

Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) Impact Statement

Office of Legislative Oversight

EXPEDITED BILL 14-25: SPECIAL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT – CLARKSBURG LIBRARY (P710500)

SUMMARY

When considered in isolation from the overall CIP, the Office of Legislative Oversight anticipates Bill 14-25 could have a positive impact on racial equity and social justice (RESJ) in the County. The construction of a new library in Clarksburg will disproportionately benefit Asian community members. This will improve library accessibility by race and ethnicity, since no Montgomery County Public Library branch is currently located in a predominantly Asian community. Further, the construction of the new library will likely relieve strain on the nearby Germantown library, which is in a predominantly Black community.

PURPOSE OF RESJ IMPACT STATEMENTS

RESJ impact statements (RESJIS) evaluate the anticipated impact of legislation on racial equity and social justice in the County. RESJ is a **process** that focuses on centering the needs, leadership, and power of Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) and communities with low incomes. RESJ is also a **goal** of eliminating racial and social inequities. Applying a RESJ lens is important to achieve RESJ.¹ This involves seeing, thinking, and working differently to address the racial and social inequities that cause racial and social disparities.²

PURPOSE OF EXPEDITED BILL 14-25

County law requires the County Executive to prepare, and the Council to adopt, a Capital Improvements Program (CIP) every other year.^{3,4} The CIP is a six-year plan for long-term investments in County facilities and infrastructure, commonly referred to as “capital projects.” These include projects such as schools, transportation systems, and libraries. The CIP can be amended between biennial updates to address changing needs and priorities.

Each year, the Council approves a Capital Budget that is prepared by the County Executive. The annual Capital Budget provides yearly appropriations for capital projects and must be consistent with the CIP.⁵ County law further requires the Council to individually authorize “special capital improvement projects” where the cost exceeds a certain threshold. This threshold is currently \$25,190,000 in FY26 dollars.⁶

The purpose of Expedited Bill 14-25 is to authorize the planning, design, and construction of a new library in Clarksburg.⁷ According to the County Executive:

“The Clarksburg population is expected to increase from 13,766 in 2010 to almost 40,000 by 2025. The closest library is the Germantown branch, which opened in 2007. The library will serve as the community connection hub to ideas, learning, and the exchange of information. It will improve the community through facilitating knowledge creation, informing the community, and inspiring lifelong learning and collaboration.”⁸

The Clarksburg Library project is estimated to cost \$33,580,000.⁹ Because its cost exceeds the local funding threshold, the Council must individually authorize the project before it can proceed.¹⁰

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The Council introduced Expedited Bill 14-25 on behalf of the County Executive on May 22, 2025.

This RESJIS builds on the RESJIS for Expedited Bill 26-23, Capital Improvements Program – White Flint Fire Station 23. Please refer to this RESJIS for background on capital improvement planning and racial equity.¹¹

CAPITAL PROJECTS, LIBRARIES, AND RACIAL EQUITY

Capital projects are among the major investments local governments make to enhance the quality of life in communities. As described by the Government Finance Officers Association, capital projects “have real social impacts: raising local property values, reducing injury, and developing public spaces that provide a wealth of community benefits.”¹² Libraries in particular are widely recognized as an important public good. As noted in one study, “[p]ublic libraries play a dual role as educational and cultural public goods and provide resources and services that can help reduce social inequality.”¹³

While capital projects like libraries are impactful, too often their benefits are not equitably distributed by race and ethnicity. This results from a deep history of government actions that has racialized public investments to center the needs and priorities of White people, while largely excluding those of Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC). The County’s public library system, Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL), is no exception to such racial inequity. Established in 1950,¹⁴ MCPL (then the Department of Public Libraries) emerged during a time when racial discrimination and segregation was commonplace in the County.¹⁵

MCPL’s first branches were nine independent libraries it acquired after its creation.¹⁶ Today, it is comprised of 21 branches that are open to the public. Figure A in the Appendix includes a map that notes MCPL’s branches and the Census tracts they are located in. The tracts are shaded in different colors to show the racial or ethnic group with the largest population in the tract. Darker shading indicates the predominant group comprises a larger share of the tract’s population. The map shows:

- 16 MCPL facilities are in Census tracts that are predominantly White. Only six of these facilities are surrounded by at least one Census tract where a BIPOC community is the predominant group. The remaining 10 are immediately surrounded by Census tracts that are also predominantly White.
- Four MCPL facilities are in Census tracts that are predominantly Black, while one is in a tract that is predominantly Latinx.
- No libraries are in Census tracts where Asian community members are the largest share of the population.

Figure B in the Appendix lists MCPL’s branches, the largest racial or ethnic group in the Census tracts where they are located, and their proximity to Census tracts with predominant BIPOC populations.

Of note, where library branches are located has important implications on how accessible they are to community members by race or ethnicity. Several studies have shown households are less likely to use libraries the further away they are from their homes.^{17,18} This can be worse for BIPOC, who because of economic inequities like the racial wealth gap, are less likely to have access to cars and more likely to depend on public transportation.¹⁹ An empirical study of one community found that Black and Latinx community members were especially sensitive to travel distance to the library.²⁰

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ANTICIPATED RESJ IMPACTS

To consider the anticipated impact of Bill 14-25 on RESJ in the County, OLO recommends the consideration of two related questions:

- Who would primarily benefit or be burdened by this bill?
- What racial and social inequities could passage of this bill weaken or strengthen?

OLO identified the following groups who would be impacted by Bill 14-25:

- **Community members living in or near Clarksburg** will benefit from the construction of the new Clarksburg Library. Table A (Appendix) includes the demographics of Clarksburg community members by race and ethnicity. The data shows that Asian community members are largely overrepresented in this community. White, Latinx, and to a lesser degree, Black, community members are underrepresented. Native American and Pacific Islander community members are proportionately represented.

Clarksburg is also an affluent community. Data in Table B (Appendix) shows that Clarksburg's median income is \$50,000 more than the County's. Further, except for Latinx community members, the median income for all racial and ethnic groups in Clarksburg is higher than in the County overall.

Of note, the construction of the new Clarksburg Library would likely relieve strain on the Germantown Library, which is currently the closest branch. As noted in Figures A and B, the Germantown Library is in a predominantly Black Census tract.

- **Current and prospective MCPL staff** will benefit from increased employment opportunities at the new Clarksburg Library. Table C (Appendix) includes the demographics of MCPL staff by race and ethnicity as of December 2024. The data shows that Asian people are slightly overrepresented among MCPL staff. Latinx, and to a lesser extent, Black people are underrepresented. White people are proportionately represented. Of note, the race or ethnicity of 10 percent of MCPL's staff is unknown.
- **Construction business owners and employees** will benefit from increased revenue and employment opportunities through the construction project. Data in Table D (Appendix) suggests that White people are largely overrepresented among construction business owners in the County. Latinx people are also overrepresented among these business owners, but to a much lesser extent than White people. Further, data in Table E (Appendix) suggests that Latinx community members are much more likely to be employed in the construction sector, given their rate of employment in natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations. Given the predominance of White people among construction business owners and the significant economic benefit of business ownership over employment,²¹ White business owners are likely to reap the greatest economic benefits from this project.

There are several considerations outside of the scope of this analysis that are necessary to have an accurate understanding of how this project will impact racial and social inequities in the County as a part of the overall CIP. A comprehensive analysis of the CIP as discussed in previous RESJIS²² and in the policy options offered next could address these questions. Further, as noted in a March 2024 Racial Equity Impact Assessment from the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice, the RESJ impact of the Clarksburg Library project will largely "depend on future policy and process decisions related to transparency, accountability, community benefits, and adherence to best practices for planning and future land use" that are not yet known.²³

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Conclusion. When considered in isolation from the overall CIP, OLO anticipates Bill 14-25 could have a positive impact on RESJ in the County. The construction of a new library in Clarksburg will disproportionately benefit Asian community members. This will improve library accessibility by race and ethnicity, since no MCPL branch is currently located in a predominantly Asian community. Further, the construction of the new library will likely relieve strain on the nearby Germantown Library, which is in a predominantly Black community.

RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

The Racial Equity and Social Justice Act requires OLO to consider whether recommended amendments to bills aimed at narrowing racial and social inequities are warranted in developing RESJ impact statements.²⁴ OLO anticipates Expedited Bill 14-25 could have a positive impact on RESJ in the County. As such, OLO does not offer recommended amendments. However, should the Council seek to improve the RESJ impact of this Bill, OLO offers two policy options for consideration:

- **Commission Equity Review of the Capital Improvements Program.** To understand and address potential racial and social inequities in capital investments, the Council could consider commissioning a comprehensive equity review of the Capital Improvements Program. For instance, as described in the RESJIS for Bill 26-23, the Baltimore City Department of Planning partnered with the Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance to develop a methodology for conducting an annual equity analysis of the City's CIP.²⁵ The analysis developed indicators to measure CIP investments across four areas of equity: distributional, transgenerational, structural, and procedural. The analysis also accounted for the varying influence of CIP projects by identifying projects as having local, multi-neighborhood, or Citywide impacts.²⁶
 - **Increase Access to CIP Construction Opportunities to BIPOC-owned businesses and workers.** The County's 2024 Disparity Study found that compared to their availability in the marketplace, Black, Native American, and Asian-owned firms are underutilized in County procurement contracts for construction. Conversely, White male and Latinx-owned firms are overutilized.²⁷ The Council could advance RESJ by supporting efforts to proactively identify and contract BIPOC-owned businesses for CIP projects. PolicyLink's "Strategies for Addressing Equity in Infrastructure and Public Works" offers best practices for incorporating historically excluded workers and businesses into employment and procurement opportunities.²⁸
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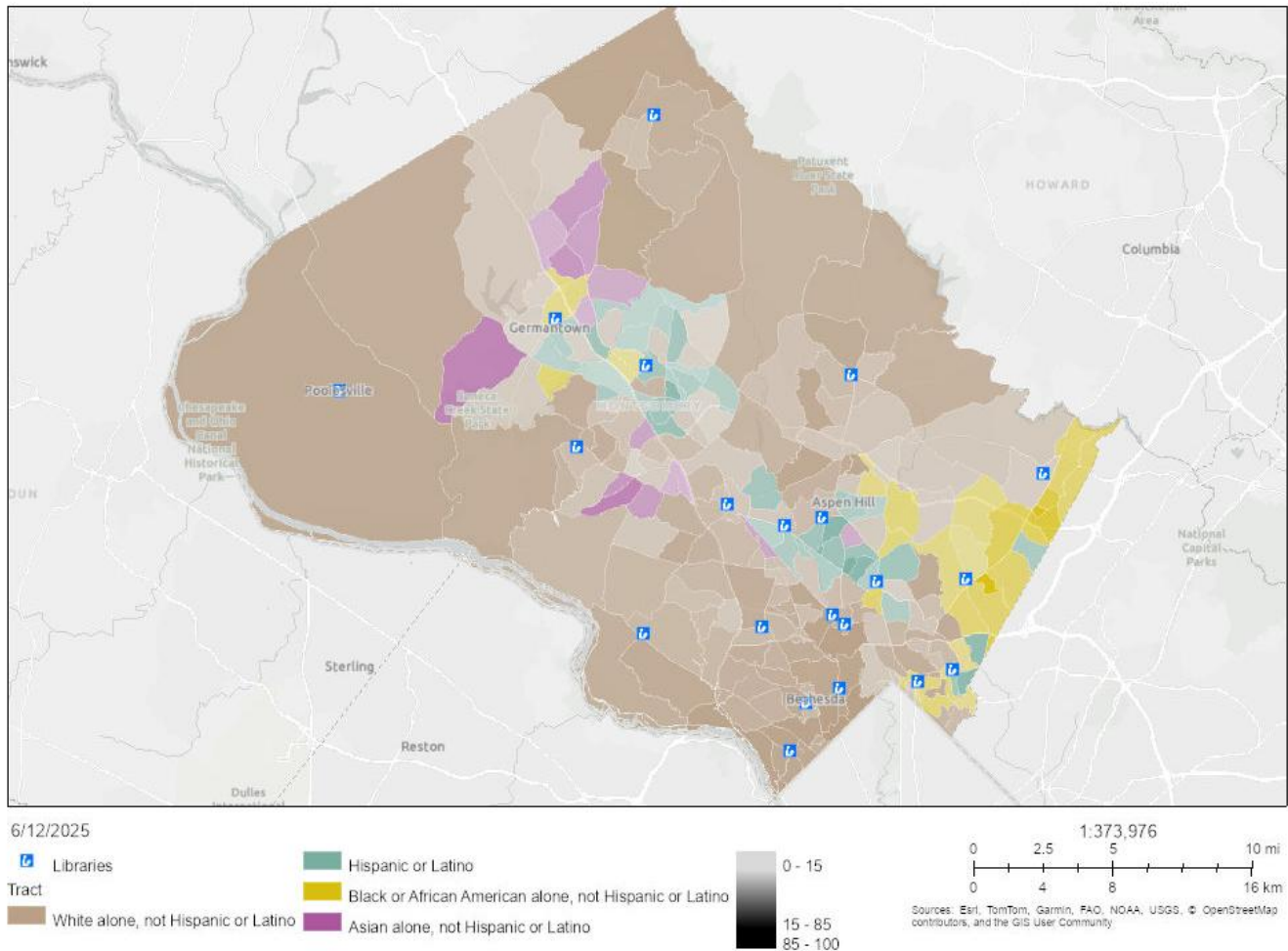
CAVEATS

Two caveats to this racial equity and social justice impact statement should be noted. First, predicting the impact of legislation on racial equity and social justice is a challenging analytical endeavor due to data limitations, uncertainty, and other factors. Second, this RESJ impact statement is intended to inform the legislative process rather than determine whether the Council should enact legislation. Thus, any conclusion made in this statement does not represent OLO's endorsement of, or objection to, the bill under consideration.

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Figure A: Map of MCPL Branches and Predominant Racial or Ethnic Group in Census Tracts



Source: Montgomery County Technology and Enterprise Business Solutions (TEBS) and 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Census Bureau.

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Figure B: Summary of MCPL Branches and Predominant Racial or Ethnic Group in Census Tracts

Branch Name	Predominant Racial or Ethnic Group in Census Tract	Near Census Tracts with Predominant BIPOC Populations?
Aspen Hill Library	White	Yes
Brigadier General Charles E. McGee Library (Silver Spring)	Black	Yes
Chevy Chase Library	White	No
Connie Morella Library (Bethesda)	White	No
Damascus Library	White	No
Davis Library (North Bethesda)	White	No
Gaithersburg Library	Latinx	Yes
Germantown Library	Black	Yes
Kensington Park Library	White	No
Little Falls Library (Bethesda)	White	No
Long Branch Library (Silver Spring)	Black	Yes
Maggie Nightingale Library (Poolesville)	White	Yes
Marilyn J. Praisner Library (Burtonsville)	White	Yes
Noyes Library for Young Children (Bethesda)	White	No
Olney Library	White	No
Potomac Library	White	No
Quince Orchard Library (Gaithersburg)	White	No
Rockville Memorial Library	White	Yes
Twinbrook Library (Rockville)	White	Yes
Wheaton Library	White	Yes
White Oak Library	Black	Yes

Table A: Population by Race and Ethnicity, Clarksburg

Race or Ethnicity ²⁹	% Clarksburg CDP Population	% County Population
Asian	40.8	15.2
Black	15.8	18.6
Native American	0.3	0.5
Pacific Islander	0.0	0.0
White	29.5	44.4
Latinx	11.7	20.6

Source: [Table DP05, 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Census Bureau.](#)

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Table B: Median Income by Race and Ethnicity, Clarksburg

Race or Ethnicity	Median Income Clarksburg CDP	Median Income Montgomery County
Asian	\$209,531	\$144,493
Black	\$140,043	\$89,362
White	\$193,774	\$159,895
Latinx	\$87,168	\$94,619
Overall	\$178,641	\$128,733

Source: [Table S1903, 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Census Bureau.](#)

Table C: MCPL Staff by Race and Ethnicity

Race or Ethnicity	# of Staff	% of Staff	% County Population
Asian (non-Latinx)	71	17.9	15.2
Black (non-Latinx)	66	16.7	18.6
White (non-Latinx)	172	43.4	44.4
Latinx	36	9.1	20.6
Unknown	42	10.6	-

Source: OLO Analysis of Office of Human Resources data as of December 2024 and Table DP05, 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Census Bureau.

Table D: Percent of Construction Business Owners by Race and Ethnicity, Montgomery County

Race or ethnicity	Construction Business Owners (NAICS 23) ^{30,31}	% County Population
Asian	7.5	15.2
Black	3.9	18.6
White	85.1	44.4
Latinx	26.7	20.6

Source: [Table AB2200CSA01, 2022 Annual Business Survey](#) and Table DP05, 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Census Bureau.

Table E: Rate of Employment in Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance Occupations by Race and Ethnicity, Montgomery County

Race or ethnicity	Rate of Employment in Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance Occupations
Asian	2.5
Black	3.0
White	3.4
Latinx	20.4
County	6.3

Source: [Table S0201, 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Census Bureau.](#)

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¹ Definition of racial equity and social justice adopted from [Marlysa Gamblin et al., “Applying Racial Equity to U.S. Federal Nutrition Programs,” Bread for the World](#) and [Racial Equity Tools](#).

² Ibid.

³ [Montgomery County Code § 302](#)

⁴ [Capital Improvements Program \(CIP\), Montgomery County Operating Budget.](#)

⁵ [Montgomery County Code § 303](#)

⁶ [Montgomery County Code § 20-1](#)

⁷ [Introduction Staff Report for Expedited Bill 14-25, Montgomery County Council, Introduced May 22, 2025.](#)

⁸ Clarksburg Library Project Description Form, Introduction Staff Report for Expedited Bill 14-25, pg. (6).

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Introduction Staff Report for Expedited Bill 14-25.

¹¹ [RESJIS for Bill 26-23, Office of Legislative Oversight, June 8, 2023.](#)

¹² [Elliot Karl, “Prioritizing Community Values in Capital Budgeting,” Government Finance Officers Association, June 2021.](#)

¹³ [Francis P. Donnelly, “Regional variations in average distance to public libraries in the United States,” Library & Information Science Research, October 2015.](#)

¹⁴ [Montgomery County Archives, “Guide to the Records of the Department of Public Libraries, 1869-1876; 1908, 1931-2005,” Montgomery History, Updated 2018, pg.2.](#)

¹⁵ [Janmarie Peña and Chitra Kalyandurg, OLO Report 2024-8: Community Engagement for Racial Equity and Social Justice, Office of Legislative Oversight, March 12, 2024, pg.15.](#)

¹⁶ Montgomery County Archives, “Guide to the Records of the Department of Public Libraries, 1869-1876; 1908, 1931-2005.”

¹⁷ Donnelly.

¹⁸ [Sung Jae Park, “Measuring public library accessibility: A case study using GIS,” Library & Information Science Research, January 2012.](#)

¹⁹ [“Vehicles Available” and “Commuting to Work,” Table S0201, 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Census Bureau.](#)

²⁰ Park.

²¹ [Brian Headd, “Small Business Facts: The Importance of Business Ownership to Wealth,” Office of Advocacy, U.S. Small Business Administration, August 2021.](#)

²² RESJIS for Bill 26-23.

²³ [Racial Equity Impact Assessment for Supplemental Appropriation 24-53, Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice, March 14, 2024.](#)

²⁴ [Bill 27-19, Administration – Human Rights – Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice – Racial Equity and Social Justice Advisory Committee – Established, Montgomery County Council.](#)

²⁵ [Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance, “Equity Analysis of Baltimore City’s Capital Improvement Plan, FY 2014 – FY 2020,” Baltimore City Department of Planning, August 2019.](#)

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ [MGT, Montgomery County, MD 2024 Disparity Study, Office of Procurement, September 23, 2024, pg. 60.](#)

²⁸ [Kalima Rose and Judith Dangerfield, “Strategies for Addressing Equity in Infrastructure and Public Works,” PolicyLink.](#)

²⁹ Race is inclusive of Latinx origin for data points presented in this RESJIS, unless otherwise noted. Estimates for Native American and Pacific Islander community members are not available for all data points in this RESJIS.

³⁰ The construction sector includes establishments that are primarily engaged in the construction of buildings or engineering projects (e.g., highways and utility systems). This sector also includes establishments primarily engaged in the preparation of sites for new construction and subdividing land for sale as building sites. Refer to [Sector 23—Construction, 2022 NAICS Definition, North American Industry Classification System, Census Bureau](#).

³¹ Margins of error for these data points may be large.