

Who's
Running?

2026 HOWARD COUNTY CANDIDATE GUIDE



DEMOCRAT

DISTRICT 2

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HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

What is your vision for strengthening Howard County's competitiveness for business investment, job creation, and private sector growth?

Howard County's next chapter of economic growth must be built on the truth that innovation and equity are not in conflict, they are the engine of the next economy. My vision is a county where economic growth expands opportunity in every zip code, where businesses can invest with confidence, and where residents of every background can access quality jobs and build long-term stability.

To achieve this, we must focus on strategic redevelopment in Long Reach, Gateway, the Route 1 Corridor, and the Oakland Mills Village Center, while strengthening transportation access and building modern infrastructure that support both employers and workers. This work must be driven by strong public-private partnerships that allow us to leverage private investment alongside public planning to modernize aging commercial areas, accelerate redevelopment, and attract new employers. As part of this strategy, we must also create transit-oriented, mixed-income housing options near job centers and transit routes, so the workforce that powers our economy can afford to live near where they work. Stable housing is not just a social need, it is a workforce and business competitiveness strategy.

As an educator and community leader, I see daily how education, housing, transportation, and economic opportunity are inseparable. When we invest in people through strong schools, credentials, and job pathways, and we invest in place through smart redevelopment, predictable processes, transit-connected communities, and cross-sector partnerships, we create a business climate that is competitive, resilient, and inclusive. That is how we grow our economy in a way that is sustainable and shared.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

How will you measure progress on your goals?

Progress must be measured in ways that are transparent, public, and connected to real outcomes for both businesses and residents. I will track business formation and retention, reductions in commercial vacancy rates in priority areas like Long Reach, the Route 1 Corridor, and Oakland Mills, and the speed and predictability of permitting and approvals so we can see whether our systems are truly becoming more efficient and business friendly. I will also track transportation access metrics that directly affect workforce reliability and economic opportunity, including average transit travel times to job centers, transit wait times, on-time performance, route coverage, and the number of transit lines connecting neighborhoods to employment hubs. Growth should not be measured only by permits issued or dollars invested, but by whether opportunity is expanding and residents can reliably access jobs and economic mobility.

Just as important, I will measure progress through workforce and opportunity outcomes. That includes the number of students and adults earning industry credentials, participation in apprenticeships and work-based learning, job placement and retention rates, and wage growth in high-demand sectors. I will also closely track participation of small, minority-owned, and women-owned businesses in county contracting, incentives, and redevelopment opportunities.

Because transparency builds trust, I will support publishing these benchmarks through a public economic dashboard that residents, employers, and community partners can easily access. Growth should not be measured only by permits issued or dollars invested, but by whether opportunity is expanding, inequities are shrinking, and residents are better positioned to thrive in the local economy.

What steps will you take to reduce regulatory barriers and create a more predictable, pro-business environment?

A predictable, transparent regulatory environment is one of the most powerful economic development tools a county can offer. I will work to modernize the permitting and approval process so it is clear, consistent, and timely, with publicly available timelines and expectations so businesses can plan, invest, and hire with confidence. Reducing unnecessary delays is especially important for small businesses and first-time entrepreneurs who often have the least margin for uncertainty.

I will advocate for regular, data-driven reviews of county regulations to identify rules that create barriers without adding meaningful public benefit. Where possible, I will support simplified application processes, improved inter-agency coordination, and clearer guidance so applicants are not navigating conflicting or duplicative requirements.

Because access to government should not depend on insider knowledge, I will also support a Small Business Navigation and Technical Assistance function that helps entrepreneurs, including minority-owned and women-owned businesses, move efficiently through licensing, zoning, and procurement. When our systems are predictable and accessible, we send a clear message that Howard County is open for business, serious about redevelopment, and committed to expanding opportunity for all.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**How do you plan to align economic development with workforce readiness, ensuring residents are prepared for emerging jobs (especially in tech, healthcare, and trades)?**

Economic development and workforce readiness must be designed together. As an Advanced Placement Economics teacher, I work every day with students to understand how labor markets, education systems, transportation, and housing interact to shape opportunity. That classroom perspective informs my approach to building a clear, connected pipeline from classroom to career, aligned with the needs of local employers.

I will champion a system where every student graduates with a credential, experience, and a plan. That means expanding partnerships between HCPSS, Howard Community College, local employers, and local unions to increase access to high-quality apprenticeships, dual enrollment, and industry-aligned training in high-demand fields like technology, healthcare, and the skilled trades. These partnerships help students gain real-world experience while helping employers develop a reliable local talent pipeline.

Workforce readiness must also account for real-life barriers. I will advocate for coordination across departments to ensure that transportation access, childcare availability, and scheduling flexibility support participation in training and apprenticeships. When we align education, workforce systems, and economic development, we create an economy that works for businesses and expands opportunity for residents across every neighborhood.

What role do you see for public-private partnerships in advancing innovation, entrepreneurship, and inclusive economic growth?

Public-private partnerships are essential to advancing innovation and inclusive economic growth in Howard County. When done well, they allow the county to leverage private investment alongside public planning to modernize infrastructure, redevelop aging commercial corridors, and expand opportunity in communities that have historically been underinvested.

I have seen the potential of these partnerships firsthand through my leadership with Columbia Community Care, where we are still building The Source, a community hub developed in partnership with local organizations, private donors, and government. We began this work while I was Chair of the Board of Directors, and that experience gave me a deep, practical understanding of what it takes to align partners, navigate public processes, and sustain momentum over time. It also reinforced for me how powerful these collaborations can be when they are rooted in trust, shared goals, and accountability.

I see public-private partnerships playing a similar role in the redevelopment of areas like Long Reach, the Route 1 Corridor, and the Oakland Mills Village Center, where coordinated investment can support entrepreneurship, workforce training, mixed-use development, and transit-connected communities. These partnerships must be transparent, community-centered, and outcome-driven. When structured well, they drive innovation, strengthen local economies, and ensure growth is both sustainable and broadly shared.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

How will you ensure that small and minority-owned businesses have equitable access to County contracts, incentives, and support services?

Ensuring equitable access for small, minority-owned, and women-owned businesses is both an equity imperative and a core economic development strategy. A competitive local economy depends on whether all businesses can navigate county systems and compete on a level playing field.

Through my work building community partnerships and nonprofit organizations, I have seen firsthand how complex processes, lack of clear information, and uneven access to relationships can create barriers for small businesses, even when talent and capacity are strong. That experience shapes my approach to improving county systems.

I will support clear, accessible procurement pathways, including simplified application processes, proactive outreach, and targeted technical assistance so businesses understand what opportunities exist and how to pursue them. Equity means designing systems that are understandable and navigable, not just well intentioned.

Transparency is essential to building trust. I will advocate for regular public reporting on participation by small, minority-owned, and women-owned businesses in county contracting and incentive programs, and for using that data to identify gaps and improve outcomes. I also support mentorship and capacity-building partnerships that connect emerging businesses with established firms, helping them grow and compete.

As someone who believes that opportunity expands when institutions earn public trust, I will work to ensure county government is a partner in opening doors rather than an obstacle. When access is equitable and systems are predictable, we strengthen entrepreneurship, expand opportunity, and ensure economic growth reflects the full talent of Howard County.

BUDGETING

What do you see as the biggest challenge for the County budget, and how do you plan to address it?

The greatest challenge facing the county budget is balancing growth with long-term sustainability. Costs related to education, infrastructure, public safety, and social services continue to rise, while revenue growth is constrained by economic cycles and structural limits. As an Advanced Placement Economics teacher, I spend my days helping students understand tradeoffs, opportunity costs, and the importance of planning for the long term. That same discipline must guide county budgeting.

I will approach the county budget with a focus on long-range financial planning, data-driven decision making, strategic business development and return on investment. That means prioritizing investments that strengthen our workforce, modernize infrastructure, and support smart redevelopment, while closely monitoring spending growth and debt levels. Sustainable budgeting is not about cutting services, but about aligning resources with outcomes and ensuring that today's decisions do not create tomorrow's shortfalls

BUDGETING**What steps will you take to increase transparency, trust, and civic engagement in budget and policy decisions?**

Transparency is foundational to public trust. As an educator, I believe people engage more deeply when information is clear, accessible, and honest. I will support a transparent, user-friendly county budget that allows residents to see how dollars are allocated, why decisions are made, and how spending aligns with community priorities.

I will also prioritize early and meaningful public engagement, including community forums, neighborhood listening sessions, and clear communication before major budget decisions are finalized. Budgeting should not feel like a closed process understood only by experts. When residents can see the tradeoffs and understand the reasoning behind decisions, trust grows and civic participation strengthens. A transparent, community-centered budget process leads to better policy and stronger outcomes for everyone.

DEVELOPMENT & REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT**Do you share the concern that our road and transit infrastructure is inadequate to support current and future growth?**

Yes. Transportation access determines economic access, and too many of our corridors lack the connectivity required for safe travel, reliable transit, and job mobility.

What are your top three priorities for transportation, infrastructure, and public facilities investment?

1. Investing in schools, deferred maintenance and renovations to ensure that our schools stay world class and ready for the challenges of the 21st century and beyond
2. Rebuilding village centers with transportation and multimodal access in mind.
3. Investing in transit oriented development that connects residents to job centers.

DEVELOPMENT & REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT**How will you work with regional, state, and federal partners to secure needed resources?**

I will actively partner with MDOT, the Howard County Delegation, and federal representatives to secure transportation grants and infrastructure funding. Regional collaboration allows us to compete for large-scale investments that no county can secure alone, especially in transit, broadband, and corridor modernization.

The rewrite of zoning and land-use regulations will shape Howard County for decades. What are your top three priorities in this process, and what is your overall zoning and land use philosophy? What outcomes do you expect to see from this effort?

My land use philosophy is grounded in **smart growth**, predictability, and balance. Growth must be intentional and aligned with our real capacity in schools, transportation, and public services. As an economics teacher, I understand that uncertainty raises costs and discourages investment, while clear rules allow communities and businesses to plan effectively.

My top three priorities are:

1. **Smart growth that balances development with school capacity and infrastructure limits**, ensuring we grow responsibly.
2. **Predictable and transparent zoning processes** that provide clarity for residents, businesses, and developers alike.
3. **Encouraging redevelopment over sprawl**, particularly in aging commercial corridors and village centers.

I expect a zoning framework that reduces uncertainty, supports reinvestment in existing communities, expands housing and commercial options where appropriate, and aligns land use with transportation and school planning. The goal is a code that strengthens economic opportunity while preserving community character and public trust.

What are your plans to encourage redevelopment of existing commercial properties?

Redevelopment must be easier and more attractive than building on undeveloped land. I will support incentives for adaptive reuse, streamlined approvals for projects that meet community priorities, and public investments in infrastructure that make redevelopment financially viable. By focusing on areas like Long Reach, the Route 1 Corridor, and the Oakland Mills Village Center, we can revitalize underused spaces, support local businesses, and create more vibrant, connected communities.

DEVELOPMENT & REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

Development is often framed as a conflict between housing growth and school capacity. How do you believe the County should balance school funding needs with new housing development?

We must move past the **false choice between housing growth and school capacity**. Families need both affordable housing and high quality schools, and responsible government must plan for them together. New housing brings new residents, and school capacity and funding must be anticipated and aligned with that growth.

As an **Advanced Placement Economics teacher**, I understand the importance of long-term, data-driven planning. The county should rely on clear enrollment projections, align housing approvals with the capital improvement planning process for schools, and ensure that funding mechanisms support timely school construction and modernization. Smart growth means aligning development decisions with expected population trends rather than reacting after capacity is already strained.

As someone who works inside our schools every day, I see how housing patterns, transportation access, and enrollment growth directly affect student opportunity. That is why we need **synchronized planning** between the State of Maryland, our county, the Board of Education, and long-range facilities teams. When planning is coordinated and transparent, we can expand housing options, protect educational excellence, and grow responsibly as a community.

EDUCATION

How will you support stronger school-to-career pathways that connect students with local employers and internship opportunities?

As the **2024-2025 Howard County Teacher of the Year**, I have seen firsthand how powerful strong school-to-career pathways can be when students are given meaningful exposure to real-world opportunities. In my classroom as an **Advanced Placement Economics teacher**, I help students understand how education, labor markets, and economic opportunity intersect, and that perspective informs my approach to policy.

I will champion a system where **every student graduates with a credential, experience, and a plan**. That means expanding partnerships between HCPSS, Howard Community College, local employers, and **local unions** to increase access to high-quality internships, apprenticeships, and work-based learning opportunities in fields such as technology, healthcare, education, logistics, and the skilled trades. These partnerships benefit students by providing real experience and benefit employers by strengthening the local talent pipeline.

I will also support removing barriers that prevent students from participating in these opportunities, including transportation access, scheduling flexibility, and coordination between schools and employers. When school-to-career pathways are intentional, inclusive, and aligned with workforce needs, we expand opportunity for students and help ensure that Howard County's economy remains strong and competitive.