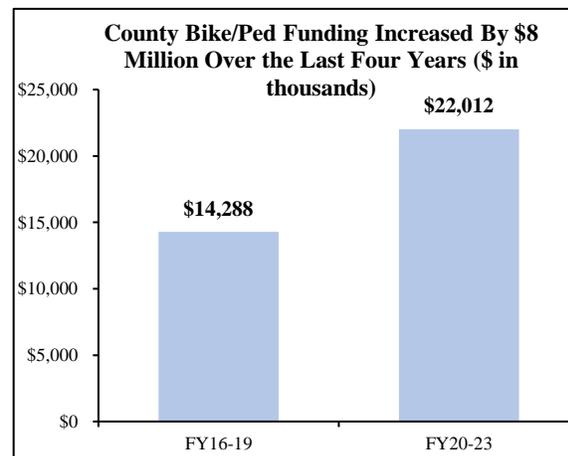
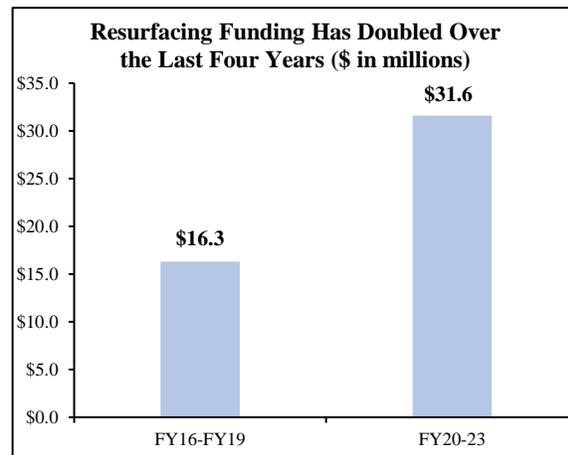
Major projects to be funded in the spending plan include a New High School #13 and the Hammond High School Renovation/Addition, along with systemic renovations such as the Manor Woods Elementary School HVAC and Wastewater Treatment Plant, the completion of the Guilford Elementary School Exterior Windows and Doors, the West Friendship Elementary School Well and the completion of the Jeffers Hill Boiler Replacement projects. This budget also fulfills requested funding for deferred maintenance, indoor environmental quality, school security and special education programming needs.

Supporting higher education and a world-class library system: In addition to public schools, this spending plan supports the educational needs of Howard County by investing in our renowned community college and library system. The plan contains \$14.8 million as a local match for the Howard Community College Mathematics and Athletic Complex, which is being supported with state funding and represents a much-needed investment on this growing campus.

The plan also includes \$1.7 million to begin design of a new library branch in Downtown Columbia and anticipates that construction of a new state-of-the-art Central Library will begin in FY24, with \$82.8 million earmarked for this groundbreaking project.

Major investments in roads and pedestrian and cycling infrastructure: The FY23 capital program contains \$12.5 million in road resurfacing – the highest in last eight years - to address an ongoing backlog and to avoid more costly repairs and reconstruction in the future. Additionally, this plan proposes record spending of \$8.2 million in County funding to support pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in Howard County, to implement the Howard County Pedestrian Master Plan, Bicycle Master Plan and Complete Streets Policy, as well as maintain existing sidewalks and curb ramps.

Stormwater management and flood protection: Our capital budget proposal continues to advance the Ellicott City Safe and Sound plan, with a \$36.4 million investment that combines \$12.5 million in state assistance with \$23.9 million in county funding. Significant flood mitigation efforts in Ellicott City and Valley Mede include construction of the Maryland



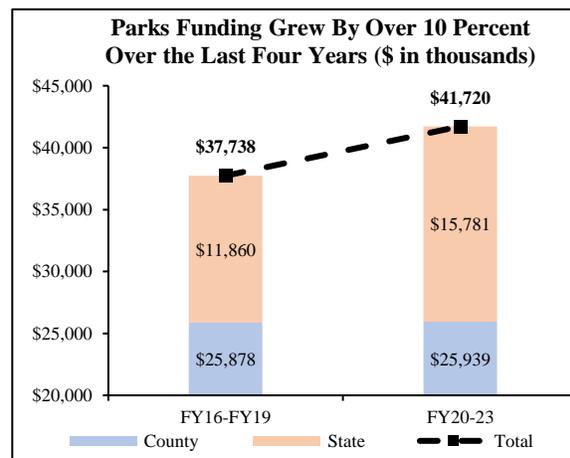
Avenue Culvert Expansion, lower Main Street building work, the H4 pond, and final design and construction of the Extended North Tunnel.

Public Safety: To meet the needs of our criminal justice system, the FY23 capital program contains \$6.0 million in systemic renovation funding for police and fire facilities and \$3.8 million for renovation of the Detention Center, including design of its new mental health unit. Work continues, in collaboration with the County Council, on locating and building needed new fire stations.

Community Resources: This spending plan advances the construction of an expanded East Columbia 50+ Center, allowing this much-anticipated project to be completed in FY23, with the design in progress for a new Multi-Service Center in the former 50+ center. With this proposed budget, more than \$20 million in total funding has been dedicated to support this critical project that supports our aging community over the last four years, with over \$18.5 million coming from County funding sources.

The proposal also anticipates the completion of the Harriet Tubman Remediation and Restoration project including furniture, fixtures and equipment with \$375,000 allocated in County funding. Nearly \$7.5 million in total funding has been provided to support this project over the last four years, with \$6.5 million coming from County funding sources.

Recreation and Parks: Our proposed budget allocates \$19 million to support park improvement projects and renovations, marking the largest parks investment in eight years. Notable improvements supported in this year's proposed budget include funding for the potential acquisition of the Camp Ilchester property, expanded recreation, pathways and parking at Blandair Park and improvements to the Schooley Mill Park equestrian ring.



### Financing the Plan: Maintaining Fiscal Discipline and Utilizing Responsible Alternative Means

This proposed budget supports strategic priorities while demonstrating sound fiscal discipline, which proved essential to maintaining our AAA credit ratings and securing the long-term sustainability of our infrastructure plan.

**The proposed budgets include total authorized GO bonds of \$75.5 million**, keeping GO bond authorization at historically low levels and slightly above the Spending Affordability Advisory Committee's recommendation of \$65 million in FY23, using \$45 million in one-time PAYGO funding to strike the balance between managing down the County's debt obligations and investing in critical infrastructure projects. This fiscally prudent approach has been adopted to slow down the growth of our long-term liability in

acknowledgement of our debt affordability challenges, while continuing to support our school construction and infrastructure needs at record funding levels.

**We continuously explore alternative funding** to address infrastructure needs. The proposed budget uses \$45 million Pay As You Go (PAYGO) funds, which is limited to one-time expenditures per the County Charter, as a cost-saving alternative to debt financing to support critical needs such as school systemic renovation, road resurfacing, and Ellicott City Safe and Sound projects. In addition, various infrastructure projects receive enhanced investment from dedicated resources such as Transfer Taxes, which benefited from a health real estate market and a rate increase approved by the County Council two years ago. Moreover, we have been working diligently with external partners and expects significant intergovernmental funding in FY23, including \$51.6 million state aid for school projects, \$12.5 million for Ellicott City flood mitigation, and significant funding for parks, infrastructure projects and local bond initiatives.

I would like to acknowledge our state and federal partners, along with the many residents, community leaders, and organizations who provided their input during our listening sessions and public hearings. Their collective efforts helped inform the development of this important capital budget plan.

The remainder of this transmittal letter provides additional detail in major areas of this Capital Improvement Plan:

### **Education**

The FY23 proposed Howard County Public School System capital budget totals \$105.9 million, including County funding of \$54.3 million and State aid of \$51.6 million. My proposed budget fully funds the Board of Education's CIP request. If approved, funding for school construction in the FY23 capital budget will be at its highest level in at least two decades.

This significant investment will advance all priority projects of the Board of Education, including the New High School #13 to address school overcrowding and Hammond High School Renovation/Addition to increase capacity. Significant systemic renovations will include the Manor Woods Elementary School HVAC and Wastewater Treatment Plant; the completion of the Guilford Elementary School Exterior Windows and Doors; the West Friendship Elementary School Well and the completion of the Jeffers Hill Boiler Replacement projects. This budget also fulfills requested funding for deferred maintenance, indoor environmental quality, school security and special education programming needs. This plan represents my commitment to maximize support to our school system while maintaining a sustainable plan. I am also thankful to our State partners for their support.

Over the last four years, total funding for school construction has increased by more than \$78 million, with County funding growing by nearly \$43 million. The increased funding has supported needed systemic renovation across the school system and allowed the top three priority HCPSS projects (High School #13, Hammond High School, and Talbott Springs Elementary School) to advance into construction, which are

expected to add 2,400 seats of new capacity by the end of 2023. Talbott Springs Elementary School is expected to be open for the 22-23 school year.

The proposed budget provides continued support to Howard Community College for the construction of a new mathematics and athletics complex (\$14.8 million) with leveraged state aid and funding for systemic renovations (\$1.0 million).

Funding the Howard County Library System is also critical to achieving our goals of providing a world class and holistic education to residents of all ages and abilities. The proposed budget includes \$1.7 million for the planning of a new library branch in Downtown Columbia. The multi-year plan was also updated to reflect a total of \$82.8 million for a state of art New Central Library with construction expected to start in FY24.

### **Ellicott City Safe and Sound & Stormwater and Watershed Management**

We continue to work diligently to mitigate flooding in the Tiber-Hudson Watershed and protect Historic Ellicott City from future storms. This effort includes the continued design and construction of large flood mitigation facilities identified in the Ellicott City Safe and Sound Plan, with construction underway on two significant flood mitigation facilities, the H-7 and Quaker Mill pond.

This year's proposed budget of \$36.4 million in Ellicott City Safe and Sound projects includes funding from State and local sources. This funding will support the extended North Tunnel and Maryland Avenue Culvert construction, completing design of the flood mitigation facility on the New Cut Branch (NC-3), and designing the flood mitigation facility on the Tiber Branch (T-1) The proposed budget also includes funds for localized drainage improvements along Main Street in the West End.

Our emphasis on stormwater and flood mitigation infrastructure goes beyond Ellicott City with an eye toward County-wide resiliency. This year's proposed budget dedicates \$2.4 million for the design and construction of flood mitigation and stormwater improvement efforts in the Valley Mede and Chatham sub-watersheds, and \$800,000 for vulnerable watershed restoration and resiliency throughout the County, targeting various neighborhoods that are experiencing localized drainage issues.

We also continue to implement projects to improve the County's water resources and water quality. Use of the Watershed Protection and Restoration fee allows us to undertake stormwater treatment projects that prevent polluted run-off from reaching the Chesapeake Bay. To date, we have treated over 3,100 acres of impervious surfaces, exceeding the State's target, by installing best management practices that limit the amount of nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment from entering our waterways.

### **Infrastructure Maintenance**

The proposed budget includes \$12.5 million in one-time PAYGO funding to address critical road resurfacing needs, \$2.5 million more than last year. Preliminary analysis indicates that the County needs to spend between \$12.5 million and \$14.5 million per year in road resurfacing for routine maintenance of the 1,080 miles of County roads to offset new deterioration and avoid adding to the existing backlog.

Our focus in FY23 includes maintaining critical infrastructure, such as repairing bridges, emergency structures, potholes, sidewalks, storm drains, and culverts, as well as improving traffic signals and intersections. We will also focus on maintaining and enhancing priority water and sewer projects. As the Spending Affordability Advisory Committee report pointed out, deteriorating roadway infrastructure will lead to increased future expenses of County funds, due to the higher costs associated with structural repair and replacement. A similar dynamic exists for other maintenance needs, including storm drainage and systemic renovation of buildings and facilities.

The proposed budget includes \$5.9 million in County systemic facilities improvements, which will allow for a partial renovation of the Second Floor of Ascend One to house Maryland Cooperative Extension which will be vacating lease space and a renovation for Human Resources and Risk Management. The renovations will include ADA upgrades to restrooms, renovated lobby and new training rooms. Other initiatives include renovations to Centennial Park restrooms (Phase II) and ADA restroom upgrades with new adult changing stations. The funds also address deferred maintenance projects around the county identified through a third-party inspection program.

### **Transportation**

This budget proposal includes a record \$8.2 million in County funding to support pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in Howard County. Of that, \$5 million will provide new infrastructure to continue implementation of the Howard County Pedestrian Master Plan, Bicycle Master Plan and Complete Streets Policy; and \$3.2 million will be used to repair and maintain existing sidewalks and curb ramps. Both the new infrastructure and maintenance of existing facilities provide significant safety, economic, environmental and health benefits for our community.

Completion of the Dayton Fuel Island replacement is expected to be completed in FY23. The removal of the existing underground fuel tanks at the Banneker Fire Station is on hold until the future of the replacement Fire Station #7 project is determined. A new parking lot for Fleet vehicles located on the property adjoining Ridge Road is under construction.

A revised master plan for the Mayfield Shop has been developed and a temporary trailer with locker rooms/ lounge space was provided for the Highways workers. In FY23, the first phases of the master plan will be moving forward including extending the water and sewer infrastructure, placement of new modular buildings for Highways staff (office, bunk space and locker rooms) and a new consolidated salt barn.

### **Community Services**

The population of older adult residents continues to grow rapidly, approaching one-third of the county's population. To meet the growing needs of our aging community, Howard County has committed to strengthening services and facilities to support the needs of older adults and keep the county age friendly.

The new 29,600 square foot East Columbia 50+ Center is now under construction, with an expected completion in late summer 2023. This new LEED Gold facility will greatly expand the programs and services for the East Columbia community with large community meeting space to support meal programs, events and community meetings, as well as state-of-the-art technology for distance learning, expanded programs in art, fitness rooms and lounge space. The existing center will be repurposed. The FY23 budget request reflects support for the renovations of the existing East Columbia 50+ Center, Bain 50+ Center and the Leola Dorsey Multi-Service Center.

The creation of the Harriet Tubman Cultural Center in the old Harriet Tubman School is nearing the final stages of construction. Due to unforeseen existing conditions, program changes, and delays related to the supply chain, this project has been delayed and is expected to be completed this summer.

### **Public Safety**

Our capital budget continues to prioritize public safety needs. The Route One (Waterloo) Fire Station is under construction and expected to open in the early fall of 2022. For the FY23 budget, the Replacement Fire Station #7 for Banneker was created as a separate project. By separating the Fire Station from the Housing project, the County will be able to own the property (rather than lease from Housing) and save financing costs.

The FY23 budget includes \$2.1 million for systemic improvements to enhance the health and safety of existing fire stations, with projects including a new exhaust vent for the gear extractors, bi-fold bay doors to improve fire response, updated shower areas and engine bay floors.

In FY23, \$3.9 million is proposed for public safety storage facilities. Prior appropriation will allow relocating police specialty vehicle storage into leased space. New funding from designated revenues will be used to purchase the State Armory in Ellicott City. In The goal is to obtain this site and relocate Bureau of Logistics Storage from the James N. Robey Public Safety Training Facility. Dedicating space for the Bureau of Logistics for storage of DFRS apparatus and supplies will help the Department maintain the equipment and supplies needed for deployment to serve the citizens of the County. In addition, moving the Logistics Storage will free up space at the PSTC to expand training and occupational safety and health services.

In FY23, additional funding is requested to upgrade the Southern District police station. Funding is also included to support close-out activities of safety improvements at the firing range, including landscaping establishment.

The FY23 proposed budget also includes \$3.8 million for necessary renovations to the Detention Center, including window replacements, new exterior wall refacing, the design of a new mental health unit and a fingerprint office renovation. This budget also includes deferred maintenance and miscellaneous urgent repairs.

### **Water and Sewer Projects**

The availability and viability of a community's water and sewer system is vital for health, safety and growth. The Howard County Department of Public Works maintains over 1,100 miles of water, over 10,000 fire hydrants, over 25,000 water valves in sizes 6 through 48-inch. The sewer collection system consists of over 1,100 miles of piping ranging in size from 6 through 48-inch diameter. The County's continually growing distribution system is supported by 15 water pumping stations, 10 elevated water tanks, 34 wastewater pumping station and a water reclamation plant.

The proposed FY23 budget includes \$17.2 million for water asset management; \$7.4 million in sewer asset management; and \$10.8 million to support maintenance, operation and upgrades at the Little Patuxent Water Reclamation Plant. Key FY23 projects efforts include the new Longfellow Area Water Main Improvements project (\$8 million); funding within the water asset management program to support the programmed replacement of 2,400 aged fire hydrants throughout the County (\$6.5 million); and funding within the sewer asset management program to address water and sewer pipelines that have been exposed due to stream erosion (\$3 million).

### **Technology Infrastructure and Enhancement**

The proposed budget also provides \$3.4 million to support the upgrading and modernization of the technology infrastructure to support the ongoing needs of County employees and residents. Technology requirements continue to evolve post-pandemic with a focus on security and stability of the IT systems. The radio enhancements and public safety system projects will provide needs support to the new Body Worn Camera program and communications support to the public safety agencies; and the new Human Resource Information System (HRIS) will bring modern tools and processes to our employee support functions.

### **Business and Economic Development**

We place a strong emphasis on supporting businesses, expanding our culture of innovation and cultivating entrepreneurs. This effort will strengthen our local economy and increase the commercial tax base, improving the quality of life for every resident.

The Maryland Innovation Center (MIC) is home to the Howard County Economic Development Authority and Howard Community College's Training and Development Solutions. The Innovation Center provides incubator space for start-ups emerging businesses and is a regional hub for business events. Prior County appropriation, leveraged with State funding and private investment, will allow the final phase of renovations (including the 4<sup>th</sup> floor) and equipment purchases to be finished in FY23.

Because of the successful opening of the Center in 2019, there is an increased demand for small business services and connection to the entrepreneurial ecosystem thus creating a demand for the 4<sup>th</sup> floor space. The upgrades will include new lighting and carpeting, technology, improved HVAC with the theme of the Innovation Center including gathering space for the community.

### **Recreation and Parks**

With \$19 million in proposed total FY23 funding, we continue to invest in park improvement projects and renovations to existing facilities with the largest single year

investment in our parks in eight years... The investment includes \$14 million in Transfer Tax revenue, and \$5 million in anticipated state grants.

The proposed FY23 budget will support the construction of additional parking, pathways, a skatepark, basketball courts, and pickleball courts at Blandair Regional Park Phase 6.

Notable park improvements will include improvements to the Schooley Mill Park equestrian ring, the scheduled replacement of three synthetic turf fields, and multiple playground renovations throughout the County. Additional Transfer Tax funding will allow the completion of the Troy Regional Park Field #1 grandstand project and the proposed community center building has been noted in the outyears. The proposed budget also includes \$6 million in Transfer Tax to fund the acquisition of the Camp Ilchester property. Funding also provides needed local match for state bond bill and Program Open Space grants or for essential maintenance of park and pedestrian amenities that have surpassed their functional and safe lifespans.

In FY23, we anticipate approximately \$1.7 million in Maryland Program Open Space funding eligible for park development projects. It will support a variety of systemic improvements across the County as well as a feasibility study and master plan for the new Shipley Park project in Marriottsville. Additionally, there will be another \$1.7 million in Program Open Space funding available to increase our ability to pursue parkland acquisition opportunities as they arise.

### **Long-Term Planning**

We have made continued progress in bringing our long-term capital budget plan more in line with financial reality. The proposed 6-year CIP features GO bonds that average approximately \$83 million per year, lower than historical levels and close to projected affordability. This shift represents another important milestone in managing the County's long-term liability as well as delivering honest, realistic and sustainable long-term infrastructure plans for the public.

The proposed budget represents a pragmatic approach to addressing our County's capital needs while ensuring Howard County remains the best place to live, learn, work, play and grow. If you have questions during your review, please do not hesitate to contact me, or my Budget Administrator Dr. Holly Sun, for assistance.

Sincerely,



Calvin Ball,  
Howard County Executive