

Dear council members,

Every month at our local public library, I lead a club called Regenerators: Zero Waste Solutions. The goal is to foster our community fomenting habits to repair, reuse and reuse the overall output of waste each of our families generate. We challenge each other with clear goals that are measurable and tangible. From time to time, I support MCCPTA Green Schools with food waste prevention efforts at MCPS schools and for MCPS parents. I also volunteer with ZWMC and the North American Food Systems Network. Here are four points of important feedback, regarding this 10-year plan, that I'd like you to consider:

1. **Wallet congruence:** We invest in police, schools, healthcare, and fire departments to protect our citizens. Could we invest to protect our county residents and neighbors from harmful pollutants as well? In the Taxes Section 5.7 of this plan where its economic management is discussed. In this section, it seems that the solid waste management system is expected to be largely self-supporting. This model has proven beneficial in cities such as Austin, TX. When installing this model, please consider your allocation of funds to also invest toward a safe and less harmful solid waste management plan. Why? Because disposing of our trash, either through burning or landfilling has a real impact on the health of our citizens, the environment and the climate. The County might consider using a portion of the tax revenue that the County Executive is promoting in corporate development to address and mitigate the health impact in our children's lungs. How about investing 100 million dollars of tax revenue in solutions that do not make us breathe garbage?
2. **Where are the Northern Stars of this plan?** This plan goes in detail about projections for population and waste generation growth, but those projections seem to not calculate for residents' capacity to reduce their waste per capita. In parallel, this plan touches base on most of the good and important elements of a Zero Waste plan such as PAYT, Fix-it clinics, food waste prevention, home composting, farm composting, but it is weak in the sense that it does not commit to a percentage of waste diversion on 10 years. What if the plan, strategized on what is needed to reach 70%, 80% or even 90% of waste diversion as our Northern Star? Throughout the document there are lots of "*will continue to research, benchmark and evaluate the feasibility of developing, proposing, and implementing.*" This plan could include projections of how much waste could be reduce by:
 - Reducing $\frac{1}{3}$ of all single homes' garbage bins from the big 96 gallons or more to 64- and 32-gallon bins.
 - Successfully implementing home composting in 10% of all single homes.
 - Offering 120 fix-it clinics over 10 years (12/year throughout the county).
 - Installing and serving 1 yard paper retrievers' containers in 100 faith communities and all 200+ MCPS schools.
 - Installing glass collection shipment containers, battery collection and other 5 hard to recycling items collection in all 21 public library branches
 - Installing hazardous and bulky collection "beauty shops" in at least 5 locations of the county besides the current transfer station.
 - Making mandatory for most building and demolition permits in the county and demolition and deconstruction permit checklist
 - Making mandatory to all county procurement minimum thresholds of recycle content

Sharing graphs and projections with various scenarios depicting the impact that implementing these types of tangible solutions could have on the overall tonnage of waste generated in the county would be vital to have a clear roadmap to follow. Budgeting to reduce 100,000, 200,000 and up to 300,000 tons of waste a year, instead of assuming/planning for projections with the level of output generated with the status quo Providing clear and specific benchmarks/milestones of volume reduction that depict the millions of dollars saved over 10 years, if implementing such programs would represent propel the investment to launch such solutions! Not just monetarily but in toxic emission specially for HHW and C&D.

3. **Bold Decentralized Resource Recovery Strategies beyond one MRF.** Everyone I know throughout the county stops time to time at least one MCPL public library, but only a couple of them have made the deliberate effort to carve time in their lives to drive HHW, or paint, or bulky items to the transfer station or to Shady Grove. Thus, geographic diversification in accessible places such as MCPL 21 public libraries would be a huge game changer for our resource recovery of batteries, electronics, glass, medicine and many more high-commodity items.
4. **Seize the chance to make organics recovery a key component of our country's food resilience strategy for 2030.** Each ton of food scraps we burn is packed with nutrients we should be embedding into our soil instead. As the price of eggs, produce and healthy food continues to rise, we must wake up into using this precious compostable material to give Montgomery County a chance for a stronger local food system. Could we be producing 20 instead of the current 2% of our food intake? The county just passed legislation supporting composting, this plan needs to ramp up its partnership with the office for food resiliency and the MDA food waste (prevention, donation and composting) regulations, and make this section more robust than it currently is. Including the amount of GHG reduction this will signify in terms of carbon sink of applying all compost produced in the Ag Reserved and in terms of food miles saved from ramping local produce production, would be the cherry on the cake!

Dear council members, let us stop paying to poison ourselves! If we fund police, schools, and healthcare to protect citizens, why not use corporate tax revenue to protect our residents and families from harmful waste pollution? On behalf of all my friends and neighbors living in MoCo who don't have the bandwidth to testify today yet are supportive of the views expressed in this testimony, I thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Daniela Ochoa Gonzalez.