



HCCA

Howard County Citizens Association

Since 1961... The Voice of the People of Howard County

Date: 20 September 2023

Good evening.

My name is Stu Kohn testifying on behalf of the Howard County Citizens Association, HCCA.

The future is now and depends on what you do today for tomorrow especially if you care about the quality of life for your constituents. The future as proposed in HoCo by Design will be meaningless unless you adopt this very strongly suggested HCCA amendment to ensure the focus is on accountability throughout the document. This amendment should be your number one priority for approval. It reads as follows:

All Implementation Action statements for each Chapter of HoCo by Design shall be evaluated and include a written report card by the various lead agencies for action to require a review with the County Council and conduct a Public Hearing on a periodic basis where questions can be asked. This is to ensure all Implementation Action statements are indeed meaningful and not just rhetoric to ensure the proposed goals are being met or completed. The Implementation Matix is impressive, but it won't mean anything unless there are checks and balances. As stated at your Work Session there are 24 Agencies responsible for execution, 78 Policies, 323 Actions of which 133 are Ongoing, 137 Mid-term, and 53 Long-term therefore it is essential we have the utmost accountability possible.

The timeframe for the Implementation Matrix needs to be revised whereby Mid-term should be 4 years, Long-term 5 to 7 years. All Ongoing activities should be reviewed preferably on a yearly basis, but at least every 2 years. We need to periodically hear the status of all Implementation statements. Without the adoption of this Amendment the 372 pages of this document becomes a "so what". We are depending on you to do what is right!

Another suggested amendment would be to Include an Implementation Action whereby the Johns Hopkins Howard County Medical Center is required to conduct a Public Forum on a yearly basis to discuss the current status of patient care at the facility. Currently the hospital cannot handle the existing patient traffic. We hear the rationale that the Hospital cannot be included because it is a "Private Institution." This is not true as the County and State have been contributing to funding the Hospital. Ideally as a quality of life issue the Hospital should be a part of APFO which we have been advocating for years.

A third suggestion is to consider including an Implementation Action item that states any

new development shall have major roads either already constructed or the necessary funding approved whether it be the State and/or County for any new development..

We are extremely disappointed your Amendments have not been posted in time for this Hearing so we could possibly comment This is wrong! There should have been a scheduled Public Hearing. On the DPZ's website titled, "Welcome to HoCo by Design" is wording stating, "County officials want to hear from every voice as we create one vision for the County's future." Apparently, this statement is not true being we don't have a voice when it comes to Amendments. It looks as though you are placating your constituents.

By the way it's been over two months since we asked via our testimony that you respond to questions, but unfortunately there has been silence. The questions were what is the present cost incurred, how does this plan differ and what are the major benefits compared to the last three General Plans? The courtesy of a response from you would be appreciated. Anyone wishing to respond now?

We hope you will take the necessary action as our future is in your hands to promote the quality of life, we are all depending on. HoCo by Design needs to be a document where words are meaningful and accountable.

Stu Kohn
HCCA President