



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Howard County Arts Council will launch Arts & Culture Planning process on January 23!**

ELLCOTT CITY, MD – Join Howard County Executive Calvin Ball and the Howard County Arts Council for the official kick off and press announcement of the Howard County Arts & Culture Plan on Thursday, January 23, from 11-11:30am in Monteabaro Hall at the Horowitz Visual & Performing Arts Center at Howard Community College. The event will begin with a performance at 10:45am and include remarks from local public officials, project leadership, and a project introduction by the consultant team.

“The arts motivate, excite, and connect us to the world through hopes, dreams, and all that can be. I’ve been thrilled to partner with the Howard County Arts Council to make our community a national leader in arts and culture,” said Howard County Executive Calvin Ball. “As our community continues to evolve, it’s essential that we plan for the future of arts and cultural development in a way that strengthens our community and supports our local artists and organizations to make impacts from neighborhoods to around our globe. Our new Arts & Culture Plan will serve as a transformational blueprint to ensure that Howard County remains one of the best places to live, work, create, vision, and thrive for all.”

Howard County’s previous comprehensive arts and culture plan was last updated in 2003. Over the past 20 years, the county has grown substantially and experienced significant shifts in population and demographics, changing the demands for arts and culture experiences along with the needs of artists and arts organizations. The new Howard County Arts & Culture Plan aims to inventory existing arts and culture assets in the county, identify strategies to grow and engage creative resources, guide future investments in the sector, and address the changing needs of the diverse local arts and culture communities. The plan also seeks to ensure the sustainability of the creative sector and promote economic and community development through the arts.

Coleen West, Executive Director of the Howard County Arts Council said, “Arts and culture are essential to the history, vibrancy, and cohesion of Howard County. They inspire us and bring people together to uplift our communities, improve our well-being, and enhance our social ties. The county has grown and changed dramatically since the last comprehensive arts and cultural plan was adopted. It is time to develop a new plan that can address these changes and set a framework for advancing arts and culture and strengthening Howard County’s position as a hub

for innovation and creativity in the region. In the coming year, I look forward to working with as many people as possible to develop new goals, strategies and policy recommendations that align with the aspirations and insights of our diverse communities and chart a course for a sustainable and inclusive arts and culture eco-system where creativity can flourish, and everyone can participate.”

Over the next two years, the Arts Council will work with a 31-person steering committee made up of local community leaders and Designing Local, a firm that specializes in arts and culture planning, to capture a shared vision for the future role of arts and culture in our community. The steering committee includes the following community members:

Jonathan Alexander, St. John's Baptist Church  
Tonya Aikens, Howard County Public Library System  
Misako Aoki, Misako Ballet  
Nina Basu, Inner Arbor Trust/Merriweather Park at Symphony Woods  
Janelle Broderick, Howard Community College  
Dan Burns, Columbia Association  
Theresa Colvin, Former MSAC Executive Director  
Terry Eberhardt, Howard County Public School System  
Ellen Flynn Giles, Howard County Historical Society & Former HoCo Arts Board  
Arthur Gold, Commission on Aging  
Jeremy Goldman, Silhouette Stages  
Tomeka Hodo, Delta Sigma Theta  
Amanda Hof, Visit Howard County  
Tessa Hurd, Howard County Department of Recreation & Parks  
Jennifer Jones, Howard County Economic Development Authority  
Sang Hee Ju, Korean Culture & Art of MD  
Kwame Kena, Visual Artist  
Ian Kennedy, Merriweather Arts & Culture Center  
Michael Koplou, The ClayGround Studio & Gallery  
Vanita Leatherwood, HopeWorks of Howard County  
Kristin O'Connor, Howard County Department of Planning & Zoning  
Darlene Richeson, MaZie Global Solutions, LLC & HoCo Arts Board  
Luzmila Robkson, La Alianza Latina Commission  
Brandey Rodgers, Howard County African American Roundtable  
Berta Sabrio, Columbia Orchestra  
Beck Seckler, LGBTQ+ Commission  
Tim Singleton, HoCoPoLitSo  
Fahimeh Vahdat, Howard Community College  
Yolanda Vazquez, La Alianza Latina Commission  
Coleen West, Howard County Arts Council  
George Wilson, Former HoCo Arts Board

The steering committee will also help with engagement strategies to reach communities and individuals who can offer fresh ideas and insight to capture emerging opportunities and overcome longstanding challenges.

Community engagement activities will begin early next year, through interviews, listening sessions, community surveys, and other channels. A plan that sets a new vision for the next

generation of arts and culture in the region will be developed in 2026 and any policy recommendations will be presented to the Howard County Council for approval at that time.

The Howard County Arts and Culture Plan has been made possible through generous funding from the Maryland State Arts Council, Howard County Government, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

For more information contact Stephanie Schuster at [development@hocoarts.org](mailto:development@hocoarts.org).

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The Howard County Arts Council is a non-profit organization whose mission is to serve the citizens of Howard County by fostering the arts, artists and arts organizations. The Howard County Arts Council receives major grants from the Howard County Government and the Maryland State Arts Council and sustaining annual support from corporate, foundation and individual sponsors. Howard County Arts Council offices are located at the Howard County Center for the Arts, 8510 High Ridge Road, Ellicott City, MD 21043. The Howard County Center for the Arts is an accessible facility encouraging the full participation of individuals with disabilities. For information, call (410) 313-2787 or email [info@hocoarts.org](mailto:info@hocoarts.org). TDD: 711

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