

Testimony on the Montgomery County Budget, April 2025

Mara Greengrass

I'm writing today as a homeowner in Montgomery County since 1999 and someone who cares deeply about the most marginalized people in our county. Let me start by saying that I support raising my property taxes if necessary to keep the programs I value afloat.

I know there are a great many competing priorities in the county budget and you're being pulled in a million different directions, but I beg you to please keep funding programs like eviction prevention and rapid rehousing. Given the direction of national politics, they're going to become even more necessary.

Last year I spoke to the council about my two homeless friends, so I'm back with an update. One friend still lives in a motel in the county because they can't find a place that will rent to them, even though they're gainfully employed and can afford the rent. Funding and extending rapid rehousing to include individuals, rather than just families, will help them get back on their feet.

My other friend has moved from their car to a shelter. I'm grateful the shelter is available, but that can't be a permanent solution. They need help! They need medications, mental and physical health care to support their disabilities, and other assistance. I strongly support funding for permanent supportive housing to help people with disabilities.

Programs like eviction prevention and rapid rehousing are ethically necessary if we want to be able to sleep at night and they're also economically sound! It's a lot cheaper to help someone stay housed or get them into housing they can stay in than it is to house them in a shelter or put them up in a motel in the county. (Believe me, I know, because I've paid for someone to stay in one of the cheapest places in Rockville and even then, I couldn't afford to pay more than a week.)

Please look closely at what Housing Justice Montgomery is asking for. Their thoughtful work to consider the most important needs of the most marginalized is a valuable guide. Those who are homeless or in danger of eviction need our help and they need it now.