

Date: November 19, 2025

Subject: HCCA Testimony – CR 223-2025CB69 Central Library; Development Rights and Responsibilities Agreement.

Position: NO

My name is Alan Schneider. I am testifying for HCCA. I live in Clarksville, Maryland.

HCCA respectfully requests and urges a NO vote on CR 223 and CB 69 for the following reasons:

1. Residents require sound fiscal policies and responsible administration. There is county wide concern over where is the money coming from, and where is it going. There is not enough information to justify the CR and CB as written.
 - a. CR 223 does not identify the amount of money that will be required to build a visionary library. CR 223 does not have any cost limit.
 - b. CR 223 does not identify the architectural design. Proposed ambitious designs are unlimited. CR 223 does not have any limit on the extent of the design plan.
 - c. CR 223 does not identify the scope of a library system for Howard County.
 - i. Historically libraries are built to serve walkable communities. CR 223 does not identify its intent to build for walkability from existing communities.
 - ii. CR 223 does not describe how the intent fulfills any part of the HoCo by Design plan. Is the plan to build one big central library for all of Howard County, or to build smaller libraries where growth will occur. Residents in River Hill have proposed a library in that growth area for many years.
 - iii. A large central library is good for a large city with readily available mass transit to the central library. District 5 and other areas in Howard County do not have convenient, readily available mass transit to the proposed location.
2. Residents require prioritization. Yes. A rebuilt central library would be great! It is not a priority.
 - a. A library is not a priority over other public needs. Paying for deferred maintenance at schools for health and safety of our children is a higher priority. Prioritize healthy children first.
 - b. Emergency room waiting times are unacceptable. Prioritize emergency care. Prioritize other infrastructure which is more likely to improve the quality of life for more residents.

3. The whereas clauses do not provide sufficient information for approving CR233 and CB69. We ask how is DB 69 being considered an Emergency Bill?
 - a. The referenced 2010 Downtown Columbia Plan is insufficient justification.
 - b. Affordable housing can be better achieved by using available resources toward that goal.
4. The parties benefiting should pay all costs.
 - a. Howard Research And Development Corporation will benefit from library relocation. It should pay all costs as part of its reportedly large profits.
 - b. Columbia Association will benefit from the proposed project. CA has \$15 million cash. It should be a major contributor.
5. Residents are concerned when the county does not follow its own procedures. Some say that not following rules and procedures is evidence of unethical behavior, or corruption.
 - a. CB69 does not qualify as an Emergency Bill. It does not meet safety, health and welfare requirements justifying an Emergency Bill. Can anyone tell us otherwise?
6. Howard County land is very limited. Limited land means high prices.
 - a. Information is lacking regarding a proposed land swap. What is the financial analysis?
 - b. Compare county acquisition of land for a library versus the cost of acquiring land for a school at a time when Howard County schools are needed to reduce overcrowding.
7. CR 223 and CB 69 are inadequate. Information is missing.
 - a. The library needs versus the need for adequate public housing need more analysis. Is a new library really needed? Priorities and other options are missing or ignored.
8. HCCA conducted a Library Location Survey on March 13, 2024, consisting of 120 participants. The result was that 73% stated the Library should exist at its present location or at the mall. The survey is compelling. <https://howardcountyhcca.org/hcca-accomplishments/>
9. The fiscal impact statement is clearly erroneous.
 - a. Would anyone please explain the meaning of the “Administrative Explanation/Testimony” section under “Fiscal Impact” which states, “The County does not anticipate any fiscal impact resulting from this resolution. Once a purchase and sale agreement has been negotiated, the County Executive intends to seek appropriation from the County Council in FY27 capital budget for the land acquisition, at which time a fiscal impact will be prepared.” The statement is conflicting in itself – why?
 - b. The public is entitled to know how much funding will be asked for such a project. Based on the aforementioned it is inaccurate, or false to state that there is no fiscal impact.

10. There is no study that offers the residents an option to choose spending tax dollars on a library versus other options such as spending on deferred school maintenance, or school construction and the elimination of 240 temporary and unsafe school classrooms.

HCCA strongly requests a unanimous “NO” vote on both CR223 and CB69 because there is inadequate justification for prioritizing this project above higher priorities for the health and safety of our children, there is no justification for prioritizing this project over other higher priority infrastructure needs, and there is no emergency. HCCA’s survey revealed that an overwhelming majority percent stated that the Library should be at the current location or at the mall.

Thank you for your attention to the voice of your constituents. Thank you for taking the action supported by HCCA’s survey that the Library should not be moved as proposed in CR223 and CB69.

Alan Schneider,
HCCA Board Member