

## MONTGOMERY COUNTY 2022 FEDERAL PRIORITIES

### Transportation

**Invest in bus infrastructure.** Urge Congress to appropriate authorized levels of transit funding (e.g., Capital Investment Grants program, Low or No-Emission (Low-No) Bus program, Bus and Bus Facilities program, etc.) critical to advancing improvements to bus transit corridors like Montgomery County's Phase 1 bus rapid transit (BRT) system, and the State of Maryland's Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT). Encourage U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) to follow progressive interpretations of Bipartisan Infrastructure Law prioritizing climate change, resilience, equity, and safety goals. Request delegation support for County's multiple FY23 competitive federal grant applications to USDOT including:

- Veirs Mill Road Flash BRT project for funding through the CIG program- Small Starts
- MD 355 Flash BRT project for funding through the CIG program- New Starts
- Joint project with the City of Gaithersburg to replace and upgrade bus shelters with funding through the Buses and Bus Facilities Program (§ 5339(b))
- Hydrogen fueling infrastructure and buses project for funding through the Low or No Emission Vehicle Program (§ 5339(c))

**Promote the use of zero emission vehicles (ZEVs).** Encourage support for development of regional charging infrastructure facilities permitting region's public transit systems to charge *en route* and at transit centers. Urge Congress to appropriate funding accelerating use of ZEVs (including zero emissions charging and alternative refueling networks). Ensure that low- and moderate-income households benefit from new technologies by extending and enhancing federal tax credits and other incentives to encourage sale of new and used ZEVs. Support micromobility devices (i.e., electric bikes) in federal tax credit and rebate programs.

**Fund transit operations and community connections to achieve equity.** Urge continued federal appropriations addressing transit operating challenges during the COVID-19 recovery period. Support competitive opportunities for local governments to reconfigure existing transit networks and explore transit pilot programs using transit as important equity promotion tool.

**Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Discretionary Grant Program.** Support Montgomery County's RAISE grant application for the Capital Crescent Trail tunnel project.

**Prioritize safety.** Urge USDOT to complete rulemaking for the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) that defines standards for installation and maintenance of traffic control devices on public roadways. Urge Congress to appropriate funding authorized in

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law prioritizing safety programs, including new Safe Streets for All competitive grant program and Complete Streets initiative.

**Invest in Transportation Demand Management (TDM).** Support rulemaking requiring suballocation of Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program funds to Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) or county and municipal governments to allow the County to advance more projects designed to reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality in the region. Urge support for Bicycle Commuter Act of 2021 (H.R. 384), reinstating bicycle benefit within federal qualified transportation fringe benefits, and Bikeshare Transit Act of 2021 (H.R. 382) to include micromobility projects (i.e., bikeshare, e-scooter) under federal transit funds eligibility.

### **Biotech and Life Sciences Economy**

**Supporting the life sciences sector.** Urge Congress to establish the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H) as a new biomedical research agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Oppose legislative efforts to prohibit its location outside the Washington region.

### **Glen Echo Park**

**Transferring ownership of Glen Echo Park to Montgomery County.** Explore with the Congressional delegation options for transferring Glen Echo Park from the National Park Service to the County to better position necessary maintenance and future capital improvements to the property.

### **Health and Human Services**

**Mental health and COVID-19 recovery.** Support increased funding for health programs directed toward culturally competent and linguistically appropriate mental and behavioral health supports and services for school-aged youth and families struggling with post-pandemic mental health disorders (e.g., Community Mental Health Services Block Grant program, National Child Traumatic Stress Initiative, etc.).

**Child care and early childhood development.** Support federal funding to expand quality and affordable child care options. Work collaboratively to advance President Biden's care economy initiatives (e.g., Child Tax Credit, pre-K and early learning entitlement programs, improved wages for child care workers, etc.). Support increased appropriations for existing childhood education programs (e.g., Child Care and Development Block Grant, Preschool Development Grant Program, etc.).

**Support aging and disabled residents.** Support increased appropriations for U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Congregate Housing Services Program (CHSP) supporting critical housing and continuity of care for frail elderly, nonelderly disabled, and temporarily disabled residents.

**End disparities in oral health for low-income adults.** Support Medicaid Dental Benefits Act (S. 3166) requiring dental and oral health coverage by state Medicaid programs for Medicaid-eligible adults.

### **Environment**

**Address climate change using an equity lens.** Support legislation increasing funding to local governments for climate change mitigation and resilience actions, including funding for green and resilience banks to facilitate private investment in domestic low-carbon and climate-resilient infrastructure.

**Mitigate flooding damage.** Support increased funding for planning and implementation programs addressing flood mitigation infrastructure, including detailed watershed/sub-watershed infrastructure risk assessments and hydrologic and hydraulic analyses. Support increased funding to address climate change impacts including the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Flood Mitigation Assistance Program, and FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.

**Promote nature-based climate solutions.** Support funding protecting natural resources that address climate resilience and carbon sequestration (e.g., forests and trees, wetlands, sustainable agricultural lands, etc.). Urge increased appropriations for Urban and Community Forestry Program, and Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds program.

**Reduce reliance on fossil fuels.** Support legislation advancing building decarbonization and electrification projects in public and private buildings. Increase funding available for local governments to offer direct education and incentives to residents and businesses to improve energy efficiency and electrify energy end uses through successful local program platforms like Montgomery Energy Connection. Support Department of Energy (DOE) funding for energy efficiency and renewable energy programs (e.g., Weatherization Assistance Program, Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program, etc.).

**Environmental conservation corps and support for community and climate justice.** Support appropriations for Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) environmental restoration conservation corps, environmental justice activities, and related funding (e.g., EPA's Environmental Justice Small Grants program, EPA's Technical Assistance Services for Communities program, etc.). Support funding for community justice academies charged with co-creating integrated health, equity and quality-of-life solutions centered on needs and desires of low-income and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color communities.

### **Telecommunications Technology**

**Cybersecurity.** Support increased funding for Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA). Support appropriations for programs available to local governments for investments in cybersecurity (e.g., upgrade and maintain network equipment, enhance cybersecurity applications and defenses and response, business continuity data recovery infrastructure, assess cybersecurity risks on premise and cloud systems, expand workforce cybersecurity training/talent

to better protect local government financial, healthcare, election, water, and electrical systems, etc.).

**Communications Act and Public, Educational and Government (PEG) channels.** Advance adoption of Protecting Community Television Act (S. 3361/H.R. 6219) explicitly prohibiting cable operators from charging local governments for the value of PEG channels required to be provided by local governments for free under federal law.

**Communications Act and Spectrum Act.** Clarify the Communications Act and Spectrum Act to affirm that local governments are not limited to cost recovery when charging for Right-of-Way fees to the telecommunications industry.

### **Finance**

**Advance Refunding Bonds.** Support passage of Lifting our Communities through Advance Liquidity Infrastructure Act (S. 479) reinstating tax-exempt status of Advance Refunding Bonds used by local governments to facilitate budgeting and financing of long-range infrastructure and facilities investments.

**Support Local Restaurant Relief.** Replenish the Restaurant Revitalization Fund (RRF) created during the COVID-19 pandemic to address severe economic challenges faced by the restaurant industry.

**Provide additional flexibility for the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund.** Urge passage of the State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Fiscal Recovery, Infrastructure, and Disaster Relief Flexibility Act (S. 3011/H.R. 5735) providing increased local control over COVID-19 Recovery Funds provided to local governments during the pandemic.

### **Education**

**Fund Title I and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).** Fully fund authorized levels of Title I Grants to Local Education Agencies, and IDEA providing improvements to achievement and education of disadvantaged children. Support advancing the Keep our Promise to America's Children and Teachers Act (S. 72/H.R. 764) creating a 10-year mandatory glide path to fully fund Title 1 and IDEA.

**Increase supply of school-based mental health supports and services.** Support appropriations for higher education degrees in social work and practicum opportunities for masters' degrees in mental health service fields. Support funding to provide training, access to scholarships and loan repayment to mental health and substance use disorder clinicians (e.g., National Health Services Corps, Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training Program, Minority Fellowship Program, etc.).

**Extend USDA Child Nutrition Waivers.** Support programmatic funding to strengthen local efforts addressing access to free and nutritious meals for children.

## **Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC)**

**Authorize low-income water utility assistance program.** Permanently authorize and increase appropriations for Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) helping eligible households afford water and wastewater services.

**Support direct financial assistance to water utilities as the country recovers from the pandemic.** WSSC continues to experience significant economic fallout from COVID-19. Urge Congress to create a permanent federal assistance program for water utilities comparable to existing utility assistance for energy sector.

## **Housing**

**Eviction Prevention Assistance and Access to Affordable Housing.** Support increased funding for existing programs addressing affordable housing challenges (e.g., Low-Income Housing Tax Credit, HOME Investment Partnership program, Housing Choice Vouchers program, Emergency Solution Grant program, Continuum of Care program competition, etc.). Permanently authorize and increase appropriations for Emergency Rental Relief Assistance Program (ERAP).

**Affordable Homeownership Gap.** Support legislation advancing affordable home ownership. Advance Enact Neighborhood Homes Investment Act (S. 98/H.R. 2143) incentivizing affordable homeownership through a new tax credit subsidizing the gap between the costs of building or rehabilitating a residential property versus the sale price of the home.

**Housing supply shortages and commercial property conversion.** Support collaborative legislative effort to create a special allocation of nine percent tax credits for conversion of commercial buildings to affordable housing.

**Community Project Funding (House)/Congressionally Directed Spending (Senate)**  
**Fiscal Year 2023**

(Proposals submitted to Montgomery County's Congressional Delegation)

**Department of Transportation**

- **Flash Expansion to Howard County Maryland.** The expansion of Flash service to Howard County requires purchase of additional buses and physical infrastructure to support the new service. Request funding for four new zero-emission buses to be owned and operated by Montgomery County to expand service from Burtonsville to Columbia along US 29. Total Project Cost: \$4,000,000.
- **Secure Bike Parking Facilities in Silver Spring and Bethesda.** Fund the construction of a secure bike parking facility in downtown Silver Spring, adjacent to the Silver Spring Transit Center and the Metropolitan Branch Trail, and the fit-out of the Bethesda Secure Bike Parking Facility, located adjacent to the Bethesda Red and Purple Line stations and the Capital Crescent Trail. These two facilities will provide a secure area for registered users to park their bikes when riding to jobs, retail, entertainment, and transit in two of the County's biggest job centers. Secure bike parking is essential in shifting mode share to cycling, as people will not make trips by bicycle if they fear their bike will be stolen. Both facilities are adjacent to major transit hubs and are also connected to regional recreational and commuter bike trails. Total Project Cost: \$535,000. Silver Spring Secure Bike Parking Facility – \$350,000 and Bethesda/CCT Secure Bike Parking Facility – \$185,000.
- **Ride On Driving Simulator Safety Program.** Purchase Bus Driving Simulators to promote the County's commitment to reducing transit crashes and mitigating safety risks. Develop and implement a driving simulator training program within the Ride On Operations Safety and Training Program. These simulators will be able to train for highrisk events in a safe environment, enabling bus operators to provide improved, safer service. Total Project Cost: \$953,300.
- **Family E-Cargo Bike Borrowing Program.** Purchase fleet of electric-assist cargo bikes and implement pilot program to lend cargo bikes to County residents for a short-term trial. Goal to promote adoption of e-biking for young families who otherwise may shift from walking/biking/transit into personal auto travel because of logistics of transporting children. Collect data and feedback on usage. Make it possible to try these bikes and allow families to see firsthand if they can replace auto trips with biking, giving families the confidence to make the investment in cargo bikes (even if they still use personal auto as well). Total Project Cost: \$500,000

### **Montgomery College**

- Building an Inclusive Healthcare Workforce: Lifting Underrepresented Residents into Healthcare Careers. Proposed by [Primary Care Coalition](#), [Nexus Montgomery](#), and [Montgomery College](#) will open doors to opportunity for residents and address critical workforce shortages in the health care sector. Montgomery County requires more health care workers – an issue seen across the nation that has only grown more critical because of the pandemic. Concurrently, residents need access to education and training to be able to fill those jobs. This program will provide residents with the needed-access to both quality training and career support that will allow them to move swiftly into employment – more people will thrive while also filling workforce gaps. Our un/underemployed residents need the planned outreach to engage them in the low and no-cost training proposed in *Building an Inclusive Healthcare Workforce: Lifting Underrepresented Residents into Healthcare Careers*. The program will infuse the workforce with 200 newly launched health care professionals with degrees or certificates. And it will leave a long-lasting mark on educational access by providing additional training labs that will add to Montgomery College’s long-term capacity to prepare *future* homegrown healthcare workers. The total cost of the program will be approximately \$1 million.

### **Department of Environmental Protection**

- Agrivoltaic Demonstration Project. Project will assess the viability of growing table crops beneath ground mounted solar arrays in the County’s Agricultural Reserve as well as the higher installation costs associated with the unique configuration and height of the solar panels. Project will complement a research framework being developed with the National Renewable Energy Lab and the University of Maryland College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Project Cost: \$200,000
- Support Electrification and Indoor Air Quality in Low Income Housing. Project will launch a pilot electrification retrofit program for low- and moderate-income housing to support energy efficiency projects that both improve housing climate resiliency and indoor air quality and home comfort for its residents. The Department of Environmental Protection will partner with the Department of Housing and Community Affairs to work with a multi-family Housing project to install energy efficient appliances and heating and cooling systems in low-income residential units. Project Cost: \$1 million
- Continuation of the Energy Connection program. Energy Connection program was initiated with funds from the Pepco/Exelon merger. Montgomery Energy Connection is a network of County Government and community partners, created to provide customized education on the benefits of energy efficiency, availability of programs and opportunities for assistance. The program has helped hundreds of residents in the County. The funds from the merger will be expended in the coming year. The funds will be used to continue the successful efforts to date and ensure that all our residents have a place to go to learn about Energy programs. Project Cost: \$600,000.

### **County Executive's Office**

- Institute for Intelligent and Immersive Computing for Life Sciences and Medicine: A Montgomery County and State of Maryland Partnership for Economic Resurgence at White Flint. Transformative partnership is proposed between the State of Maryland, Montgomery County, and the University of Maryland to establish White Flint as a national epicenter of computationally enabled life sciences research. A request for \$3 million to fund startup costs for artificial intelligence computational infrastructure in leased space.

### **Department of Police**

- License Plate Reader expansion. MCPD would build out over several years an existing program using fixed license plate readers in high crime areas and common thoroughfares in/out of neighboring jurisdictions. Working with Prince George's County and Metropolitan Police Department (D.C.), MCPD would create a regional LPR alerting system so officers could react to LPR hits near the borders in real time. The LPR expansion would serve MCPD's real time crime program and serve as a component of a wider technology program such as public security cameras and real time regional data and mapping. Funding for additional fixed LPR units and supportive technologies such as servers, storage, wireless technology connections, etc. would serve not only Montgomery County but the greater NCR. Project Cost: \$2 million