

Hello members of the Council. My name is Barbara Fischer from East Montgomery Village. My primary recommendation is to urge you to **reject any further capital funding for the Montgomery County Revenue Authority's Airpark projects in the FY27-32 CIP**, using as an example the [North End Hangar \(P392502\)](#). If you (hopefully) have any control on MCRA, you should prohibit them from transferring funds earned from the County golf course operations and wasting them at the Airpark. The Airpark is not a good investment for the County as a whole – and is harmful to its surrounding community in numerous ways. As you know, you established the ACAC Committee representing various representative of community members and county government as well as the Airpark manager. It's first report to the County Council, submitted in the spring, reported on several major concerns and made various recommendations. MCRA's response has been minimal at best- addressing only minor improvements to the website (while at the same time for months adding an unbelievably difficult CAPCHATA preventing perhaps many- including me- from submitting complaints). This lack of response is disrespectful not only to the Committee and residents- but to each of you on the County Council as well. Major issues currently under review by the committee include Fly-friendly polices not followed by Airpark users, MCRA's silence to the community but clearly with an objective to continue to grow the Airpark (added hangers, towers, purchasing land, and reconfiguring roads), and the lack of accountability of MCRA.

I had planned, before listening to much of the hearings on February 9 and 10, to focus solely on requesting there be no further expansion of any kind at the Airpark without MCRA fully addressing the many recommendations and concerns already recommended by the committee. I still feel very strongly about this. But, in addition to that, **I strongly recommend all MCPS CIP projects** addressed be funded to the fullest extent **before ANY optional projects** are funded. During a tight budget year where MCPS is facing a \$560 million gap between its request and the County Executive's recommendation, these funds could be redirected to local schools or community needs. These are our children who are our future and these projects must be prioritized NOW after many years of neglect. It is simply not acceptable to fund anymore bus only lanes, turf or grass fields, theatre arts renovations, unneeded hangers to an airpark, or historical markers while our children/teachers inhale bad air, freeze or sweat seasonally. Projects I'd recommend cutting right away include the Rt 29 "flash" bus median lane at \$115M (other speaker mentioned possibly more like \$158- 200M!); new Observation Drive extended (\$500K from CIP, but he possibly said \$12M overall); floating bus stops (frightening perspectives of the blind were presented); bicycle lanes (dare I say, some of our

roads are too dangerous and crowded for safe biking of any kind and simply should be restricted).

I believe this so strongly that I suggest some other county budgets be reallocated to the CIP budget line in order to funnel more money – even in 2026- to make some of these needed MCPS CIP projects get underway as soon as possible. I heard various schools say they have studies and in some cases designs for unfunded and unscheduled work. Start on renovations at Cold Spring ES; Damascus, Magruder and Wooton HS should all have renovations leading to needed rebuilding accomplished ASAP!

I applaud the eight Councilmembers who stood firm on February 3 to keep our General Obligation bond limit at \$300 million. Raising this ceiling to accommodate projects like the MCRA Airpark Hanger, Land Acquisitions and Obstruction Removal, and the Runway Lighting Rehabilitation would contribute to a 'buy now, pay later' scheme that threatens our Triple-A rating. We should be tightening our belts to fund needed renovations to our schools, not expanding our debt for a loss-leading airport that services a fraction of our population.

Some wonderful projects citizens spoke of do, of course, deserve to move forward. And the way to fund these projects was suggested by at least one of the speakers- Public-Private Partnerships. Some of these had clearly already been done in some areas and it sounds like such a natural fit for the various community groups within the county. Theatre renovations at Montgomery College, Rockville- maybe Strathmore and/or the Olney Theatre. The natural grass/turf fields have many possibilities, as do natural trails. In fact, might any of our hospitals, research companies, or actual mold remediation companies assist MCPS, at least with recommendations, planning, or expediting scheduling?

While the Board of Education is seemingly forced to continue to postpone needed work, the MCRA rushed to start design work on a new hangar by December 2025. MCRA admits this hangar is intended to 'allow for the opportunity for competition'—which means more private flight schools, likely jets, and more noise, pollution, and safety concerns Unless they are instructed to not accept more federal funds, the MCRA has singularly reset the 20-year FAA clock, committing our taxpayers to another two decades of noise, environmental lead, and annual operating losses exceeding **\$1 million/year** (Actual FY24- \$500K, the latest projection I could find for FY-25 was \$1M.) This should be stopped and the complicated

ownership, management, and contracts surrounding the Airpark should be reviewed and renegotiated.

I ask the Council **to strike the Airpark funding and work to prioritize the \$2.7 billion school backlog** instead. The county's priority must be our children's classrooms, not private hangars.

I thank you for all your work on these many decisions.

Barbara Fischer