

Dear Montgomery County Council Members,

It disheartens me to have to write something like this because I always view Maryland as one of the rare places in the United States that values what I believe are the keys to a happy life: family, community, education, and nature. I hope this will be the last time I, and any other community member, will have to step up and explain to Montgomery County Council members why a parks budget should not be cut.

Despite their beauty, parks are more than simply green spaces existing for a nice evening stroll or the occasional pretty picture. Parks are the heart of any great community. With these essential pillars of Montgomery County, our children discover nature, neighbors connect, and we all create lifelong memories. These places bring an incalculable amount of joy and well-being to everyone who comes across them. Additionally, with our beautiful parks, we gain a positive economic impact by attracting homebuyers and tourists alike. With continued investment and growth of its parks, Montgomery County can be a beacon of hope and show what is possible to people nationwide.

While I am no stranger to the cost increases to essentials across the country, these are the moments people look back on and say, “We did right” or “We did wrong”. I understand the challenges in allocating and balancing a budget, and I appreciate the difficult decisions you have to make. However, the proposed 3.2% increase compared to the 7.2% requested to maintain current services, increase programming, and widen maintenance abilities is unacceptable.

Other county departments have received an average of two times what is being proposed for Parks. This 3.2% increase cannot be viewed as anything except a step backward. Not receiving the requested increase percentage of 7.2 will mean our Parks will struggle. Struggle to maintain their appearances. Struggle to keep facilities open. Struggle to retain staff. Struggle to offer programs the community relies on.

In a world facing many challenges, from climate change to immense social isolation, parks are some of the rare crucial places we have left in society. The council’s actions on this matter will directly reflect whether or not they understand what is important to residents of Montgomery County. I urge you to consider the long-term benefits of investing in our parks and community. Your decision will shape the future of our county, determining whether we have stronger, healthier, and happier residents. Please view parks not as a luxury but an essential investment in our collective future.

Together, we can choose the future we want. A future where our parks thrive and each person prospers. We all share this vision, and I hope you will join me in working towards it.

Sincerely,

Christian G.  
Rockville