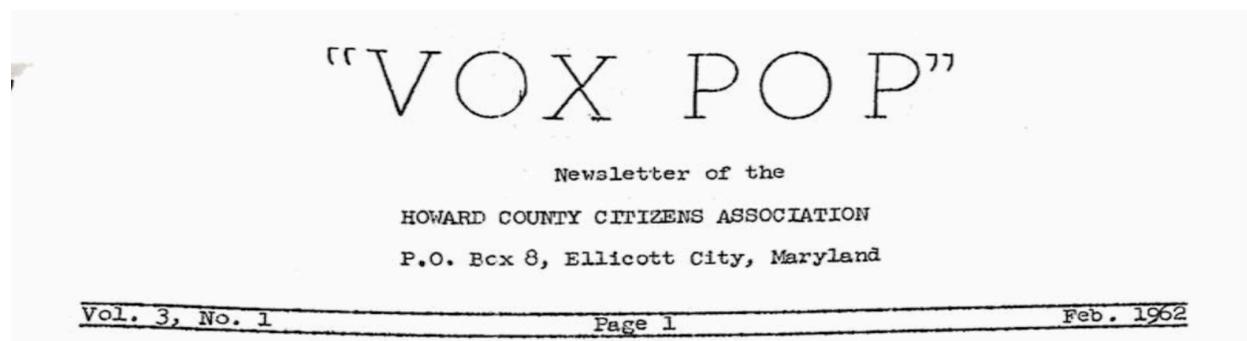


June 2025

*A blast from the past, we're reviving.....*

# The Vox Pop

## Newsletter of the HCCA



Vox Pop. popular opinion as represented by informal comments from members of the public

In this issue:

Legislative Scorecard

Introduction to Adequate Public Facilities Ordinances (APFO)

HCPSS adopts objective criteria for school improvements

Nonprofit highlight: S.T.A.N.D

BWI Roundtable Updates

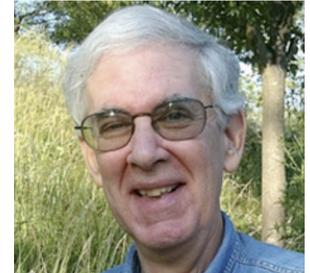
Electric vehicles in HoCo

Updates to the Stop Grace Project

And more....

Greetings,

The Howard County Citizens Association, HCCA established in 1961 wishes to **THANK ALL** who have supported us during the last 65 years. Without you our organization would not exist! It is a pleasure to try and serve the Howard County Community to focus on striving to improve what affects us all. We invite you to go to our website at <https://howardcountyhcca.org/> to view our vision, goals, accomplishments and consider becoming a paid member.



The periodic publication of the HCCA newsletter will provide our viewers with information as to our ongoing and future activities. Winston Churchill said it best, "Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts." HCCA will continue to work with community members and government officials to try and ensure we are the best of all counties.

In this newsletter you will be informed of the latest activities our Board Members are currently involved in and our accomplishments. In the next couple of months we will be involved with reviewing and testifying on the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) on legislative matters, against a Go-Kart facility in Highland on residential property, rules and procedures of the Board of Appeals, and meeting with the Columbia Association CEO/ President, etc.

We hope to see many of you at our Annual Meeting on Tuesday, 17 June at the Hawthorn Center in Columbia. More details will follow on our HCCA Website, Listserve and Facebook pages.

Stu Kohn  
HCCA President

## Join The Conversation

Stay abreast of the issues happening in Howard County & engage in discussion with other concerned residents by joining the HCCA Google Group. Participation in the group allows you to monitor issues of concern to other Howard County citizens and stay informed about important Howard County issues and events.

Signup is free: <https://howardcountyhcca.org/get-involved/join-the-hcca-e-mail-listserve/>

Looking to testify to the Council Council? Go to: <https://cc.howardcountymd.gov/>. Testimony can be virtual or in person

# Legislative Scorecard

Bill	HCCA Nickname	HCCA Position	Passed/Failed	Vote
<b>CB6-8</b> Inspector General Establishment	The “Good governance” bill	Favorable with amendments	Passed	Walsh: Y Jung: Y Jones: Y Rigby: Y Yungmann: Y
<b>CB11</b> Non-confirming Uses - Enlargement (WR Grace Property to curtail Plastic Burning)	The “Don’t burn plastic near peoples’ homes” bill	Favorable	Failed	Walsh: Y Jung: Y Jones: N Rigby: N Yungmann: N
<b>CB18</b> Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Residential Units Exemptions	The “Horse trading school infrastructure exemptions for some affordable housing” bill	Unfavorable	Passed with amendments	Walsh: N Jung: N Jones: Y Rigby: Y Yungmann: Y
<b>CB20</b> Excess Surplus Revenue - Modifications	The schools bill to finally repurpose surplus	Favorable	Passed	Walsh: Y Jung: Y Jones: Y Rigby: Y Yungmann: Y
<b>CB27</b> Open Meetings - Waiver and Variance Requests	The “Eyes Wide Shut” on open meetings bill	Favorable	Failed	Walsh: Y Jung: Y Jones: N Rigby: N Yungmann: N
<b>CB28</b> Fiscal Analysis Council Legislation	The “Loss of independent fiscal analysis” bill	Unfavorable	Passed	Walsh: Y Jung: N Jones: Y Rigby: Y Yungmann: Y
<b>CB29</b> Subdivision and Land Development Regulations-Waivers/Repeal	Response to bill: “Watershed? What me worry” -Alfred E. Neuman	Favorable	Failed	Walsh: Y Jung: N Jones: N Rigby: N Yungmann: N
<b>CB30</b> Membership - Human Rights Commission	The “On the job training, no qualifications necessary” bill	Favorable with amendments	Passed	Walsh: Y Jung: Y Jones: Y Rigby: Y Yungmann: Y

## Important Dates:

June 17th: HCCA Annual Meeting 6PM  
Hawthorne Center “APFO/Growth  
Management”

# How can Howard County balance growth with infrastructure?

By Lisa Markovitz,  
APFO Review committee member

## *APFO – Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance*

### *What is it? Why should I care about it?*

APFO is a local Howard County set of regulations that control the timing of new residential development. A big part of APFO is the temporary holding off of projects proposed near overcapacity schools. Right now, an APFO Review Committee established by the County has suggested changes that could have a major effect on the HCPSS. If the newly proposed changes are enacted, it will likely increase the frequency and number of changed boundary areas (redistricting).

### *What are current APFO regulations?*

Each year a capacity chart of how many students will fit in the schools is created by HCPSS. Enrollment is projected and schools are noted as being under or over capacity. If schools fall over the following percentages of overcapacity, the projects proposed in that school’s districted area have to wait up to 4 years before proceeding in the permitting process: Elementary Schools 105%, Middle Schools 110% and High Schools 115%.

A current recommendation of the 2025 APFO Review Committee is to eliminate the APFO School Capacity test and instead implement a tiered system of additional fees that have higher extra charges for more

crowded areas. This will create faster residential development and increase funds available for the HCPSS capital budget. No more pausing of projects, regardless of how crowded a school area is. Many are concerned that the extra fees are not enough to hasten provision of more school capacity. Some prefer a hybrid system, to raise fees, but not completely eliminate the wait.

### *What do the APFO Committee recommendations mean? How do I give input?*

The Committee will finish up its work and make several recommendations to the County Council by mid August. The County Council and County Executive will review the recommendations and decide if a Bill will be introduced to amend APFO. If/when that occurs, public hearings for the new Bill will take place under their normal schedule.

### *What else does APFO do?*

There are “allocations” that allow a certain number of units of various types to be built across the County per year. A number of units have to be available for a project to proceed. These amounts are high enough that projects are not held up by this regulation. The School capacity wait can be up to 4 years, then regardless of the amount of overcapacity in the area, projects proceed. The proposed extra fee program will eliminate all school waits. There are road tests that measure for development mitigation efforts, that do not pause projects, but create fees. More road improvements to crossroads and bus stops to create more pedestrian accessibility and ADA compliance for longer distances from projects are being proposed. Other areas of APFO, such as adding other tests for health and public safety, and changing reports and funding issues are still being reviewed.

# Why can't we be friends? A fairer process for capital improvements in HCPSS.

By Ryan Powers, Board Member

Howard County Public School System maintains 78 buildings requiring large capital costs from the Howard County government. There are over 200+ mobile classrooms within the school system, many serving in overcrowded schools. In addition, deferred maintenance of these buildings is now at hundreds of millions of dollars. With many demands from parents and the community, the Board of Education has not been consistent with the schools listed for the capital improvement program. Many times this feels to community members as if decisions are based on politics and not the most needy schools, as there were no criteria nor standards by which these decisions were being made. However, there is hope this will soon change with the adoption of objective standards for large capital needs (additions and renovations).

Various members of the BOE and HCPSS have worked close to a year to identify and hash out the new capital budget standardization criteria. There are two main criteria, school condition and school capacity (see picture). Importantly, each category is meant to be evaluated with objective data. Some of these categories are self explanatory and have existed in one form or another for many years. However, the newest category, "feed pattern", is meant to more directly address HCPSS' framework on equity and ask the question, "what is the student experience of the conditions of their school buildings or its capacity throughout their entire time in HCPSS?"

## Facility Condition 55%

- State Facility Condition Index/State Facilities Assessment – 20 points
- HCPSS Deferred Maintenance – 15 points
- HCPSS Maintenance Tracking – 5 points
- Health and Safety – 10 points
- Feed Pattern/building condition – 10 points

## Capacity/Utilization 45%

- Seat need – 35 points
- Educational Sufficiency – 10 points
- Feed Pattern/capacity – 10 points

Source: HCPSS

The system still isn't perfect. The construction of new schools is not explicitly considered in these criteria nor is the concept of "geographic equity" (having a local school in your area). Adequate Public Facilities Ordinances are not taken into account and leave Howard County, HCPSS, and housing advocates talking to their isolated islands instead of to each other. Instead, these factors are taken into account at some later stage after schools have already been ranked. It is possible politics will enter in this gap, but already there is more transparency and accountability with the new system.

The Baltimore Banner also reported that HCPSS is still considering whether to grandfather in schools already on the list. Those school projects that are listed to receive improvements and have already had money spent on them will continue.

School advocates say they look forward to a "trust by verify" approach when the BOE uses this new system for capital budget debate in late August/early September.

## Deep into HoCo by Phillip Space

### Howard County Department of Public Works to Host a Community Outreach Meeting on the Tremendous Troy Park Champion Tree Protection Project

The County's Department of Public Works will hold a community outreach meeting on Wednesday, March 5th, to gather community input and discuss a critical preservation project to protect the County Champion Tree at Troy Park at Elkridge and the County's tree canopy.

02/25/2025



Local government can seem weird, quirky, and like the show *Parks and Rec*. Then you realize it's because somewhere out there somebody cared enough. Dig deeper and you find out all about the many Champion Trees in Howard County. ([mdbigtrees.org](http://mdbigtrees.org) "BT-4258")

## The Community Conversation

We want to hear from you! Send us your thoughts and issues to [thevoxpophcca@gmail.com](mailto:thevoxpophcca@gmail.com). We are planning to include more of the community conversation in future newsletters. To get started, we are also looking for pictures of DPZ Development Signs to feature in a section of our next newsletter, "Best Development Signs in Howard County"

### Red= Public Meeting/Hearing

A public meeting/hearing regarding the property is being held by one of the following bodies:

Board of Appeals (Codes B 01-99)  
Department of Planning and Zoning (Codes D 01-99)  
Hearing Examiner: (Codes H 01-99)  
Planning Board: (Codes P 01-99)  
Zoning Board: (Codes Z 01-99)

### Blue: Pre-submission Community Meeting

Required by DPZ and held by the developer/petitioner to provide information to the community regarding the proposed plan submittal for one of the following:

Conditional Use (Codes C 01-99)  
Zoning Map Amendment Request (Codes M 01-99)  
Nonresidential Development (Codes N 01-99)  
Residential Development (Codes R 01-99)  
Columbia Town Center Redevelopment (Codes T 01-99)  
Columbia Village Center Redevelopment (Codes V 01-99)

### Black and White = Public Notice Sign

A new development is proposed on the property and plans are available for review at DP

*This year the board voted unanimously to donate \$500 to STAND as part of our community advocacy outreach effort. Thank you to our paid members for helping us support such productive work!*

## **Nonprofit Community Recognition: Stepping Towards A New Destiny (S.T.A.N.D) Mentorship stands up for kids**

Recent tragic events involving Howard County teens have sparked urgent conversations about youth engagement and public safety. STAND Mentorship is uniquely poised to help, as it was designed specifically for the 1% of youth facing the deepest challenges—those navigating poverty, trauma, housing instability, and systemic neglect. These young people don't just need help with homework. They need consistent, trusted adults who are credible messengers that understand their realities and offer trauma-informed support.

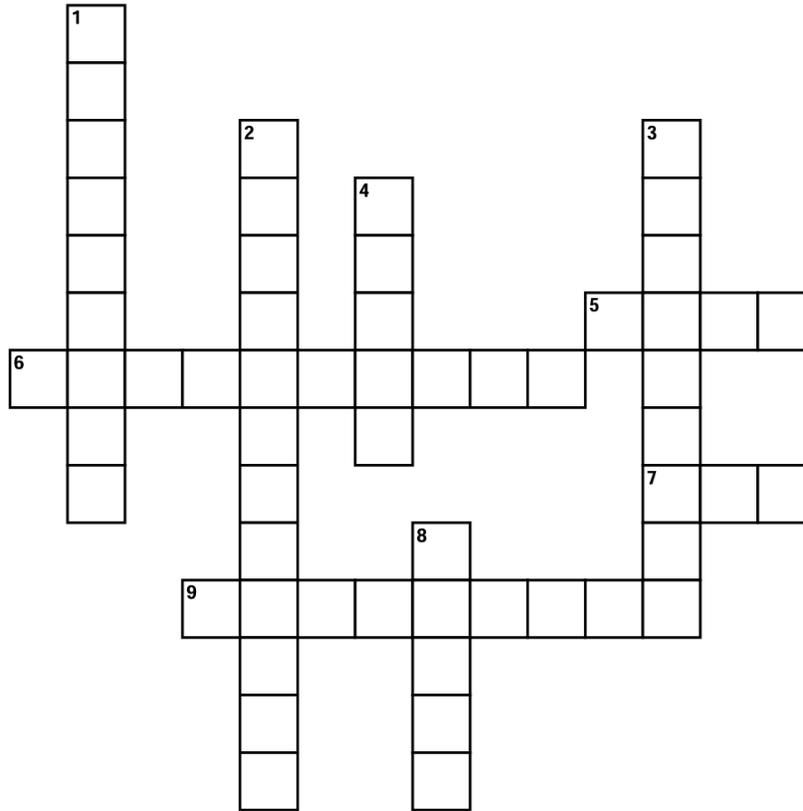
STAND's experienced life coaches build trust, defuse conflict, set goals, and stay connected around the clock—even in crisis. Their holistic approach blends relationship-based mentorship with skills in financial literacy, conflict resolution, job readiness, and mental and physical health. With over 20 years of experience, STAND coaches bring cultural competency, behavioral expertise, and peer recovery support to some of the county's most vulnerable youth.

Critically, STAND coaches are embedded in the community—present in schools, neighborhoods, and on the sidelines. They recognize tensions before they escalate, de-escalate volatile situations, and prevent tragedies that rarely make the news but have lasting impact. STAND can't reach every teen, but their presence greatly reduces the likelihood that a young person will turn to violence.

While other programs often serve students with stable support systems, STAND reaches those in crisis—young people too often written off. With the right support, they can still thrive. This work is not easy, but it is essential. If we care about real safety, we must invest in real solutions for those most often left behind.

Learn more or support the mission at [www.standmentorship.org](http://www.standmentorship.org).

# A Cross Word



## Across

- [5]** Smart growth in the county includes these infrastructure ordinances with might get decimated.
- [6]** Current Howard County Executive
- [7]** Number of villages in the Columbia Association
- [9]** Glenelg High School's mascot

## Down

- [1]** The village of \_\_\_\_\_ was named after the Former President of Connecticut General Life Insurance Company, which partnered with the Rouse Company.
- [2]** Lake Kittamaqundi means \_\_\_\_\_ in the Piscataway language
- [3]** A general change to the County Charter voted in this November
- [4]** Sponsor of Council Bill 18 letting far too many new homes skip the APFO school wait.
- [8]** The Howard County Charter was adopted in nineteen sixty-\_\_\_\_\_.

# DC Metroplex BWI Community Round Table Updates By

Howard Johnson, BWI Round Table Chair

The DC Metroplex BWI Community Round Table is a result of action taken by Congress to request the FAA to create round tables at regional airports with communities affected by the implementation of NextGen. The new system created condensed flight paths of planes flying over homes giving residents living under the new flight paths no relief during the day and evening. The BWI Round Table has been in place since 2017 working with the Maryland Aviation Administration to advise the FAA about impacts of NextGen to residents in Howard, Anne Arundle and Baltimore Counties. The FAA implemented flight path changes to address the complaints from residents in the Fall of 2024.

BWI Round Table Open Meeting:  
June 24th 7-9 Pm  
location the MAA building  
991 Corporate Blvd,  
Linthicum Heights, MD 21090

*Please follow the link below to register*

<https://marylandaviation.com/environmental/airport-noise/dc-metroplex-bwi-community-roundtable/>

The Maryland Aviation Administration will be presenting a review of arrival and departure flight procedures that were put in place by the FAA in the fall of 2024. The MAA will have 6 months of decibel noise data and flight path information related to the new procedures available in this presentation.

## *Other BWI News:*

The ANZ review is underway by the MAA. This is a review of plane noise at BWI required by Maryland code. The MAA has called in local neighborhood representatives, county and airline stakeholders to attend SAC meetings for presentations on current and forecasted flight operations in out years of 5 and 10- years will affect the noise zone around the airport. The ANZ is based on 65Db level of noise created by airline traffic.

## *Reporting Airplane noise:*

Sound meters and virtual modeling of aircraft noise help the MAA and the Round Table assess noise but we also rely on airplane noise reported by residents in the county to measure the impact of flight operations at BWI airport. There is also an unofficial facebook group called BWI Quite that often has feedback.

Please report noise to this link on the MAA website. Use this link to access the noise complaint form. You can also request a remote noise monitor to be placed at your home.

<https://marylandaviation.com/environmental/airport-noise/>

Follow this link to the 2025 ANZ SAC meeting presentation

<https://marylandaviation.com/environmental/airport-noise/bwi-marshall-airport-noise-zone/>

**Towards a Greener Future** By Paul Verchinski, Public representative on the MD Zero Emissions Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Council and HCCA Board member

Electric Vehicles (EV) and Electric Vehicle Chargers(EVSEs): Howard County has been a leader in supporting EV and EVSEs. HoCo has the largest number of EVs per capita in MD. In 2018, former Council member Jen Terrasa sponsored a HoCo bill that required EVSEs for every 25 units built in Multi-Unit dwellings and an EVSE capability for electric service panels in all new single-family dwellings. HCCA supported this bill. Currently, MD has over 130,000 EVs. EVs are a critical component of the MD Climate Solutions Now Act which requires a 60% reduction in Green House Gases (GHG) by 2031. Internal Combustion Engine Cars produce 40% of GHG in MD. Because of this, HCCA continues to advocate for EV expansion throughout MD. Most recently, I testified before the MD Public Service Commission against a Phase 2 proposal from the 5 MD utilities. Phase 2 funding would increase electricity rates due to the poor performance of utility owned EVSEs in MD. This article summarizes on going issues with utility EVSEs

<https://marylandmatters.org/2025/04/19/time-to-pull-the-plug-on-utility-run-ev-charger-program/>

MD Zero Emissions Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Council

<https://www.mdot.maryland.gov/tso/pages/Index.aspx?PageId=81>

**Where is the Stop Grace Movement Going?** By Ryan Powers



*Do you stop something you don't understand?*

This March the Council heard dozens of testimonies from residents about a proposed plastic-recycling lab at the W.R. Grace main campus in Columbia--Sorry, I meant a plastic-burning lab. Or should we confuse the issue with the more technical term *pyrolysis*? There is a lot of information and misinformation about this project. W.R. Grace has compared the amount of pollution to a car trip from Cedar Creek to The Mall and back. Residents say that car is stalled right in their backyard. If you listen to a well-known company like W.R. Grace, in this case infamous from the movie "A Civil Action", there is no threat to public health. On the other side are residents whose day jobs are engineers, chemists, and doctors saying they are concerned about future health problems from an experimental lab so close to them, especially in vulnerable populations with asthma and other lung ailments.

The Council voted 3-2 against changing PEC zoning to restrict labs designed to study the pyrolysis of plastic feed stock. Among the reasons to vote against the change was the council "not being experts" or needing to hear more from the state Department of the Environment, or even being more worried about getting sued for allegations of spot zoning than concerned about the environment and resident health. I understand not having the full picture, but as a County that propagandizes its commitment to the environment and health of its residents, what side should decisions err on? Why are there conflicting messages about what really matters in Howard County?

Council Members Walsh and Jung voted "Yes" while Council Members Jones, Rigby, and Yungmann voted "No"

The Stop Grace project is not done fighting for the residents or Cedar Creek and others. It is currently raising the funds necessary to cover the final costs for the Zoning Complaint Hearing and expects a final decision from the Hearing Examiner in mid-July to August. They can be contacted at [stopgraceplasticpermit@gmail.com](mailto:stopgraceplasticpermit@gmail.com).

## About Us

To learn more about HCCA and Board members who wrote these articles , visit <https://howardcountyhcca.org/us/citizens-association/>

