

I'm writing in support of two causes that affect the lives as well as the quality of life of people with disabilities: I urge you to fully fund the Montgomery County Public Libraries' (MCPL) operating budget, and to recognize the importance of the testimony of the Commission on People with Disabilities' recommendation that bicycle lanes should be eliminated or minimized in Montgomery County.

MCPL provides us all with books in various formats and languages, along with a wide range of programs, meeting spaces, accessible computers, and best of all, a terrific staff who works with us to answer questions and resolve problems. A friend of mine who works with people who have intellectual disabilities says the libraries are the one place where they feel welcomed and engaged. People who use wheelchairs don't usually have to worry about accessibility when they come to meetings at a library. People who are blind and those who are losing their vision are discovering the audio books, many available in a variety of languages, that can entertain or educate. Libraries are life-changing and life affirming for children, teens, adults and seniors who have disabilities. Please consider the needs of people with disabilities of all ages who need the help that libraries and librarians provide, and fund at the recommended budget level.

I'm very concerned about the proliferation of bicycle lanes, especially when they are at bus stops and near handicap parking spaces. How can someone who is blind, or someone who uses a walker or wheelchair, cross safely to a "bus island" when bicyclists may or may not stop for them? Painting a crosswalk is easy, but there's no signal or any effective method to make bicyclists stop. Please do not fund any plans that call for bus islands. And bike lanes make it harder to park in handicap parking spaces and to get your wheelchair out of the vehicle. Is it safe to assume that all bicyclists will stop? Until there is equal safety for people with disabilities, we should eliminate bike lanes.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to the FY26 operating budget.