MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

COMMISSION ON PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ANNUAL REPORT

October 16, 2020

Honorable Marc Elrich, Montgomery County Executive *Via Letter of Transmittal Electronically*
Honorable Sidney Katz, President, Montgomery County Council
Raymond Crowel, Psy.D., Director, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services|

The Commission on People with Disabilities is pleased to present a summary of its activities for the past year for your review. We continue to advise and consult with you on issues of concern to the safety and well-being of an estimated 85,000 people with disabilities who live in the County, according to the 2019 US Census Bureau. We continue to work to improve the lives of people with disabilities and over the past year:

1. The most important transportation priority of the Commission is to ensure pedestrian safety for everyone, including children/students, people with disabilities, older adults and the general public. Currently, the County has numerous transportation plans and projects which affect pedestrian safety, including: the Bicycle Master Plan, Safe Streets to Schools, Pedestrian Master plan, Vision Zero, Visually Impaired Urban Navigation Study and Pilot Design and Complete Streets Design Draft. This fragmented approach is not only confusing for the public, but also leads to haphazard design that puts people of all ages and abilities at risk. For example, specific school safety issues have been left out of the Complete Streets Design Plan. We are asking the County to align the plans to have a consistent and comprehensive approach to pedestrian safety. This will result in effective transportation planning with the goal of-preventing serious or fatal accidents.
2. We are deeply concerned about the installation of bike lanes and floating bus stops as they present a serious safety concern for people who are blind, have low vision or who have a mobility disability. A simplification and more detailed safety review encompassing all transportation initiatives to assure uniformity of goals and inclusiveness of concerns of people with disabilities before plans are implemented is critical. In the interim, the Commission has recommended a moratorium on installation of floating bus stops and bicycle lanes.
3. MCDOT is promoting scooters and bikes to increase transit options but unfortunately they too often block sidewalks and endanger people with disabilities as a tripping hazard or barrier to passage.
4. The Commission recommends that MCDOT pursue sidewalk installation as it promotes a safer way for people to walk. This is especially true along thoroughfares approaching schools and may require legislation to make it a requirement as the City of Rockville has done.
5. We are pleased to see the outcomes of the hiring initiatives for people with disabilities and Veterans. Since 2010, the County has hired 44 people with disabilities, 283 Veterans of which 23 have a disability, and 31 people with disabilities who were hired non-competitively.
6. The Developmental Disabilities Advisory Committee provides enhanced communication between the executive and legislative branches, the Developmental Disabilities Administration and non-profits. We will be facing employment challenges as during the pandemic over half of the persons who are funded for employment by the Developmental Disabilities Administration have lost their employment in the private and public sector.

We wish to recognize and give our personal thanks to all Commissioners, the many community members, and the agency staff who participate in our meetings for their commitment and dedication in promoting the civil rights and independence of people with disabilities. It has been a pleasure to work with you and members of the Commission during our term of service. We are confident that you will continue to support the Commission's efforts to enhance the lives of people with disabilities. Our meetings are open to the public, and we invite you to join us for any meeting.

Seth Morgan, MD
Chair

Trish Gallalee
Vice-Chair

COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP LIST - 2020

Effective January 2020

Public Voting Members

Seth A. Morgan, M.D., Chair
Patricia Gallalee, Vice-Chair
Deena (Day) Al-Mohamed
Jametta Anderson
Neal Carter
Myra Coffield
Benjamin DuGoff
Michael Greenberg
Scott Hunger
Luis Hurtado
Jenn Lynn
Shonda McLaughlin
Carl Prather
David Rice
Teri Roe
Avner Shapiro

Organization / Agency Representatives Voting Members

Larry Bram, *Easter Seals*
Eric Cole, *Dandy-Walker Alliance, Inc.*
Karen Goss, *Mid-Atlantic ADA Center*
Tom Liniak, *Jewish Social Services Agency*
Karen Morgret, *Treatment and Learning Centers*
Anne Peyer, *Cornerstone Montgomery*
Steve Robinson, *Madison House Autism Foundation*
Richard Shermanski, *American Speech-Language Hearing Association*
John Whittle, *Consultant, Service Coordination, Inc.*

Non-Voting Members

Public Agency Representatives

Matthew Barkley, *ADA Title II Compliance Manager, Department of General Services*
Charlie Butler, *Department of Recreation*
Okianer Christian Dark, *Commission on Human Rights*
James Dean, *Maryland State Dept. of Education, Division of Rehabilitation Services*
Marybeth Dugan, *M-NCPPC, Montgomery Parks*
Simone Geness, *Montgomery County Public Schools*
Angelisa Hawes, *Montgomery County Public Libraries*
Karen Hochberg, *Targeted Recruitment Specialist, Office of Human Resources*
Denise Isreal, *Department of Transportation*
Christopher Moy, *ADA Compliance*, *Montgomery College*
Susan Smith, *Housing Opportunities Commission*

Department of Health and Human Services - Staff Members

Betsy Tolbert Luecking, *Community Outreach Manager*
Carly Clem, *Administrative Specialist I*

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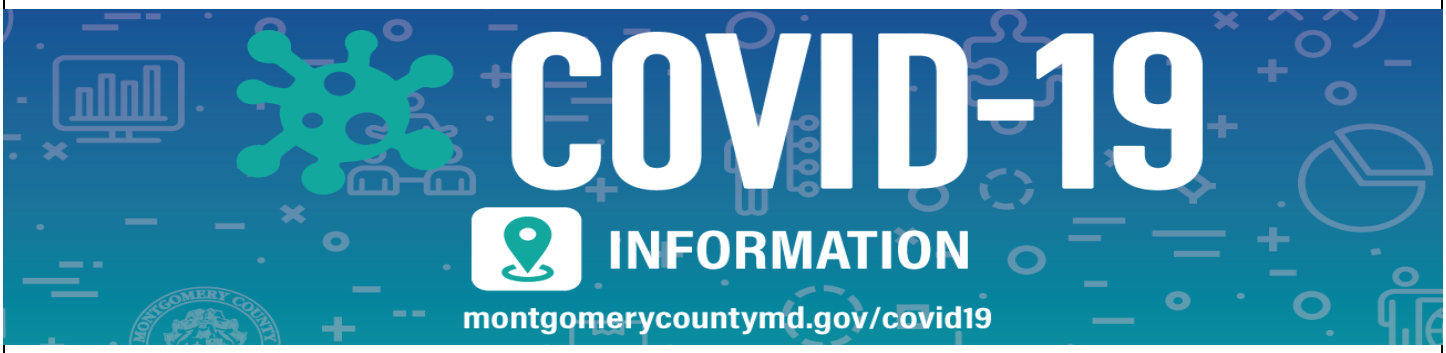
MONTGOMERY COUNTY COVID-19 PANDEMIC INFORMATION PORTAL

The COVID-19 Pandemic has put a strain on all residents and especially on vulnerable populations including children and adults with disabilities. The County is committed to minimizing the detrimental effects on COVID-19 and to maintain long-term access to services, community engagement and social engagement. Many aspects of all of our lives have been impacted including the need for readily accessible reliable information and available resources on topics such as general medical care resources, mental wellness and behavioral health care, food security, safe housing, personal safety, freedom to worship without fear, etc,. We encourage you to use the Montgomery County COVID-19 Information Portal:
https://montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19/get-help/



OTHER COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESOURCES

Stay Positive, Test Negative

American Council of the Blind COVID-19 Resources
https://acb.org/acb-covid19-response

EveryMind COVID-19 Coping with Anxiety and Stress
https://www.every-mind.org/7493-2/

Maryland Department of Disabilities COVID-19 Resources
http://mdod.maryland.gov/news/Pages/Covid-resources.aspx

National Federation of the Blind
https://www.nfb.org/resources/covid-19-resources

National Deaf Center COVID-19 Resources
https://www.nationaldeafcenter.org/covid-19-information

National Multiple Sclerosis COVID Resources
https://www.nationalmssociety.org/coronavirus-covid-19-information

COVID-19 Special Considerations for People with Spinal Cord Injury
https://kesslerfoundation.org/info/covid-19-and-spinal-cord-injury-minimizing-risks-complications

Go Outside, Call a Friend, Get Some Exercise, Stay Connected

COMMISSION ON PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES COMMEMORATES 42ND YEAR

The County Commission on Handicapped Individuals was established by the County Council on October 17, 1978. In October of 1977, County Executive James Gleason established a Task Force on Concerns of the Handicapped. Their Task Force report in June, 1978 later led to the County Council taking this action. This month the Commission celebrates 41 years of advising the County on disability issues and concerns. The Commission was located in the Office of Family Resources and at that time Chuck Short was the Director of that Office.

Effective November 9, 1990, the Commission was renamed in Bill 49-90 to the Commission on People with Disabilities and added four more slots for people with disabilities. Over the years, the Commission has benefitted greatly from the strong support of all County Executives and County Council Members to have this County become a leader in the nation on disability issues. We have also benefitted greatly from our many citizens/former Commissioners who have worked for the federal government on disability issues. Former Commission member Larry Roffee went on to be the first Executive Director of the US Access Board, and now David Capozzi who is also a former Commissioner is now the Executive Director there. The Commission has served under County Executives James Gleason, Charles Gilchrist, Sidney Kramer, Neal Potter, Douglas Duncan and Isiah Leggett.

Commission's Key Advocacy/Advisory Highlights:

- **Bill 46-09 - Personnel - Regulations - Persons with Disabilities - Hiring Preference** (effective February 2, 2010 and applies to persons with disabilities, Veterans, and Veterans with disabilities) - **NACO 2014 Achievement Award Winner -** Mark Maxin, Assistant General Counsel for Administration, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission and former Commissioner was instrumental in making legal cases on both employment bills for the Commission
- **Bill 32-12 - Personnel - Regulations - Persons with Disabilities - Noncompetitive Appointment** (effective February 5, 2013 - 80% of voters voted to adopt) Noncompetitive hiring preference for people with severe disabilities
- **Bill 5-13 - Property Tax Credit - Accessibility Features** (enacted November 19, 2013 - **Design for Life Property Tax Incentive Program** that provides property tax credits up to $10,000 for levels of accessibility installed in new construction and existing homes - **NACO 2018 Achievement Award Winner**
- HOC and Adventist Rehabilitation Hospital in the establishment of 6 accessible apartments at **Metro Pointe** for younger adults who were living in nursing homes **Montgomery's Best Honor Awards Recipient 2008**
- **Zoning Text Amendment 06-17** permits by right vs a zoning variance unroofed and open structure in an easement including a ramp and chairlift that allows a person with a physical disability access to a one family dwelling and is exterior to the one family dwelling
- **Resolution 16-931 - Policy Regarding the Use of Brick and Other Pavements in the Public Right-of-Way** for County sidewalks **particularly red brick pavers**
- County purchasing **accessible Ride On busses in 1978** before the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act
- **Pedestrian Winter Safety Act of 2001** - Snow removal legislation
- **Respect the Space** program to assess proper parking signage so it can be enforced by the police department
- Establishment of a Center for Independent Living or **Independence Now**
- Installation of the **elevator at the Marc Train station** in Rockville

COMMISSION ON PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES COMMEMORATES 42ND YEAR CONTINUED

- **Scattered site housing** for people with mental illness and other disabilities
- Department of Transportation on **access issues for people who are blind** in downtown Silver Spring
- Evaluating and working closely with the **Strathmore** on making the Music Center and Mansion accessible and user-friendly for people with disabilities
- Assessing ADA compliance in 200+ **polling places** in partnership with the Montgomery County Board of Elections
- **Assistive Listening Systems** in County buildings: The Commission Sent a request to Strathmore Hall to make neck loops an option for guests. Strathmore responded that they have neck loops and that they will be training staff to ensure that patrons know that is an option. Initiated effort to have HHS install integrated audio loop systems in with public address system into designated meeting rooms.· Pushed for a clause to be included in mental health service proposals that makes it clear that those services must be inclusive, i.e., must provide assistive listening devices for people who are deaf and hard of hearing, both for group sessions and one-on-one therapy.·. County contract now includes provision for CART (Computer Assisted Real-time Captioning) accommodations and other provisions.· Advocated for trial VRS/VRI installation in two locations in the county, possibly in libraries. VRI would to allow people who are deaf and hard of hearing people who have not made an appointment to be provided access when they walk in for services. VRS would allow deaf and hard of hearing people to place phone calls using sign language. Montgomery County now has a free emergency notification system for the public which is a tremendous benefit for deaf and hard of hearing people who rely on their wireless devices or email. To sign up go to www.montgomerycountymd.gov and click on "Alert Montgomery".
- **Community Support Services** for people with developmental disabilities reinstated to provide 500 persons with Coordination of Community Services
- Montgomery County Government on **compliance with the ADA**
- **US Department of Justice Project Civic Access Settlement Agreement** including Montgomery Parks
- **Waivers from the Maryland Accessibility Code Accessibility Code** per State law as recognized local disability advisory group
- Advising County on **pedestrian safety issues** and safety concerns about floating bus stops and bike lanes.
- **Bill 33-15 Transportation Service Improvement Fund**: Established the fund based on placing a 25 cent surcharge on all Transportation Network Companies (Uber, Lyft, etc.) for rides originating in Montgomery County with the fund designated to be used to promote accessible vehicle ride availability in the County In order to establish the fund, permission was sought and obtained from the Maryland State Government.

MONTGOMERY PARKS COMPLETES FULLY ACCESSIBLE BOAT LAUNCH AT SENECA LANDING

September 2, 2020

Launch improves accessibility and safety for users of kayaks, canoes and paddleboards

Silver Spring, MD – Montgomery Parks, part of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, has completed construction of a new floating launch for non-motorized boats improving accessibility and safety for kayakers, canoeists and paddle boarders at Seneca Landing Special Park.

Photo Courtesy of Betsy Luecking, Montgomery County Commission on Veterans Affairs

The site, located in Poolesville, is one of the busiest access points to the Potomac River and adjoins the National Park Service's popular C&O Canal. Prior to the new floating launch, motorized and non-motorized boats were sharing the same ramp, causing conflict and safety issues. The ramp was also not ADA accessible presenting numerous challenges for users with disabilities.

Photo Courtesy of Betsy Luecking, Montgomery County Commission on Veterans Affairs

"Installation of the new floating boat launch was completed in June and has already proven to be extremely popular," said Bob Green, Senior ADA Compliance Project Manager, Montgomery Parks. "The floating launch accomplishes several things: it improves safety by separating motorized and non-motorized boats, it creates an accessible access point for disabled and able-bodied individuals, and it enhances the overall enjoyment of one of our area's beautiful natural resources." As part of the project, Montgomery Parks also installed an accessible drop-off area and walkway, three accessible parking spaces and a fully accessible picnic area with tables and grills.

The need for an accessible boat launch was initiated by Team River Runner, a non-profit organization that provides adventure and adaptive paddles sports to veterans and their families. They approached the Montgomery County Commission on Veterans Affairs about the need for an accessible launch and were assisted by the Commission to initiate the project. On Sundays from May to November, the group hosts a kayak program at Seneca Landing with patients from Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. "Having a safe and totally accessible launch for paddle craft is a game changer," said Joe Morini, Executive Director, Team River Runner. "An all–inclusive site for those with physical challenges grants equal accessibility and affords all the opportunity to find health, healing, and social connections on the beautiful waters of Seneca Creek and the Potomac River."

A second phase of the project, which will include accessibility upgrades to improve safety, capacity and enhance accessibility of the existing boat ramp for motorized boats is scheduled to begin this winter.

Accessibility
Montgomery Parks, part of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, encourages and supports the participation of individuals with disabilities. Please contact the Program Access Office at 301-495-2581 (Voice/TTY), MD Relay 7-1-1 or 800-552-7724 or ProgramAccess@MontgomeryParks.org to request a disability modification. Visit www.MontgomeryParks.org/access for more information.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT DATA ON HIRING VETERANS, DISABLED VETERANS AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The Commission on People with Disabilities was instrumental in advocating for the implementation of employment initiatives through input, testimony and outreach. These include several internship programs for persons with disabilities: Customized Employment Public Intern Project, Quest, and Project SEARCH Montgomery.

The Commission on People with Disabilities and Commission on Veterans Affairs worked with the County's Office of Human Resources (OHR) to establish employment initiatives which include hiring preferences for veteran, veteran with a disability, and person with a disability and a non-competitive hiring process for persons with disabilities, which was passed into law by Montgomery County voters in 2012.

Karen Hochberg, OHR, has reported that since the hiring preferences and non-competitive hiring process were implemented approximately:

Fiscal Year (FY)	FY20	FY19	FY18	FY17	FY16	FY15	FY14	FY13	FY12	Total
Person with a Disability (PWD)	2	2	3	8	5	5	6	9	4	44
Department non-select PWD	11	15	7	13	4	2	10	13	15	90
Veteran	29	28	9	29	23	45	51	31	18	263
Department non-select VET	30	18	8	28	25	20	35	46	36	246
Veteran with a disability (VWD)	4	1	1	6	4	3	3	1	N/A	23
Department non-select VWD	4	6	3	2	5	0	5	1	N/A	26
Non-Competitive Hire	1	3	4	5	1	7	10	X	N/A	31
Not-Specified Hires	X	X	X	1	1	1	1	X	X	4

(Non-select means that applicant was interviewed but the department did not select them. The non-selection must be based on a objective results from the interview. OHR must approve the non-selection before a department can move forward with additional interviews.)

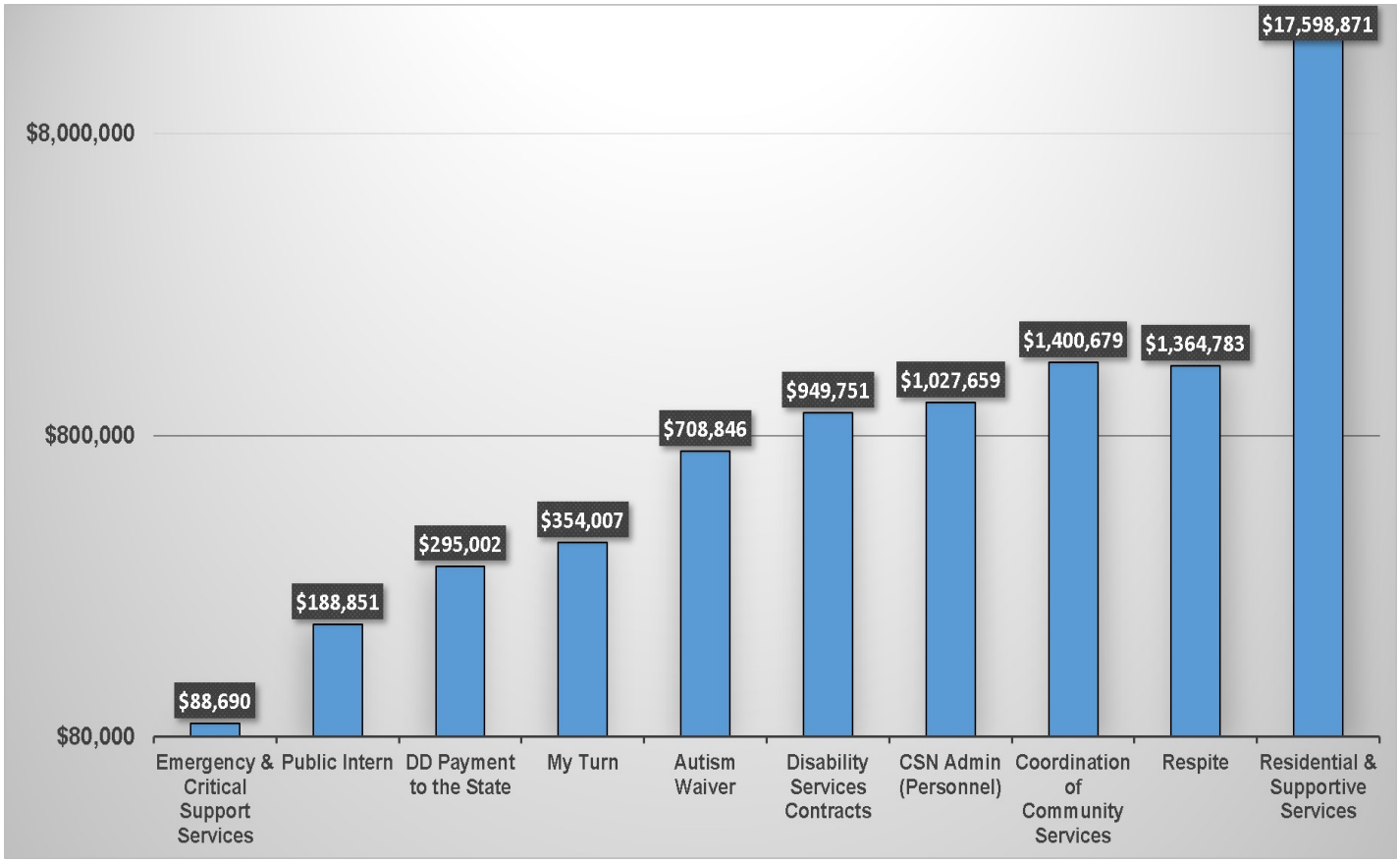
A Better Bottom Line - Montgomery County Government video regarding the employment of people with disabilities and veterans. (YouTube):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z-2A_PbxrqA (6 minutes 27 second version)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWOYNkEWE5s (11 minute 42 second version)

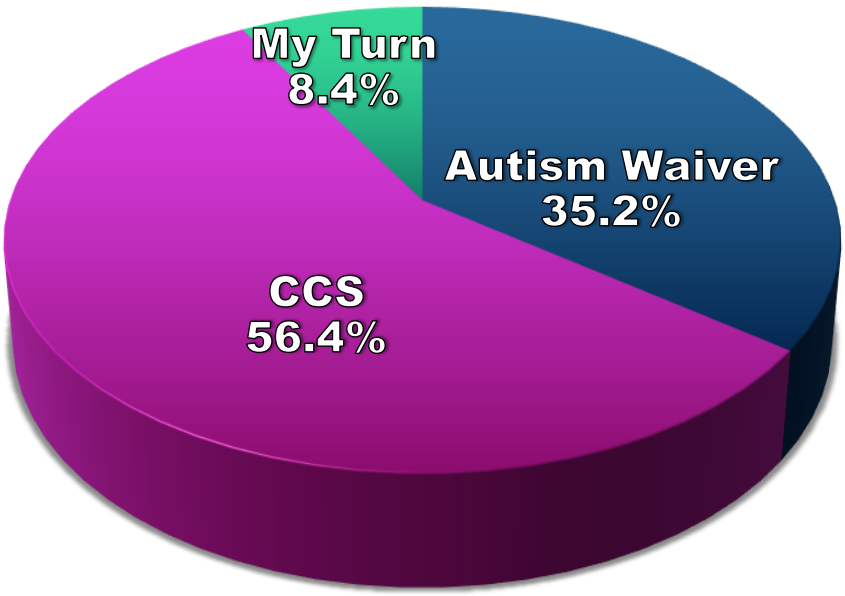
COMMUNITY SUPPORT NETWORK (CSN) FY21 BUDGET BY PROGRAM

Total CSN Budget: $23,862,605



CSN BREAKDOWN BY PROGRAM

Total CSN Clients: 838
Coordination of Community Services (CCS): 473 clients
Autism Waiver: 295 clients
My Turn: 70 clients



Data as of August 2020

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY DATA & WAITING LISTS

How Maryland Rates: When it comes to supporting Marylanders with intellectual and developmental disabilities, there are some ways in which the state has excelled, but also significant room for improvement. When it comes to waiting lists, there were 11,023 Marylanders with I/DD awaiting Home and Community Based Services. When it comes to the direct support workforce crisis, the state saw a turnover rate of 36.1%, compared to a national average of 43.8%. And, when it comes to employment opportunities for workers with I/DD in Maryland, 30% were working in integrated employment, compared to the national average of 20%.

Source: United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) Report "The Case for Inclusion 2020"

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ADMINISTRATION WAITING LIST

Data from Onesta Duke, Southern Maryland Regional Director, Developmental Disabilities Adminisration, Maryland Department of Health

As of October 13th, 2020 – fluctuates day by day

From Montgomery County:

- 885 on State DDA waiting list – these persons currently receive no services
  - 13 in crisis resolution (need services within 3 months)
  - 32 in crisis prevention (need services within a year)
  - 780 current request

Notes: Developmentally Disabled only; Supports Only excluded.

AUTISM WAIVER WAITING LIST

The Autism Waiver is administered by the Maryland Department of Education through local schools. Data from Daniel Hammond, Coordinator, The Medicaid Home & Community-Based Autism Waiver Program, Montgomery County Public Schools

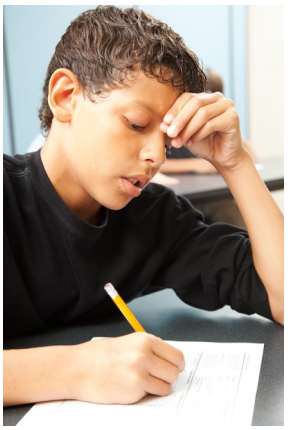
Autism Waiver Registry - As of December, 2019

Statewide number of students on the Registry: About 5,500

Registry for Montgomery County: 1,350 (This does not include enrolled students)

Note: Not all students on the Registry will qualify for the Autism Waiver Program and not all students on the Registry are enrolled in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). As a sample, out of the next 100 students 32 students were either no longer enrolled in MCPS or did not have an IEP (Individualized Education Program).

The students that came into the program this summer registered during the fall of 2011 so there was an 8.5-year wait. The Montgomery County Autism Waiver Program currently has 295 participants and statewide there are 1,200 students in the program. No diagnosis is made prior to being put on the waiting list.



WHO HAS A DISABILITY IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD? AN OVERVIEW

The U.S. Census Bureau, 2019, estimates that there are approximately **85,852 persons living in Montgomery County, MD with a disability**. According to a 2019 American Community Survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, 12.7% of Americans self-reported as having a disability. These figures excluded individuals who reside in nursing homes or other institutions.
Please note: Some individuals may have identified as having multiple disabilities and age population totals will not equal disability type totals.

2019 Disability Characteristics - Montgomery County, MD

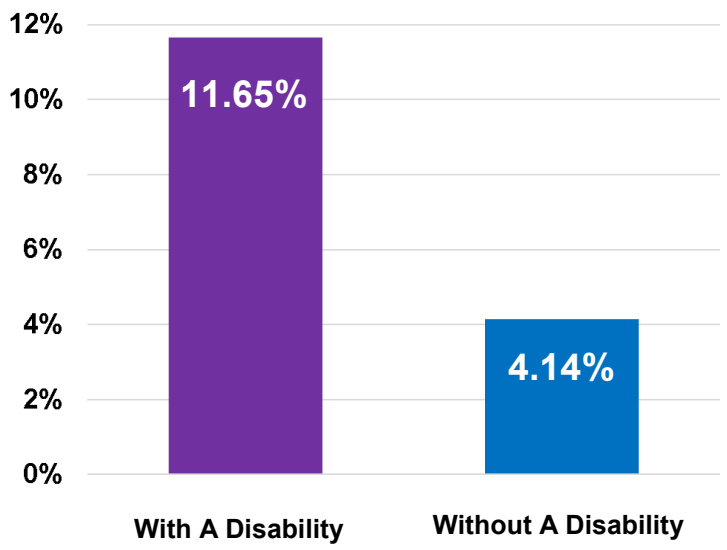
Total Population With A Disability: 85,852

Subject With A Disability	Total	Subject with a Disability	Total
Population under 5 years	**44**	**Population 65 to 74 Years**	**14,612**
With a hearing difficulty	44	With a hearing difficulty	5,229
With a vision difficulty	0	With a vision difficulty	2,611
Population 5 to 17 years	**7,594**	With a cognitive difficulty	2,072
With a hearing difficulty	663	With an ambulatory difficulty	8,813
With a vision difficulty	596	With a self-care difficulty	1,282
With a cognitive difficulty	6,188	With an independent living difficulty	4,697
With an ambulatory difficulty	844	**Population 75 and older**	**28,607**
With a self-care difficulty	1,290	With a hearing difficulty	12,028
Population 18 to 34 Years	**10,507**	With a vision difficulty	6,057
With a hearing difficulty	993	With a cognitive difficulty	7,476
With a vision difficulty	1,835	With an ambulatory difficulty	18,703
With a cognitive difficulty	7,854	With a self-care difficulty	8,024
With an ambulatory difficulty	1,575	With an independent living difficulty	16,283
With a self-care difficulty	1,736		
With an independent living difficulty	4,664		
Population 35 to 64 years	**24,488**		
With a hearing difficulty	4,897		
With a vision difficulty	3,922		
With a cognitive difficulty	9,727		
With an ambulatory difficulty	9,859		
With a self-care difficulty	4,760		
With an independent living difficulty	8,523		

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2019

0 - 17 year olds with a disability = 7,638
18 - 64 year olds with a disability = 34,995
65 and older with a disability = 43,219

Unemployment Rate - Montgomery County, MD
18 Years to 64 Years - Labor Force Participation



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2019

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SPECIAL EDUCATION

Number of Montgomery County Public School Students with Disabilities Ages 3 - 21 Receiving Special Education Services

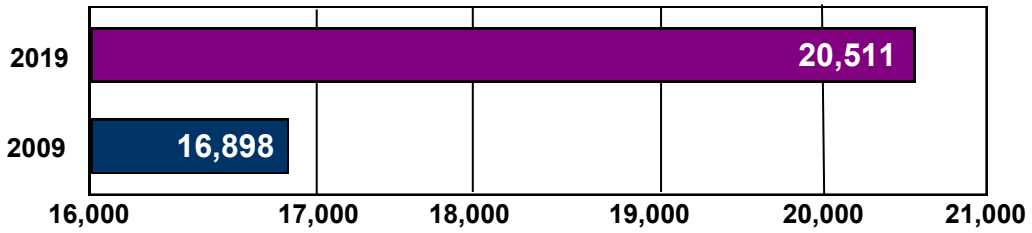
As of October 2019, there were **20,511** students with disabilities enrolled in Special Education. This population makes up **12.4%** of the County's total school enrollment of 165,267 students.

Disability Type	# of Students 2019	# of Students 2018	% Between 2019 and 2018
Autism	2,918	2,728	+ 6.7%
Deaf	79	80	- 1.2%
Deaf-Blind	4	3	+ 28.5%
Developmental Delay	3,598	3,563	+ 1.0%
Developmental Delay (Extended IFSP)	99	106	- 6.8%
Emotional Disability	883	778	+ 12.6%
Hearing Impairment	139	148	- 6.3%
Intellectual Disability	616	634	- 2.9%
Multiple Disabilities	506	451	+ 11.5%
Orthopedic Impairment	17	17	0%
Other Health Impairment	3,377	3,247	+ 3.9%
Specific Learning Disability	6,389	6,129	+ 4.1%
Speech and Language Impairment	1,821	1,897	- 4.1%
Traumatic Brain Injury	17	16	+ 6.0%
Visual Impairment	48	51	- 6.0%
Total	**20,511**	**19,848**	

Source: Maryland State Department of Education - Special Education/Early Intervention Services Census Data 10/2019

Montgomery County School Enrollment - Special Education Ages 3 to 21

Special Education enrollment has **increased by 3,613 students or 21.4%** over the last ten years.



# of students ages 3 - 21 enrolled in Special Education in Montgomery County Public Schools

Source: Maryland State Department of Education - Special Education/Early Intervention Services Census Data 10/2019

Students with Disabilities By Race Compared with General Education Students By Race - Ages 3 to 21

SWD = Students with Disabilities / GE = General Education (includes students with disabilities)

	Grand Total	Asian		Black or African American		White		Hispanic		Two or More Races	
		Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
SWD	20,511	1,568	7.6%	5,365	26.2%	5,345	26.1%	7,295	35.6%	887	4.3%
GE	165,267	23,369	14.1%	35,391	21.4%	44,436	26.9%	53,586	32.4%	8,054	4.9%

Source: Maryland State Department of Education - Special Education/Early Intervention Services Census Data 10/2019

FY21 OPERATING BUDGET TESTIMONY

Commission on People with Disabilities
Testimony before the County Council
FY21 Operating Budget
April 16, 2020
Seth Morgan, MD, Chair

The Commission on People with Disabilities thanks the County Executive and the County Council for the strong support you have provided over the years for inclusive programs for people with disabilities of all ages in Montgomery County. We recognize that the COVID-19 public health emergency is placing unprecedented safety and financial pressures on the County, and we appreciate your commitment to ensuring that people with disabilities are included and considered in the planning and evaluation of all programs or services it provides.

Pedestrian Safety - The Commission has serious concerns regarding the County Department of Transportation's new designs for bike lanes and floating bus stops throughout the County. The current plans pose a significant safety threat to pedestrians with disabilities, generally and are of especially serious concern for pedestrians who are blind, deaf, hard of hearing and/or who have mobility disabilities. The design of the "floating bus stop" is of our greatest concern. Pedestrians are required to cross the bike lane to access these bus stops. The narrowing of the streets makes it difficult for persons to exit their vehicle safely. As Charlie Crawford, former Commissioner, President of the Capital Area Guide Dog Users Inc. and a pedestrian who is blind recently commented, the risks to low vision individuals posed by these bus stops is likely to have a chilling effect on the willingness for the blind to attempt use of public transportation. Isolation of people with disabilities which has lessened since passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is likely to worsen anew. DOT's suggestions to warn cyclists to stop and yield to pedestrians requires the pedestrian to trust the cyclist to stop. This is insufficient. We ask for a moratorium on bike lanes and floating bus stops and have DOT evaluate what has happened in Silver Spring prior to establishing them elsewhere. We are also seeing the dockless scooters laying all over the sidewalks. These pose a danger to people with vision, hearing and mobility disabilities. The County should ban them for safety reasons. In the interim, we recommend that DOT funds be designated and redirected for much more needed road infrastructure maintenance use while asking for a moratorium on bike lane development due to financial strains on the County budget. This would give the County time to reassess safety concerns of bike lane design plans with a mandate to DOT to restudy the issue with particular consideration of concerns and input from people with disabilities to improve safety for all on our roads.

Accessible Ride Availability On Demand - The County imposed a 25 cent tax on Uber and Lyft rides to be used to help fund accessible rides for those who need them. The fund brings in $2M to $2.5M per year. We ask that you assist us to ensure the money is spent for accessible rides, on demand.

FY21 OPERATING BUDGET TESTIMONY CONTINUED

Developmental Disabilities Administration Transformation Plan Monitoring - We request that this committee continue to monitor the Developmental Disabilities Administration Transformation Plan and the impact on the County residents and providers. We also recommend that the County continue to work with the State on the Medicaid match. We continue to strongly recommend that the Council work with the Montgomery County Delegation to General Assembly to carefully monitor the implementation of the Developmental Disabilities Transformation Plan. We ask that the Council continue to support providers who serve people with development disabilities to ensure that they have sufficient funds to operate in the County and to attract new providers.

Employment of People with Intellectual, Physical, Behavioral and Sensory Disabilities of All Ages The County should do more to promote employment for people with disabilities of all ages in the private sector. This should be done in partnership with the Chambers of Commerce, the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation, and WorkSource Montgomery. There are waiting lists for employment services with little or no movement. The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) waiting list is 413 County residents We need to work with General Assembly to seek more funding for DORS and look as a last resort to use County dollars for those who will never get off of the DORS waiting list. We recommend that any County dollars spent on employment of people with disabilities have accountability and outcomes attached to them. We need to measure what programs are most effective and fund those effective programs.

Initiative to Improve Early Screening, Diagnosis, and Intervention for Infants and Toddlers with Developmental Delays - The Commission supports the new initiative on early infancy detection of developmental delays as early treatment has proven to lessen long term disabilities of such delays. We want to ensure that our youngest children with delays are identified and receive treatment as early as possible. Funding for this program is expected to mitigate the longer-term needs of children who otherwise are not diagnosed in a timely fashion. The Infants and Toddlers program reports that pediatricians do not always do early enough screenings, and some do not even know about the program or make poor referrals. The Commission recommends including $159,000 in this year's budget (and $1.2 to $1.5 million over 5 years) to fund this initiative. Developed by a coalition of area stakeholders that includes commissioners - the Montgomery County Coalition to Improve Early Intervention for Infants and Toddlers with Developmental Delays - to significantly improve efforts to identify and provide appropriate evidence- based interventions to children under three years of age who do become diagnosed as having a developmental delay.

We understand the need to make such adjustments in this unprecedented time, and we appreciate the County Executive's and the County Council's demonstrated commitment to serving residents who have a disability, particularly those who are most vulnerable. As you proceed with these difficult decisions, we urge you to support the critical programs that permit people with disabilities to live safely in an inclusive community.

E-SCOOTER LETTER TO COUNTY EXECUTIVE ELRICH

November 22, 2019

Via: Electronic Facsimile

The Honorable County Executive Marc Elrich.
Dear Mr. Elrich:

On behalf of the Commission on People with Disabilities, I am writing today to inform you of significant concerns that the Commission has regarding the potential barrier and risk to the safe use of sidewalks posed by e-scooters, and to request that the County Council and MCDOT: 1. Make fully available any evaluations on e-scooter collisions and public-right-of-way violations, and 2. consider implementation of specific lock to/tethering requirements for e-scooters and guidance that encourages safer shared use of the County's sidewalks and trails.

Just in the short trial period of time, to date, the experience of members of our community and reports of experience in other jurisdictions around e-scooters and violations of public-rights-of-way is very concerning. We have seen scooters left on sidewalks and at curb-cuts not only endangering the blind and people with low vision but also blocking users of wheelchairs and other mobility devices. In addition, we have seen motorized scooter users zipping in and out around pedestrians on sidewalks.

Our experience mirrors that of San Francisco, where a mid-point review of their scooter program reported, "When scooters appeared on San Francisco's streets in the spring of 2018, public concerns focused on how scooter programs initially negatively impacted safety and accessibility of San Francisco's sidewalks due to illegal sidewalk riding and scooters left in locations that impeded pedestrian access and created tripping hazards."

There were both unpermitted and another permitted pilot scooter programs in 2018 to early 2019 in San Francisco. Because of their experiences, San Francisco made it a requirement that scooters had to be locked or tethered to a fixed structure when dropped off. This was felt to be the most practical way to assure that pedestrian right of way is kept free of obstacles. While not perfect, the midway evaluation of the program seemed to note improvement from this requirement.

During the unregulated (two month) time period in San Francisco, there were close to 2,000 complaints of scooters blocking the pedestrian right of way. After the "lock to tethering" requirement was instituted, the incidence of similar complaints (over a five-month period) dropped to 624 reports.

Other jurisdictions have made recommendations that docking stations for dropping off scooters be put in heavy use areas. In San Francisco, fines on scooter companies for improperly placed scooters (the companies and not the individual users are fined) were increased from $100 to $500.

We reference San Francisco because of their detailed pilot and evaluation as well as their transparent permitting process. This allowed San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Board as well as public citizens access to the information and data behind the decision-making process.

Given this experience in San Francisco, the Commission on People with Disabilities respectfully requests that all current and future scooter pilot programs in the County incorporate some of those same protections into our programs that have been successful in other places, such as San Francisco. Specific scooter parking requirements and guidelines are included as appendices in their final Powered Scooter Share Permit Application which is publicly available on the SFMTA website https://www.sfmta.com/sites/default/files/reports-and-documents/2019/07/appendix_1_-_powered_scooter_parking_requirements.pdf .

We also request that any scooter programs incorporated into the County include regular data reporting guidelines to include, usage, collisions, violations, and public right-of-way complaints.

The Commission on People with Disabilities is committed to safe, reliable, and equitable transportation. To ensure that the County continues be accountable to its residents with disabilities and is supportive of positive change, we request to be provided, in a timely fashion, reports (both in-progress reviews and final reports) on current and future scooter programs , as well as any permits, requirements, or guidance that may be crafted, as they are being generated.

Sincerely,

Seth A. Morgan, MD, FAAN
Chair

C: Nancy Navarro, President, County Council
Christopher Conklin, Director, Department of Transportation
Raymond Crowel, Director, Department of Health and Human Services

TESTIMONY RE: BILL 8-20 - E-SCOOTERS

Montgomery County Council
Transportation and Environment Committee Hearing
Bill 8-20, E-Scooters - Operating Requirements and Registration
Seth Morgan, Chair – Patricia Gallalee, Vice-Chair
June 9, 2020

The Commission on People with Disabilities reiterates the significant concerns that the Commission has regarding the potential barrier and risk to the safe use of sidewalks posed by e-scooters.

We continue to receive concerns from members of our community and reports of experiences in other jurisdictions around e-scooters and violations of public-rights-of-way. The issue specifically mentioned is that of scooters left on sidewalks and at curb-cuts blocking users of wheelchairs and other mobility devices, and posing a danger to blind and visually impaired individuals. In addition, we have seen, on multiple occasions motorized scooters used on sidewalks.

We recognize that these concerns are mentioned in the MOU (Article III.A.4.b):

> *Participating Company will work to ensure that Participating Company Dockless Vehicles are parked at public bicycle racks or on public sidewalks or other public areas in a manner that does not impede pedestrian access…does not affect access to street furniture, does not interfere with traffic operations, bus stop operation, driveway access, crosswalks, ADA ramps…*

However, there is no real mechanism to decrease the number of dockless vehicles that may be parked illegally. The provision in Bill 8-20 at 7-5 states that, "The County Police Department must enforce the requirements of this chapter…" but it does not specifically indicate that the parking requirements would be enforceable. "Lack of widespread enforcement of restrictions on parking or sidewalk use" was a concern expressed by the Access for All (AFA) Advisory Committee on Dockless Vehicles in the Region in their December 16, 2019 memorandum.

Director Conklin in his letter of January 2, 2020 indicated that there had been conversations with the County Council and the Police on expanded regulation of scooters. However both the letter and the current MOU only highlight the use of a complaints-driven system to address scooters that may have been parked in areas that block public rights of way and access for people with disabilities. While this lets us know how many are improperly parked, it doesn't include any actions to decrease the problem over time. There is no penalty or incentive for either the individual using the scooter nor the vendor.

In some jurisdictions, fines have been levied on scooter companies for improperly placed scooters (the companies and not the individual users are fined) with the company then seeking redress from the individual. In San Francisco, last year, those fines were increased, clearly highlighting an ongoing need.

We understand that the question around fines for scooter companies or individual riders for improperly parked scooters may be something for consideration as part of a permanent dockless vehicle program that will require a hearing and Council action. But because this is such a critical issue for people with disabilities, we deem it critical to be considered <u>now</u>, while the program is still in its developmental phase. For both vendors and riders, making these changes later can be quite difficult and require not only altering policies and processes, but addressing changed expectations.

We strongly support the recommendation from the Montgomery County Department of Transportation's (MCDOT) Dockless Bikeshare Evaluation Summary that could apply to scooters, which was to: increase the supply of parking racks or corrals, and to designate specific areas for company rebalancing in commercial districts. This would be particularly beneficial for people with disabilities in high pedestrian traffic areas. The call for more orderly parking and corrals is a common theme in community feedback. In addition, other jurisdictions have made recommendations that docking stations for dropping off scooters be put in heavy use areas.

We strongly support the MOU's inclusion of regular data reporting and hope that this would include regular public posting of all data around usage, collisions, violations, and public right-of-way complaints.

The Commission on People with Disabilities is committed to safe, reliable, and equitable transportation. It is our goal to ensure that the County continues be accountable to its residents with disabilities and is supportive of positive change. The Commission stands ready to provide any additional information, concerns, or recommendations on the e-scooter program and people with disabilities that you might require going forward.

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS RE: COMPLETE STREETS DRAFT AND VISION ZERO

June 12, 2020

The Honorable Marc Elrich, County Executive *Via: Electronic Facsimile*
The Honorable Sidney Katz, Council President
The Honorable Thomas Hucker, Council Vice-President; Chair, T & E Committee

Re: Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities Comments and Recommendations on Montgomery County Complete Streets Draft, May 2020 and Vision Zero

On behalf of the Commission on People with Disabilities, I am writing to convey to you the Commission's concerns regarding the proposed draft May 2020 Montgomery County Complete Streets document that overlaps not just Vision Zero and also include the Bicycle Master Plan, the Pedestrian Master Plan and encumbrances to safe sidewalk use such as scooters and outdoor café seating as well. To exclude any topics that may not fall technically within Vision Zero does not address all the factors that may affect pedestrian, bicyclist and scooter user's safety. Currently, the U.S. Access Board does not have specific standards for bike lanes or floating stops. What they do have is standards for bus stops which would still apply to floating bus stops. Those standards can be found in the ADA standards (sections 810 and 218) and generally speaking about bike lanes the Access Board's position is that they should be treated like any other lane of traffic.

Persons who are blind have commented that the proposed street design standards are a disruption to what the norm has been in the United States and abroad and that if adopted will have a far-reaching impact on how people who are blind or who have a physical disability will get around in their daily lives. Not being able to safely exit a vehicle or to walk from a vehicle to a curb quickly without avoiding a bike lane is dangerous. The placement of these bike lanes is an incredible disruption to most of the population and has not been thought through, considering the needs of the entire community. There has got to be a better solution than forcing cars to park three feet from the curb and have the driver step into traffic to exit the vehicle. The plan has vague designs that do not provide enough detail to make an adequate assessment. For example, not having street parking for persons with a disability who uses a wheelchair is not addressed. People with disabilities are not represented in the plan. According to a 2018 American Community Survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, 12.6% of Americans self-reported as having a disability. and is growing as our population ages. The plan only slightly touches on some of the past issues the Commission has raised. The Commission asked to help with designs to provide advice, but now we have the document that does not show that our recommendations have been included. In fact, the opposite. Hence, I will enumerate major areas of concern as they have been discussed by commissioners and members of the community at our commission meetings.

1. Sidewalks Generally and Schools Route Safety: There are areas in Montgomery County where sidewalks are not available. It is self-evident that in areas close to schools in which students (of primary and secondary schools especially) must walk to and from schools, having them have to walk in the streets alongside of commuter traffic is unacceptable, especially on the main traffic arteries leading to the school This seems to be a self-evident fact yet other DOT projects such as bicycle lanes are given priority over providing at least one safe travel route for children/pedestrians. Further, residents using assistive devices (canes, wheelchairs or other devices) in neighborhoods where sidewalks are absent must travel in roadways. It is noted that the design plan does not include any specific recommendations for safety of children in school zones. Issues such as posted signage with school times and a yellow flashing signal is not included nor is it consistent with all schools. On page 207 of the Montgomery County Complete Streets draft, there are no safety speed targets for school zones while schools are in session.
2. Vision Zero: This term is insensitive to a segment of the disability community; those with visual impairment. Though catchy, the name the project may be offensive to some who have "zero vision".
3. Sidewalk Encumbrances: Just as planters, telephone poles and poorly maintained sidewalks can be challenges to the blind or those dependent on mobility assistive devices, so too are sidewalk restaurant seating areas and poorly parked scooters and bicycles. As there are for restaurant seating areas, so too the scooters and bicycle users should be required to leave their devices at designated docking areas that keep them out of pedestrian travel lanes. Because it is hard to design these is not a reason to ignore the problem or pretend it is not there.

3. Bicycle Lanes: People with disabilities support and recognize the benefits of bicycling but bicycling should not be at the expense of others not being able to fully participate in community life. Bicycle lanes pose not just a danger to those with disabilities (especially those who are blind, have mobility limitations or are deaf) but also to the bicyclist who may be injured or killed by a collision. Minimizing risk must be a priority for the wellbeing of all. Typically, sidewalk and bus stops are located on the sidewalk and this is what people are familiar with. This changes the infrastructure e of what people know. When a pedestrian must cross a bicycle lane (as is needed to reach a bus stop separated from the sidewalk by a bicycle lane; aka, a "floating bus stop"), inadequate designing or risk prevention modalities make a pedestrian-cyclist accident likely. Dedicated lights to stop cyclists when a pedestrian is in transit to or from the "floating bus stop" should be seriously considered for all such bus stops. The design of the green colored bicycle lanes is confusing for drivers and service animals such as seeing eye dogs are colorblind so that the green lanes are just as invisible to the animal as it is to the animal's blind owner making the risk even more acute. The current design being implementing is likely to need potentially costly retrofitting. At a time of financial challenges in the County government budget, pushing forward with a construction plan that has foreseeable problems that might be minimized by reconsideration of the plans seems fiscally imprudent. Even more concerning is the internationally burgeoning number of lawsuits being brought by disability groups due to the design flaw of the types incorporated into the county's plans. This is yet another reason to carefully reassess the designs of this project prior to construction continuation. The current installations in Silver Spring make it confusing and unsafe for rivers.
4. E-scooters: We are pleased to learn this week that the Department of Transportation recommends that they only be allowed on sidewalks that are 5 feet wide. We are hopeful Council will take action to ensure they are not just abandoned on the sidewalks, as they are now.
5. Vehicular Traffic and Parking Concerns: In addition to the risks of worsening gridlock and creating confusion as to where people drive that is likely to accompany removal or narrowing of lanes available to cars in order to accommodate new bicycle lanes, the changes are also going to make parking by people who require accessible parking more difficult. By narrowing the lanes and taking away parking capability next to sidewalks to put in bike lanes, people who must deploy a ramp to exit their vehicles will be unable to without (illegally) blocking the bicycle lanes. Further, narrowing the lanes mean that those who are able to exit their vehicles without the need of a ramp but use wheelchairs or other ambulatory assistance devices will be forced (along with their service animal if they have one) into traffic that is already in a narrowed lane. They and their service animal will be at increased danger of being hit by traffic travelling past them. Those who use paratransit services will be limited as to where they can go because the bicycle lanes limit where they are able to get out of the van.

Finally, the multiplicity of factors that combine to make pedestrian safety less secure is likely to have an unintended, chilling consequence. The foreseeable risk of injury or death has already made some with disabilities in Montgomery County to curtail their use of public transportation or even to go out to use sidewalks. Before the accessibility provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), many people with disabilities withdrew from participation with their communities. The ADA mandated changes such as curb cuts and many other accommodations that allowed people with disabilities the security and independence to live, work and become part of the fabric of their communities. Current changes are making those with disabilities reconsider their safety in their participation with the communities they live in. Unfortunately, fear of injuries caused by the infrastructure changes being made to their communities may result in a fear-related, self-imposed isolation that harkens back to the pre-ADA era. This street design plan was developed to ensure bicyclists have lanes, but they may prevent pedestrians from being safe on the streets and hence we recommend getting feedback from pedestrians and drivers.

Thank you for the opportunity to share the concerns of the Commission. We would like to work with the County in a relationship that seriously considers and reacts positively to the access and safety concerns we bring to the planning process. Because it appears that all parities do not fully understand the laws of the road, we recommend that an aggressive community education campaign be launched to help drivers, bikers, walkers and scooter riders share the road and sidewalks and get where they're going safely. Please feel free to contact me to further discuss.

Sincerely,

Seth A. Morgan, MD, FAAN, Chair

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS RE: COMPLETE STREETS DRAFT AND VISION ZERO

July 1, 2020

The Honorable Marc Elrich, County Executive *Via: Electronic Facsimile*
The Honorable Sidney Katz, Council President
The Honorable Thomas Hucker, Council Vice-President; Chair, T & E Committee
Wade Holland, Vision Zero Coordinator

Re: Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities Comments and Additional Recommendations on Montgomery County Complete Streets, May 2020 and Vision Zero

On June 16, the Commission on People with Disabilities sent you recommendations regarding the Montgomery County Complete Streets document. Upon further discussion on the issues, we have additional comments. The Commission recommends that sidewalks generally, that take into consideration the needs of people with disabilities, and schools route safety should be the first priority as nearly everyone uses sidewalks or should have access to a sidewalk and not be forced to walk in the streets. One motivation for the Complete Streets Design Guide is the County's Vision Zero Action Plan which has a goal to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries by 2030.

This past year there were severe accidents regarding grade school and high school students, and it Is noted that school safety issues are not addressed in the document. On page 207 of the Montgomery County Complete Streets draft, there are no safety speed targets for school zones while schools are in session. The document does not specifically address school safety standards. The guide is not specifically focused on schools and is a general level view of all streets. We recommend that school safety be addressed as part of Vision Zero planning.

Over the years the Commission has been sending numerous letters to advocate for people with disabilities, greater accessibility and transportation safety. The Commission has recommended to cease installation of the bicycle lanes and floating bus stops until a safer design can be developed or do alternative planning to accommodate bicyclists. Our comments don't just protect the lives of persons with disabilities but everyone. Vision Zero needs to seriously consider the impact of the design and how it is creating a dangerous situation for 98% of the public who will not be using the bike lanes. According to 2013-2017 ACS 5-year estimates, 1.1% of commuters in principal cities travel to work by bicycle. As gas prices decline the number of people who bike to work declines (Bloomberg article, Jan. 2019) which has been an ongoing trend. Sidewalk design is consistent nationally and internationally, which is critical for people with disabilities, especially individuals with low or no vision. Significant changes that have been proposed will create confusion for people who have come to know safely use the typical design of sidewalks.

The proposed design and in areas where it has been implemented significantly narrows the road and the parking area on the street requiring the driver to exit and passengers on the driver's side to exit the vehicle into traffic, passengers on the other side exit into the bike lane. Bikes travel between 15 and 30 miles an hour creating a dangerous situation to get to the curb. The millions of dollars that will go to creating and maintaining the bikes lanes, not to mention the educational component to teach all residents about what all the new markings mean for drivers and pedestrians. This money should be supporting safety measures for the larger population rather than creating a street design that endangers their lives. It does not make sense and it doesn't serve the community as evidenced by the statistics we have sent over the past year. We would recommend that bike paths be installed similar to the C&O Canal that then leads to access to public transportation.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS RE: COMPLETE STREETS DRAFT AND VISION ZERO CONTINUED

The design has another incredible flaw in that it assumes people live close to where they work. The average commute here is further because of the cost to live in this county. Bike lanes favor the upper middle class who can afford to live in neighborhoods near where they work. Improved sidewalks, access to public transportation, additional crosswalks, and affordable housing nearby public transportation would be a benefit a broader population. $600,000 townhouses near the Twinbrook Metro and the high-priced rental properties at Pike and Rose are just a few examples of the disparity that exists.

The Commission believes that the plan has zero vision about how we get around and unfairly endangers 98% of the population, and the most harm to people who move slower or differently due to age or a disability. Not to mention the people who wear noise canceling headphones and read their phones while walking.

It is our belief that there are other more important transportation issues such as Increased sidewalks in all neighborhoods, fixing potholes in roads and in general road maintenance. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this critical safety issue for our community. Please feel free to contact the Commission with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Seth A. Morgan, MD, FAAN, Chair

c: Dr. Raymond Crowel, Director, DHHS
Dr. Odile Brunetto, Chief, Aging & Disability Services, DHHS

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING BOARD TESTIMONY
COMPLETE STREETS DESIGN DRAFT

Commission on People with Disabilities
July 23, 2020

Seth Morgan, MD – Chair ● Patricia Gallalee – Vice-Chair

The most important priority of the Commission on People with Disabilities in regard to transportation is to ensure pedestrian safety for everyone, including children/students, people with disabilities, older adults and the general public. Currently, the County has numerous transportation plans and projects which affect pedestrian safety, including:

- Bicycle Master Plan
- Safe Streets to Schools
- Pedestrian Master plan
- Vision Zero
- Visually Impaired Urban Navigation Study and Pilot Design
- Complete Streets Design Draft

There are probably many others which we're not aware of. This fragmented approach is not only confusing for the public, but also leads to haphazard design that puts people of all ages and abilities at risk. For example, specific school safety issues have been left out of the Complete Streets Design Plan. We are asking the County to align the plans to have a consistent and comprehensive approach to pedestrian safety. This will result in effective transportation planning with the goal of-preventing serious or fatal accidents resulting in making the County a safer community.

On page 8 of the document, there are six common principles from Montgomery County's Vision Zero Action Plan. We believe this plan fails to comply with all except for the first one that states: "Transportation–related deaths and severe injuries are unacceptable." The remaining 5 principles are not achievable with this existing draft.

Below are several serious safety issues with the Complete Streets draft we would like to bring to your attention:

1. Bus stops should be located on the sidewalk curb, not a floating bus stop, so the location is predictable and consistent with the most common design standards nationally and internationally. The design of the floating bus stops poses a severe safety risk to people~~s~~ who are blind, have low vision, or who have a mobility limitation. We strongly recommend that a moratorium be placed on the installation of floating bus stops and that the existing ones be removed based on the concerns raised by numerous individuals who are blind and advocacy and support organizations.

2. The Commission is not averse to making bike riding safer. The US Census American Community Survey indicates that 1.1% of the population commutes to work. The County should consider locating bike paths on roads that do not have bus routes or consider putting bike lanes in the middle of the road. This would maintain the use of sidewalks by pedestrians of all stages of life who need them to participate and be included in community life.

3. Continuous sidewalks should exist on main arteries to schools. As you know, this past year there were accidents regarding grade school and high school students, and it Is noted that school safety issues are not specifically addressed in the document. On page 207 of the Montgomery County Complete Streets draft, there are no safety speed targets for school zones while schools are in session. The document does not specifically address having consistent school safety standards. We recommend that school safety be incorporated as part of Vision Zero planning.

4. For passengers of taxis, paratransit/MetroAccess and other vehicles there needs to be **safe pick-up and drop-off zones**. Page 101 of the draft guide mentions them in the context of rideshare vehicles and taxis, but many drivers need to safely drop-off passengers at the curb, especially passengers who have difficulty walking. Also, MetroAccess drivers leave their vehicle, place a traffic cone at the traffic side of the vehicle, and guide riders who are blind and who need assistance finding the door to the building, which may take 5-10 minutes.

5. The current design does not address accessible street parking. The current reduction in road width makes it difficult if not impossible for the average person to safely get out of their car without being hit by an oncoming vehicle. It is impossible for drivers who exit their car on the driver side with their wheelchair and a service animal. We request that DOT revisit the policy given the fact that the 2011 Proposed Guidelines do include designs for accessible street parking.

It appears that transportation funding may be diminishing due to COVID-19. Bus routes have been cut to 40% and rail to 30%. We encourage you to use precious funds to ensure that people have adequate access to public transportation and that sidewalks are installed and maintained as needed. We recommend that the County slow down and carefully evaluate transportation projects that do not have direct, immediate and significant safety value for residents of all ages and abilities.

It is the responsibility of this Commission to advise the County on issues and the needs of people with disabilities, yet we were not approached to provide input into the bike plan and other plans prior to it going for approval by the Council. We recommend that all transportation plans be vetted ahead of time and be signed off on by agency American with Disabilities Act Compliance Managers and the Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities. There is a saying “Nothing for us, without us”. And surely not after it is done, but in the pre-planning stages. This will save both lives and resources.

c: The Honorable Marc Elrich, County Executive
The Honorable Sidney Katz, President, County Council
Dr. Raymond Crowel, Director, DHHS
Dr. Odile Brunetto, Chief, Aging & Disability Services, DHHS

MONTGOMERY COLLEGE
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & CONTINUING EDUCATION

240-567-5188 (V) ● E-mail: wdce@montgomerycollege.edu
www.montgomerycollege.edu/workforce-development-continuing-education

The Graduate Transition Program, (GTP)

The Graduate Transition Program at Montgomery College, Rockville Campus, is a custom-tailored learning community program that offers students a unique post-secondary opportunity to further their formal education. The objective of the program is to enable students, while in a supportive college environment, to transition to greater independent living through developmentally appropriate educational, vocational, and life -skill services. This two-year, tuition-based, credit-free certificate program focuses on basic academic skills, and enhances students' potential success as productive citizens in the community.

The College schedule consists of two 14-week semesters, for two years. Students receive academic instruction 3 hours per day, Monday through Friday. Small class sizes, experienced faculty and staff, and individual classroom assistants encourage an interactive and dynamic learning environment designed specifically for students with special needs. Classes offered include Reading and Writing, Science, Health, Anatomy, World History and Current Events, Communications and Public Speaking, Art, Computers, and more. During the student's two-year period, Montgomery College works with the DDA providers to offer volunteer position, internships, and paid employment. This program is offered on the Rockville campus of Montgomery College.

Connecting Reading and Writing Program

This program connects Reading and Writing Skills students need to prepare for college level course work. The program is designed to enhance reading comprehension, writing skills, and build vocabulary. Students learn and practice reading and writing skills by enrolling in both courses.

During 25 sessions, students receive instruction in reading comprehension and vocabulary building. Students learn to identify the main idea, follow a sequence of events, and recognize supporting details. Students improve their writing and speaking skills when they learn to summarize and outline reading materials, take better notes, and build your vocabulary. The program offers students the tools necessary to develop better writing skills. Reading and writing skills are combined in this class in a comprehensive, systematic process. Students learn to write descriptive and narrative paragraphs, use punctuation correctly, and compose demonstration speeches. The program helps prepare students for the college's assessment test, Accuplacer.

This program is offered on the Rockville and Takoma Park campuses of Montgomery College.

Driver's Education with Additional Support

This course provides the exact same MVA curriculum as SFT-043 Driver Education, but with built-in supports. Montgomery College's Driving School and its instructors are Maryland MVA licensed and certified. Their additional support instructors are dually certified in Special Education. This course, in a small class-room environment, prepares rookie drivers to test for a Maryland driver's license. Additional Supports include, but are not limited to:

- Differentiated instruction, supplemental aides and supports including a multi-sensory approach to learning.
- Behind the wheel is one-on-one instruction with a dually certified MVA and MSDE Special Education Educator
- Smaller class size
- Quizzes and tests are read aloud
- Extra time is granted to students for quizzes and tests
- Manipulatives (by cars) are used to better explain situations
- A copy of all PowerPoints and instructor notes are provided to the student.

If you have a Disability Support Request you need to call Natalie Martinez, Disability Support Services Counselor at 240-567-4118 (V) or e-mail Natalie Martinez@montgomerycollege.edu at least four weeks prior to the start of the class to arrange for accommodations and/or assistive technology.

DESIGN FOR LIFE PROPERTY TAX INCENTIVE PROGRAM

The Design for Life (DFL) Property Tax Incentive Program provides 3 tiers of property tax incentives to make homes more universally accessible. The target audience is all homeowners and buyers, not a specific audience or segment of our community.

1. **Accessible Feature tax incentives** are for certain features that are permanently installed to improve access to or within an owner's principal residence (not limited to single-family homes).
2. **Level I (VISITable) tax incentives** are available for permanent installations to any new or existing single-family homes, townhomes and duplexes that meet Level I accessibility threshold.
3. **Level II (LIVEable) tax incentives** are available for permanent installations to any new or existing single-family homes, townhomes and duplexes that meet Level II accessibility threshold. For new home construction a school impact tax credit may be available for projects meeting Level I and Level II Accessibility standards.

Whether you are a first time homebuyer, young family, active adult, or person living with a temporary or permanent impairment, these additional design elements will enhance your home — and at the same time, meet your needs and your visitors' needs throughout your life.

The Design for Life **Accessibility Standards for Level I (VISITable) and Level II (LIVEable)** incorporate design elements such as a no-step entrance, which make it easier and safer to accommodate a person living with a temporary or permanent disabilities, accommodate friends or relatives who have mobility disabilities or even bring in a baby stroller or move in large furniture. Ultimately, homes that incorporate these features will help people live in their homes for their lifetime more comfortably, conveniently and cost effectively. In 2018 this program was awarded a Natnional Association of Counties (NACO) Achievement Award.

Who Needs An Accessible Home? You Do!

1. Live longer in the home you love.
2. Welcome all guests with diverse mobility.
3. Increase the value of your home.
4. Qualify for property tax credits.
5. Make everyone feel welcome.

DESIGN FOR LIFE PROPERTY TAX INCENTIVE PROGRAM - AT A GLANCE

Accessibility	Property Tax Credit—runs with property	School Impact Tax Credit	Applicability	Program annual limit	Type of residence ownership
Feature 1. no-step front door entrance or a no-step entrance to another location providing access to the main living space 2. ramp creating a no-step entrance 3. interior doorway w/32-inch clear opening 4. exterior doorway w/32-inch clear opening + exterior lighting controlled from inside the residence or automatic or continuously on; 5. walls around a toilet, tub, or shower reinforced and properly installed grab bars 6. maneuverable bathroom or kitchen 7. an exterior or interior elevator or lift or stair glide unit; 8. accessibility-enhanced bathroom, including a walk-in or roll-in shower or tub 9. alarm, appliance, and control structurally integrated to assist with a sensory disability	50% of eligible costs Up to $2500 less other subsidy Amount of credit that exceeds tax imposed carries over	NA	Expenditures in excess of $500 Incurred within 12 months of application	$100,000	Multi-family condo Attached sf Detached sf
Level I (Visitable) • permanent addition • single family residence • at least one no-step entrance • connected to an accessible route • to a place to visit on the entry level • a usable powder room or bathroom, and • a 32-inch nominal clear width interior door	Up to $3000 less other subsidy including school impact tax credit Maximum credit to be applied in any tax year is $2000 and excess credit carries over	5% of the single family houses in project-$500/Level I house 10% of the single family houses in project-$1,000/Level I house 25% of the single family houses in project-$1,500/Level I house 30% of the single family houses in project-$2,000/level I house Applies only where there is no bonus density for DFL units	Expenditures in excess of $500 Incurred within 12 months of application	$500,000	Attached or detached single family
Level II (livable) Visitable criteria above PLUS Accessible circulation path that connects the accessible entrance to an accessible kitchen, a full bath, and at least one accessible bedroom	Up to $10,000 less other subsidy including school impact tax credit Maximum credit to be applied in any tax year is $2000 and excess credit carries over	NA	Expenditures in excess of $500 Incurred within 12 months of application	$500,000	Attached or detached single family

DISABILITY NETWORK DIRECTORY

An online directory of providers, agencies, businesses and advocacy organizations.

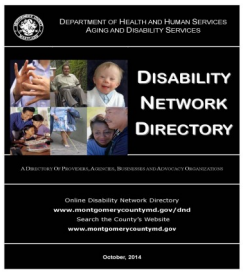
www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dnd

Find resources and information on the following topics:

- Access & ADA-Related Issues including Curb Cuts & Sidewalks
- Adaptive & Medical Equipment
- Adult Day Centers
- Advocacy
- AIDS/HIV Resources
- Assistive Technology
- Autism Resources
- Blind/Low Vision Resources including Macular Degeneration
- Brain Injury Resources
- Case Management
- Child Care including Arc Programs
- Children & Youth Services
- Clothing
- Commissions on People with Disabilities (Statewide & Regional)
- Computer Support/Training
- Conflict Resolution
- Consumer Protection
- Counseling
- Deaf Resources including Sign Language Interpreting Services & Cart Reporting
- Deaf-Blind Resources
- Dental Services
- Developmental Disabilities
- Disability Specific Resources
- Education Resources - Adults
- Education - Children & Youth including Assessment Services
- Emergency Resources
- Employment including Employment Funding, Business Assistance & Job Lines / Websites
- Estate Planning
- Evacuations & Disaster Resources
- Faith-Based Resources
- Family Supports
- Financial including Financial Assistance, Financial Counseling & Financial Loans / Grants for Accessibility
- Food including HELP, Food Warehouses, Pantries and Soup Kitchens, Home Delivery & Preparation
- Furniture
- Government - Local Depts of Social Services
- Hard of Hearing Resources
- Health & Wellness
- Health Insurance
- Home Care Services - Funding Resources
- Home Care and Home Health Providers
- Hospice Services
- Hospitals
- Housing including Housing Providers, Financial Assistance, Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC), Legal Issues, Home Modifications & Design Consultation, & Ramp, Lift, Elevator & Automated Door Providers/ Installation
- Independent Living Skills
- Learning Disabilities including Testing & Diagnostic Services
- Legal Services including Disability Law Attorneys, Estate Law Attorneys, & Free, Low Cost & Pro Bono
- Legislation
- Loan Closets
- Long Term Care
- Medicaid Waivers
- Medical Care Services
- Medication Resources
- Mental Health Resources
- Parenting Supports
- Parking
- Recreation including Day & Summer Camps
- Respite Care
- Service Animals
- Spinal Cord Injury
- Substance Abuse
- Support Groups including Sibling Support
- Transitioning Youth
- Veterans
- Volunteer Services

PUBLICATIONS PROVIDED BY THE COMMISSION

Publications Provided by the Commission on People with Disabilities



Disability Network Directory: A directory of provider agencies, businesses and advocacy organizations that offer local, state and national resources for people with disabilities. The Disability Network Directory is available online at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dnd.

Transportation Network Directory : A comprehensive listing of public, private and non-profit transportation in the Washington Metropolitan Region, State of Maryland and beyond. Includes information for people with disabilities and adults 50+. This guide was compiled to assist County residents to better coordinate their transportation needs. To download a copy of the guide visit www.montgomerycountymd.gov/tnd.

To request alternative formats of these publications, please call 240-777-1246 (V), MD Relay 711, or e-mail DHHSWebsite@montgomerycountymd.gov.

STAY ALERT!

You are encouraged to sign up for emergency alerts from **Alert Montgomery**. Montgomery County officials can use this alerting system to contact you before or during a major crisis, emergency, or severe weather alert. Alerts MAY be broadcast via the following delivery methods:

- E-mail account (work, home, other)
- Cell phone (SMS Text)
- Everbridge Mobile Member App
- Home phone (Voice)
- Cell phone (Voice)
- TTY device
- Twitter: Following "@ReadyMontgomery"
- Facebook: Add "Montgomery County MD Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security" in friends

While signing up for Alert Montgomery is free of charge, your wireless carrier may charge you a fee to receive text messages.

https://alert.montgomerycountymd.gov

BE READY MAKE A PLAN

Montgomery County encourages all residents to put together a plan for emergencies. The County has emergency response plans in place for dealing with emergencies from snow storms to terrorist attacks.

However, each person is strongly encouraged to develop their own personal plan. Montgomery County has developed the Plan 9 Guide for residents. It is a simple guide to nine essential items to help residents shelter in-place during emergencies.

We also encourage people to request a File of Life that allows you to fill out your medical history and rescue personnel are trained to look for this File on your refrigerator. To request a File of Life, call the Health and Human Services Aging and Disability Resource Unit: 240-777-3000 (V), 240-777-2545 (TTY), or visit www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OEMHS

Plan 9

Collect these **nine essential items** to help you shelter-in-place in the event of an emergency.

1. Water: *One gallon* per person per day for three days. Replace the water every 6 months.

2. Food: *Non-perishables* such as canned or packaged food. Enough to last 3 to 5 days per person.

3. Clothes: *One change* of clothes and footwear per person. Consider packing blankets, rain-gear, and outerwear in case of severe weather.

4. Medications: *Three days worth* of prescription medications. Be sure to mark the expiration dates and change as needed.

5. Flashlight: *A bright flashlight* and extra batteries. Do not use candles as they are fire hazards.

6. Can Opener: *Manual can opener* in case there's no electric power. Buying foods with pull-open cans is also helpful.

7. Radio: *Battery-powered radio* and extra batteries. Crank operated or solar powered radios are also helpful.

8. Hygiene Items: Basics like soap, toilet paper and a toothbrush. Moist toilettes are useful.

9. First Aid: Basics like antiseptic, gloves, bandages, and non-prescription medicines. Many stores have pre-made kits.

COMMISSION PRESENTATIONS FOR 2019 - 2020

Oct 2019:

National Disability Employment Awareness Month – *The Honorable Marc Elrich, County Executive*

Dockless Vehicle Pilot Program Update – *Gary Erenrich, Special Assistant to Director, and Sandra Brecher, Chief, Commuter Services, Montgomery County Department of Transportation*

Nov 2019:

Draft Transition Pilot Proposal – *Claire Funkhouser, Developmental Disability Advisory Committee of the Commission on People with Disabilities*

Discussion & Next Steps: Pedestrian Safety of Floating Bus Stops and Dockless Vehicle Pilot Program – *Seth Morgan, Chair*

Dec 2019:

Personal Perspectives on Pedestrian Safety of Floating Bus Stops & Dockless Vehicle Pilot Program – *Charlie Crawford and Sue Crawford, and Ancil Torres and Sonia Aslam with Torres Foundation for the Blind International, Inc.*

Purple Line Project Update and Plans for Relocation of Silver Spring Transit Center Bus Stops – *Maricela Cordova, Purple Line Implementation Manager, Department of Transportation*

Jan 2020:

HHS Committee Perspectives on Issues Impacting People with Disabilities – *The Honorable Gabe Albornoz, Councilmember & Chair of Health & Human Services Committee, Montgomery County Council*

Feb 2020:

County Sensory Friendly Initiative – *Leslie Rubin, Senior Legislative Analyst, Office of Legislative Oversight, Montgomery County Council*

Street Safety and Inclusion of Communities with Various Abilities – *The Honorable Evan Glass, Councilmember, Montgomery County Council, Health & Human Services (HHS) Committee and Transportation & Environment (T&E) Committee*

March 2020:

Vision Zero and a Discussion on Addressing the Pedestrian and Driver Safety Concerns of People with Disabilities – *Wade Holland, Vision Zero Coordinator*

May 2020:

Accessibility & County Press Conferences – *David Rice, Commissioner*

Status of Programs Serving People with Developmental Disabilities – *Commissioners John Whittle and Michael Greenberg*

June 2020:

Proposed Street Design – *Steve Aldrich, Transportation Master Planner,* **Maryland-***National Capital Park and Planning Commission, and Andrew Bossi, Senior Planning Specialist, Montgomery County Department of Transportation's Director's Office*

Montgomery County COVID-19 Recovery Planning Framework, Roles and Responsibilities – *Odile Brunetto, Chief, Aging and Disability Services, Montgomery County Health & Human Services*

July, 2020:

Updates Proposed Street Design – *Steve Aldrich, Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission and Andrew Bossi, Montgomery County Department of Transportation's Director's Office*

Sept, 2020

Update – *The Honorable Gabe Albornoz, Chair, HHS Committee, Montgomery County Council*

Downtown Bethesda Streetscape Standards – *Leslye Howerton, Master Planning Supervisor, Downtown Planning Division, Montgomery County Planning Department*

Bike Lane and Floating Bus Stop Pedestrian Safety Letter from Advocates to County Officials – *Patrick Sheehan, President, National Capital Area Chapter of the American Council of the Blind of Maryland*

ABOUT THE COMMISSION

HISTORY

The Commission on People with Disabilities was established by County legislation October 17, 1978 to advise the County Executive and County Council on the coordination and development of the County's policies affecting residents with disabilities.

MISSION

The Commission provides advice, counsel, and recommendations to the Government of Montgomery County, Maryland in general, the County Executive, and the County Council in particular. Its responsibilities involve those matters influencing the provision of services, County policies and procedures, development and implementation of state and federal laws, and any other issues affecting the lives, rights, and welfare of the people it represents. The Commission operates in belief that people with disabilities have the right to the same opportunities in life as people without disabilities; and that this right can best be ensured by a commitment to enhancing the image, status, and quality of life of all children and adults with disabilities.

MEMBERSHIP

The Commission on People with Disabilities is composed of 25 voting members who serve in a volunteer capacity. Members are appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council.

The Commission includes:

- 13 people with disabilities,
- 3 parents of people with disabilities, and
- 9 representatives of public and private service providing agencies

The Commission also includes ex-officio members that are appointed to represent the Departments of Health and Human Services, Transportation, Recreation, Libraries, General Services, Office of Human Resources, and the Human Rights Commission. There are also members who represent Montgomery College, Montgomery County Public Schools, Housing Opportunities Commission, Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services, and Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission/Montgomery Parks.

MEETINGS

All Commission and Committee meetings are open to the public. The Commission welcomes visitors to join us as we serve the County and its residents. Meetings are subject to change without advance notice. Please call to confirm day and time of meetings and to request any special accommodations. As possible, we adjust meeting dates in order to accommodate days of major religious observances. You can view the Commission meeting minutes or check meeting schedules times online at: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cpwd.

MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2020 - 2021

Full Commission Meeting
2nd Wednesday of the month,
except for July and August
Via Zoom
6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Steering Committee Meeting
3rd Wednesday of the month
Via Zoom
5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Workgroups
Meet, as needed, at differing locations.

COMMISSION STRUCTURE

The Commission operates through a structure that is re-evaluated annually to respond to changing needs. The Steering Committee is responsible for planning and directing the activities of the Commission and for overseeing the activities of the committees.

The work of the Commission is done by Commission members and interested persons from the community. In addition, coordinators are assigned to take lead responsibility for public relations and legislation. The Nominating and Selection Committees, required for administration purposes, were also established.

The Commission encourages that all residents with disabilities and their families communicate with their elected officials about their needs for programs and services. Go to the Office of Governmental Relations website for information on how to contact your elected officials: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OIR.

Like us on Facebook!
Facebook.com/MCCPWD

Sign up for eSubscribe to receive emails about disability information and resources:
www.montgomerycountymd.gov/govdelivery

HOW TO CONTACT YOUR COUNTY ELECTED OFFICIALS

County Executive
Marc Elrich

The **County Executive** can be reached at:

Executive Office Building
101 Monroe Street, 2nd Floor
Rockville, MD 20850
240-777-0311 (V)
240-773-3556 (TTY)
County.ExecutiveIQ@montgomerycountymd.gov

Montgomery County Council

The **County Council** can be reached at:

Stella B. Werner Council Office Building
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850
240-777-7900 (V)
MD Relay 711 (TTY)
240-777-7989 (FAX)
county.council@montgomerycountymd.gov

Standing: Hans Riemer, Gabe Albornoz, Craig Rice, Andrew Friedson, and Tom Hucker.
Seated, left to right: Will Jawando, Sidney Katz, Nancy Navarro and Evan Glass.

Marc Elrich, County Executive
Raymond Crowel, Director
Odile Brunetto, Chief
Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
Aging and Disability Services, Commission on People with Disabilities
401 Hungerford Drive, 4th Floor

Rockville, Maryland 20850
240-777-1246 (V) ♦ via MD Relay at 711

Language translation and alternative formats of this report are available upon request. For additional information on the Commission, please call the telephone numbers or write to the address listed above or e-mail via the contact information listed below.

Montgomery County does not discriminate on the basis of disability in employment or in the admission or access to its programs or services.

2019 - 2020 Annual Report Prepared By:

Betsy Tolbert Luecking, *Community Outreach Manager*

Carly Clem, *Administrative Specialist I*