



CB9-2022: Requiring Developers to meet with the School System on School Capacity Solutions

01/18/2022

The Howard County Citizens Association is supportive of this legislation and would like to thank Councilmember Deb Jung for introducing it.

The Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance is a tool to mitigate the impact of residential development on public facilities. A well maintained public facility preserves quality of life. Howard County's major economic engine is its school system, which unfortunately has been adversely impacted by unmitigated increase in residential development and terrible zoning and land-use decisions.

These adverse decisions lead to higher class-sizes, increase in teacher-to-student ratio, and general pressure on county resources. The children disproportionately impacted by reduction in level of service of schools are those from low-income families and the school's special education program. Which is why we continue to be puzzled by the APFO carveout that allows the county to ignore school capacity when approving homes that benefit children from low-income families.

Unmitigated increase in residential development leads to inequitable conditions for those disproportionately impacted. This legislation will add a safeguard to APFO by requiring coordination with the school system to ensure that affordable housing projects are not plopped in already segregated neighborhoods, thereby exacerbating the inequitable conditions.

The HCCA continues to advocate for an economically integrated Howard County and zoning and land-use policies that do not concentrate poverty. We urge the county council to work towards a vision of an integrated community by eliminating favorable exemptions, fees-in-lieu, and minimal obligations.

Hiruy Hadgu

HCCA