



# County Executive Marc Elrich Transition Report

*“My vision is for a more equitable and inclusive Montgomery County”*



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# The First Steps Toward A More Equitable and Inclusive Montgomery County

To County Executive Marc Elrich,

Together with the 222 members of your Transition Team, I am pleased to present you with our report. We are grateful to have been asked to contribute our perspectives to a document that supports your vision for a more equitable and inclusive Montgomery County, and we look forward to working with you in the years ahead to make this vision a reality for the more than one million residents and thousands of businesses who call it home.

This report is full of creative ideas and strategies drawn from the collective experience of the team members. The Team worked diligently during your transition period to craft these recommendations using the Results Based Accountability (RBA) framework, an organized system of thinking and taking action that can be used to improve the quality of life in communities and the County as a whole, starting with the ends we desire and working backwards to the means.

Your identification of seven priority outcomes for the County and selection of three associated key indicators for each was the first step in the RBA process. The Transition Team's work involved the next steps: Reviewing the available data for each measure and assessing how we are doing, articulating "the story behind the curve," identifying potential partners who have a role to play in improving conditions, brainstorming ideas for what works to do better, and finally proposing and prioritizing ideas and strategies.

Although the Transition Team worked in seven priority outcome groups, it became clear that none of the outcomes exists in a vacuum: Indeed, each is deeply interrelated with the others, and a variety of crosscutting themes emerged. For example, safe neighborhoods allow our youth and families to thrive, academic success contributes to a growing economy, the number of good-paying jobs makes living in the County more affordable, and so on.

This report is only a starting point – the "first drafts" of 21 focused and nimble strategic plans for making progress on your key indicators of success. These plans will continue to evolve as they are handed off to Outcome Leadership Teams, which will drive their implementation.

During your campaign and since taking office, you have talked about the importance of inclusiveness – making the table bigger, giving everyone a voice, and ensuring that our residents are part of the process and co-own the outcomes. The Transition Team and your eight public listening sessions across the County showed that you are serious. As the Transition Team Chair it was an honor to bring people together around your vision for Montgomery County, and as your Chief Administrative Officer I am inspired and energized to carry this work forward.

Sincerely,  
Andrew Kleine  
Transition Team Chair and Chief Administrative Officer



# **Section I: Transition Team Priority Outcome Strategies**

County Executive Marc Elrich Transition Report

# Thriving Youth and Families

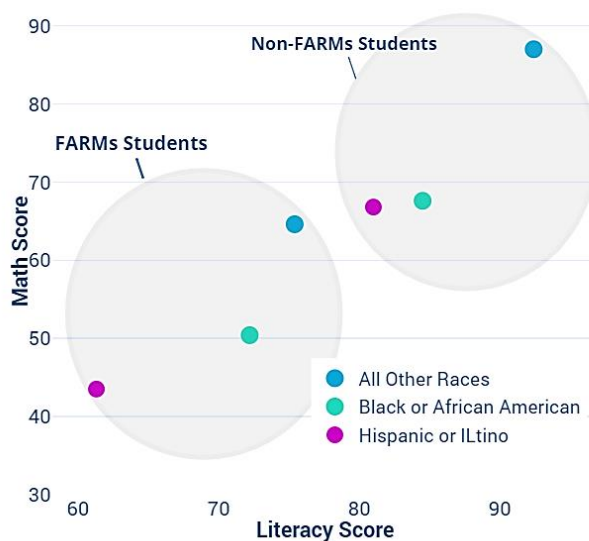
*Getting all children off to a good start in life has innumerable long-term benefits for our community, including a stronger economy, lower poverty, and less crime. Children need healthy, supportive families, great schools, and caring communities.*

## Key Indicator I. Academic Achievement Gap

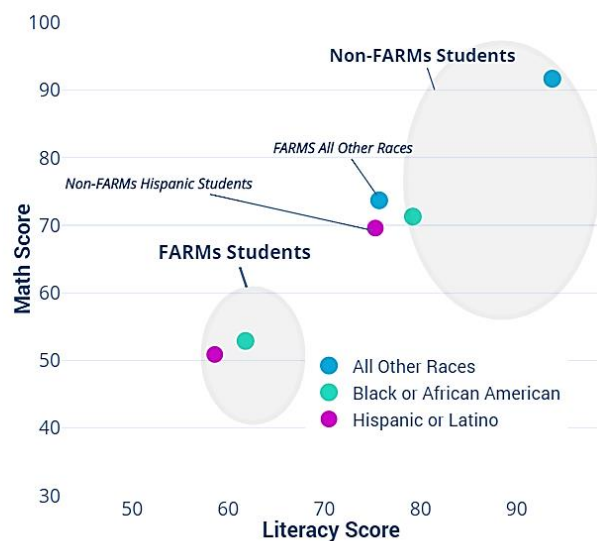
**About this Indicator:** As part of its “Equity Accountability Model,” Montgomery County Public Schools calculates and reports the percent of various FARMS and Non-FARMS student populations at the Elementary, Middle, and High School levels that are meeting readiness measures in two of three categories (classroom, district, and external) for both Literacy and Mathematics. At present this data is available only for 2018. The visualizations below present these figures for Elementary and Middle School.

### 1. How are we doing?

#### Elementary



#### Middle School



### 2. What is the story behind the curve?

#### Positive Factors

- Available resources. The County provides a high level of financial and other resources to our students, including access to early childhood education and food and nutrition for those in need. Education is a priority and a high-profile policy issue.
- Focus on specific needs. MCPS has a strong focus on literacy at the elementary school level and is intentionally targeting opportunity and achievement gaps at all levels.



## Negative Factors

- Institutional racism and inequities. Deficiencies and biases in the curriculum “track” students into advanced versus remedial classes and the lack of a bilingual curriculum make for an uneven playing field for students, exacerbated by disproportionate disciplinary actions based on race. Schools are segregated by geography and socio-economic factors and there is resistance from the community to adjust school boundaries, while the teacher population does not have the diversity to reflect the students they educate.
- Ineffective Strategies and Management. Some areas experience a disproportionate or inappropriate allocation of resources, a lack of out-of-school-time support and/or needed wraparound services, possibly due to ineffective strategies and management.
- Changing academic needs. The current curriculum does not meet 21st century requirements of students, the workforce, and the community. A greater emphasis must be placed on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) and there needs to be more quality instructors hired in those subject areas, and early childhood education needs to be a priority.
- Student Support. There is a lack of academic support as students transition to their next grade level, and especially from elementary to middle to high school. For too many students, low levels of parent education makes these shifts, and the overall academic support the students receive, all the more challenging.

### **3. What strategies do we recommend to turn the curve?**

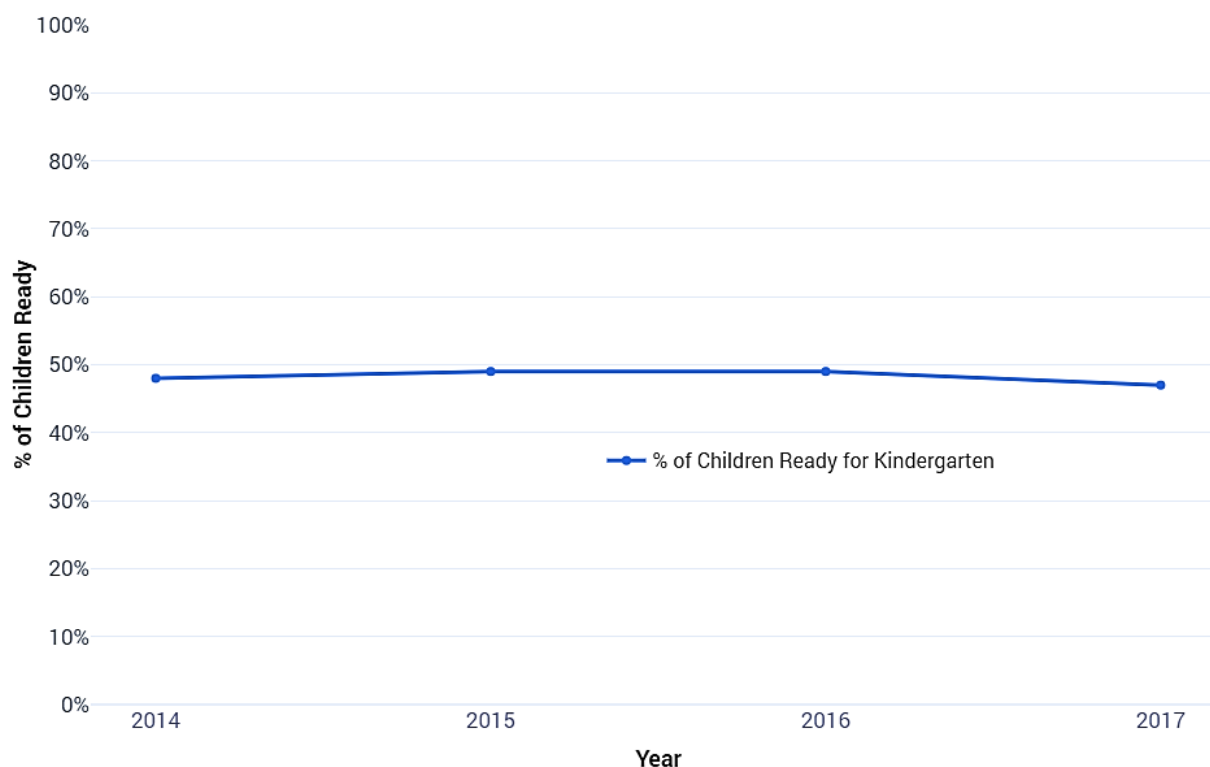
- 1) Restructure MCPS’s budget and planning to focus on strategies and measurable student outcomes. Categorize the MCPS budget by strategies and include measurable student outcomes, with a focus on improving literacy and math skills. The details of the budget should include the cost, the impact, and the timeline for implementation of each individual strategy in order to determine cost-effectiveness and what is and is not working.
- 2) Address the socio-economic and racial imbalances in the school system.
  - Provide all MCPS staff with racial equity and trauma training.
  - Increase the diversity of the MCPS staff.
- 3) Intensive case management and academic interventions.
  - Students whose skills are below grade level have access to individualized attention that follows the child from pre-kindergarten until 12th grade.
  - Measure each student individually and develop a reporting system that tracks performance year over year.
  - Give every child an IEP (Individual Education Plan). All students should be encouraged and have an opportunity to reach their potential. To that end, the educational system should meet each student where they are and take them as far as they can go. Progress shouldn’t be limited by grade or time.
- 4) Have a child and youth services budget with year-round schooling. Incentivize MCPS to adopt a “community schools strategy” in schools with concentrated poverty, including Linkages to Learning, a comprehensive school-based prevention and intervention initiative that connects students and their families to services and resources that address

the social, economic, health, and emotional issues that may interfere with academic success at school.

## Key Indicator II. Percent of Children Ready for Kindergarten

**About this Indicator:** Ready at Five, in partnership with the Maryland State Department of Education, administers annually the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) to a sample of kindergartners across the County. The KRA measures school readiness (knowledge, skills and behaviors) across four learning domains: Language & Literacy, Mathematics, Physical Well-being & Motor Development, and Social Foundations (<https://www.readyatfive.org/>).

### 1. How are we doing?



KRA data suggests that just under half of Montgomery County kindergarteners show up ready for school; and while largely consistent over the past few years, the most recent reporting year shows a slight decline in readiness.

### 2. What is the story behind the curve?

#### Positive Factors

- Existing resources. Because Montgomery County prioritizes a healthy community and quality education, there are currently Pre-Kindergarten/early childhood resources and

opportunities, as well as vital wraparound services (healthcare, mental health caregivers, dental, nutrition, enrichment), infrastructure (libraries, family support centers), programs and referral networks already in place.

- A robust economy. The County can support the necessary programs, in part because we have low unemployment and a highly educated workforce.
- “No wrong door” approach. There are multiple points of entry to find and get support services.

### Negative Factors

- Limitations of current resources. There is a finite amount of quality, diverse, and affordable childcare and educators, and the existing wealth/opportunity gap (across housing, transportation, nutrition, healthcare, etc.) means that some cannot access these services.
- Barriers and a lack of coordination. The system to connect clients to programs is poor, and clients face a range of obstacles including transportation and a lack of affordable housing near transit nodes.
- Family issues. The development of a child under five may be stifled for reasons such as limited parent education and/or engagement, challenges inherent in adapting to a new culture and in accommodating different cultures, economic stress and a lack of economic mobility, and food insecurity.
- Health-related issues. Families may encounter a lack of healthcare for adults, inadequate reproductive health services, and at home there can be a generally unhealthy environment (lead, mold, social issues, etc.)
- The early childhood education system. Childcare is expensive and may simply be unaffordable for some. And the childcare that is affordable often will have underpaid staff, high turnover, and a lack of cultural diversity. Teachers with less experience tend to be found in communities with high poverty.

### 3. What strategies do we recommend to turn the curve?

- 1) Advocate for universal access to pre-kindergarten and early childcare and education.
- 2) Provide a childcare subsidy continuum to ensure universal access to early childcare and education for public, non-profit, and for-profit providers.
- 3) Create a “new” early care/education coordinating structure to:
  - Frame/advocate for funding;
  - Develop guidelines for best practices and quality (using data);
  - Develop private and nonprofit partnerships;
  - Ensure culturally competent navigation and access to early care and education;
  - Expand “stock of early care/education availability”; and
  - Coordinate opportunities for community-based resources (libraries, parent resource centers, places of worship).
- 5) Adopt policies that address systemic barriers to allow for, for example, additional Family Resources (Judy) Centers, including incentives to attend.
- 6) Create/increase classroom space to accommodate Pre-K students.

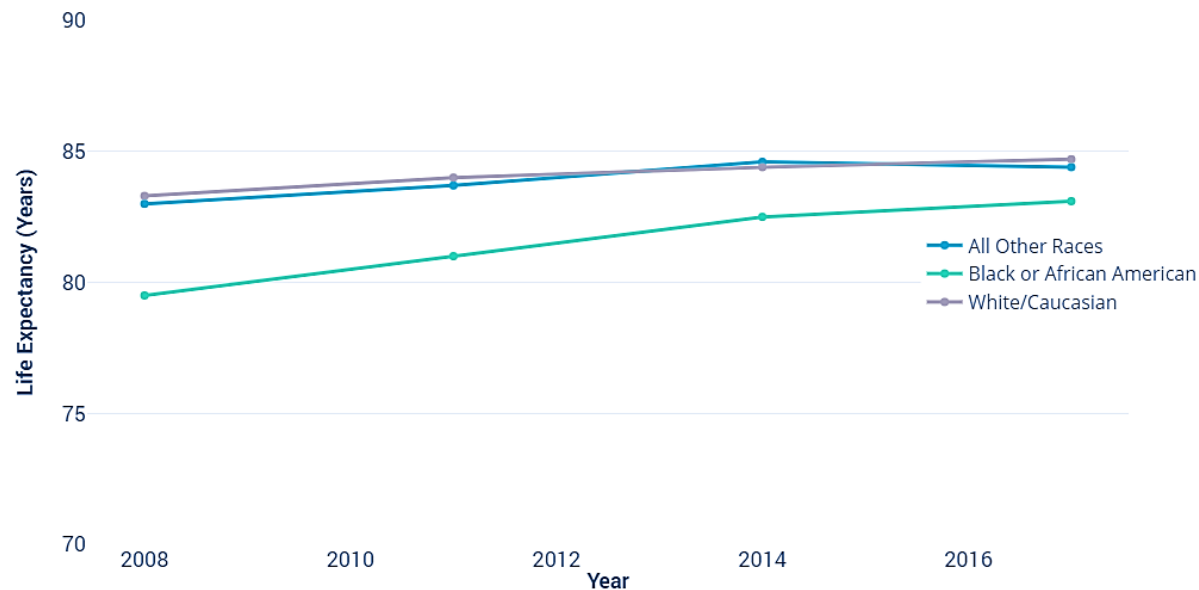


- Extend MCPS building use into the late afternoon/evening.
- Explore using empty office or retail space, houses of worship and private homes.

## Key Indicator III. Life Expectancy and Gap

**About this Indicator:** Life expectancy data is from the Maryland Department of Health and is reported as a three-year average in the third year.

### 1. How are we doing?



The gap between Non-Hispanic White residents and Black residents has been narrowing, but more work is needed to understand the specific risk factors for each sub-population and how they can be addressed.

### 2. What is the story behind the curve?

#### Positive Factors

- Improved accessibility to healthcare. There has been an increase in infrastructure for health and wellness services to serve vulnerable communities such as immigrant families and uninsured populations (school-based wellness centers, behavioral health and crisis services, community clinics, etc.), coupled with increased awareness (public education).
- Improved ability to monitor. There is infrastructure and programs to monitor health outcomes that feature solid metrics to assess the health of the County.

#### Negative Factors

- A widening opportunity gap. There is a growing “opportunity gap” in terms of access to resources such as healthcare, transportation, food, and educational opportunities. There

is also a lack of outreach/education on those options that are available in the community for accessing resources.

- Healthcare costs. Healthcare costs are high and increasing. And there is limited financial support for organizations that provide healthcare.
- Racial and other systemic barriers. Racial and other systemic barriers and cultural stigmas additionally limit access to and the use of healthcare services. More generally, these kinds of societal factors impact life expectancy.

### **3. What strategies do we recommend to turn the curve?**

- 1) More inter-agency collaboration needed (e.g., among aging, health, social services, recreation, and parks). There are opportunities for agencies to work together more effectively to better leverage existing services in the areas of aging, health, social services, recreation, parks, and elsewhere, and to develop a common approach to data and evaluation that can spur further cooperation and “affinity based” health programs.
- 2) Support aging in place infrastructure. Include aging in place and in communities.
- 3) Provide targeted maternal support for pregnant women and mothers.
- 4) Provide targeted support and resources for veteran families.
- 5) Increase funding for digital or technology-based health awareness and illness prevention campaigns. Ensure these campaigns are culturally and linguistically accessible.

## **The Team**

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Brigid Howe

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**Public feedback and questions from the CE's Listening Sessions relating to this Priority Outcome reflect concerns about:**

- NOTE: Naturally for this Priority, many issues were raised that are under the control of MCPS and the Board of Education, such as: the known gaps between the quality of schools and programming offered across the County (including Magnet programs), addressing capacity/overcrowding issues, increasing STEM education while complementing that with Arts and Humanities offerings, fighting hate crimes and racism, and combating bullying in schools. Below are issues raised that are more in the purview of MCG, though perhaps not completely in that they may require collaboration with MCPS.
- Improving our broadband infrastructure (i.e., equal access for students
- others), most notably in the Poolesville area, and more generally up-county and in the Ag Reserve area.
- Ensuring affordable daycare and after-school programming for all children, including those with disabilities.
- Expanding Pre-K.
- Ensuring affordable community college tuition.
- Increasing non-MCPS services that support children (health, mental health, recreation, etc.).
- Creating affordable living options for seniors.
- Addressing lead exposure levels in schools and other facilities.
- Increasing mental health treatment, services and awareness.
- Supporting the County's immigrant families.
- Enacting community policing and fostering civil dialogue to address the increasing divides between communities in the County.
- Engaging and hearing the concerns of younger County residents (in their 20s).
- Combating obesity in our youth.
- Committing resources to the young LGBTQ+ community who don't have supportive families.
- Finding the balance between affordable housing and the taxable wealth that funds schools and other services.
- Supporting student clubs that build skills for success school and life.

**A public survey on the transition website collected input from residents as well; Respondents conveyed the following related to this Priority Outcome:**

- The most frequently cited issues were schools and education. Respondents supported investment in schools to ensure quality education and meet students' non-academic needs, including access to food and social services. Many responses focused on the importance of culturally competent services and equity among schools and among students within the same school.
- Early childhood education and childcare were likewise priorities for respondents, many of whom suggested the implementation of universal pre-kindergarten. The availability of affordable childcare was recognized as an issue closely tied to equity in that it affects parents', and by extension, children's, opportunities for success.
- Many respondents identified recreation as a priority, with suggestions to support parks and green spaces and provide after-school and summer programming.

- Survey responses highlighted the importance of health care and mental health, including culturally competent resources and education for diverse populations.
- A variety of social services were identified as important for youth and families, with a focus on their role in promoting equity.
- The issue of affordable housing was frequently cited as an important factor for thriving youth and families, and some respondents acknowledged the overlap among priority outcomes.
- Other needs included in multiple responses were career development, community engagement, drug and alcohol prevention, financial literacy, higher education, parenting and violence prevention, and transportation.

## A Growing Economy

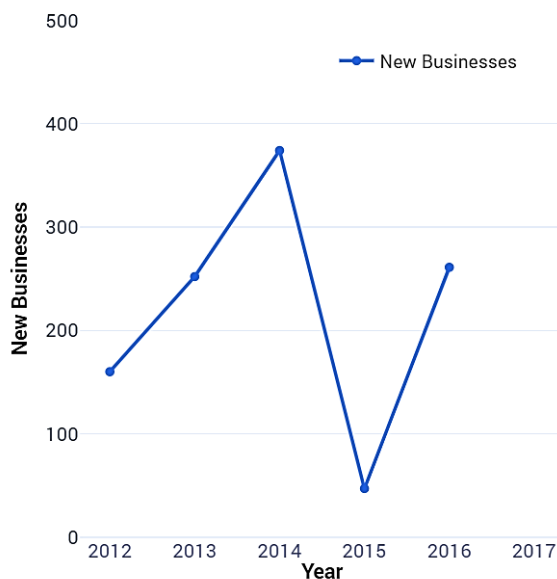
Montgomery County's high wealth and low unemployment rate mask economic disparities as well as other warning signs, such as slow business growth and problems with office vacancies. Maintaining and improving our quality of life depends on a strong local economy. We need to have a business-friendly attitude and incubate the next generation of job creators.

### Key Indicator I. Number of Net New Businesses

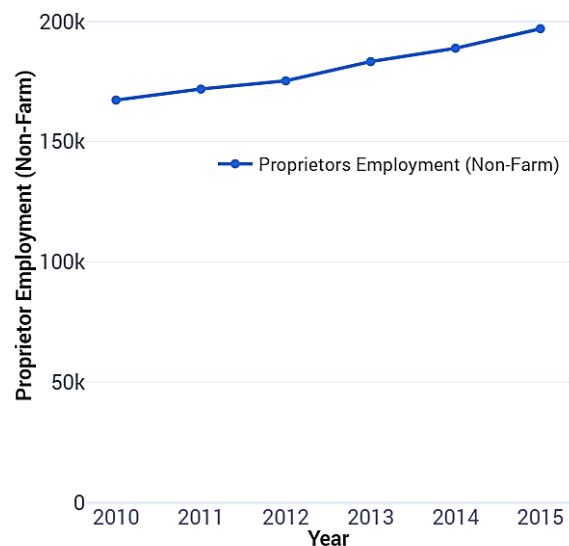
**About this Indicator:** The Number of Net New Businesses is the annual number of private business establishments in the County as reported by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics subtracted from the prior year's number. The level of employment by non-farm proprietorships is reported by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

#### 1. How are we doing?

Net New Businesses



Sole-Proprietorships



While the overall number of private businesses has remained fairly constant since the 2011 baseline year, we have seen a decline in 2014 and 2015 from which we have only started to recover. At the same time, the number of proprietorships in the County has been steadily increasing year over year, making up a growing share of total employment.



## **2. What is the story behind the curve?**

### **Positive Factors**

- The County's workforce. Montgomery County boasts a large, well-educated, and diverse workforce.
- Infrastructure and proximity. New and expanding businesses are attracted by a good transit system, proximity to Washington, D.C., the presence of numerous federal agencies as well as several multinational corporations, a County government with a AAA bond rating, and access to capital and loans through a variety of institutions.
- Our immigrant population. Our diverse, entrepreneurial, and innovative immigrant population is a largely untapped asset, bolstered by the County's welcoming attitude towards immigrants. In FY18, the County purchased 23.5% of eligible goods and services from MFD (Minority, Female, Disabled)-owned companies, exceeding the 20% goal.

### **Negative Factors**

- The cost of doing business. Montgomery County is an expensive place to do business. The costs of purchasing or renting space, parking, equipment, taxes, competing for talent in a tight labor market, and other needs add up quickly, especially for small businesses.
- Difficulties working with the County government. Businesses complain that it is difficult to work with County Government, citing unfriendly permitting and regulatory processes, a lack of clear and consistent guidance for understanding and navigating all the business apparatuses (MCEDC, Workforce Montgomery, Small Business Navigator, etc.), no emphasis on timeliness and transparency, and a general sense that the County's business environment is not cohesive, solution-oriented or welcoming enough to people who want to set up shop here. In addition, regulations that must be adhered to can be burdensome, and zoning restrictions can limit potential location opportunities.
- Minority access to capital. Minority residents are often disadvantaged when it comes to accessing the necessary capital or loans needed to start or grow a business.

## **3. What strategies do we recommend to turn the curve?**

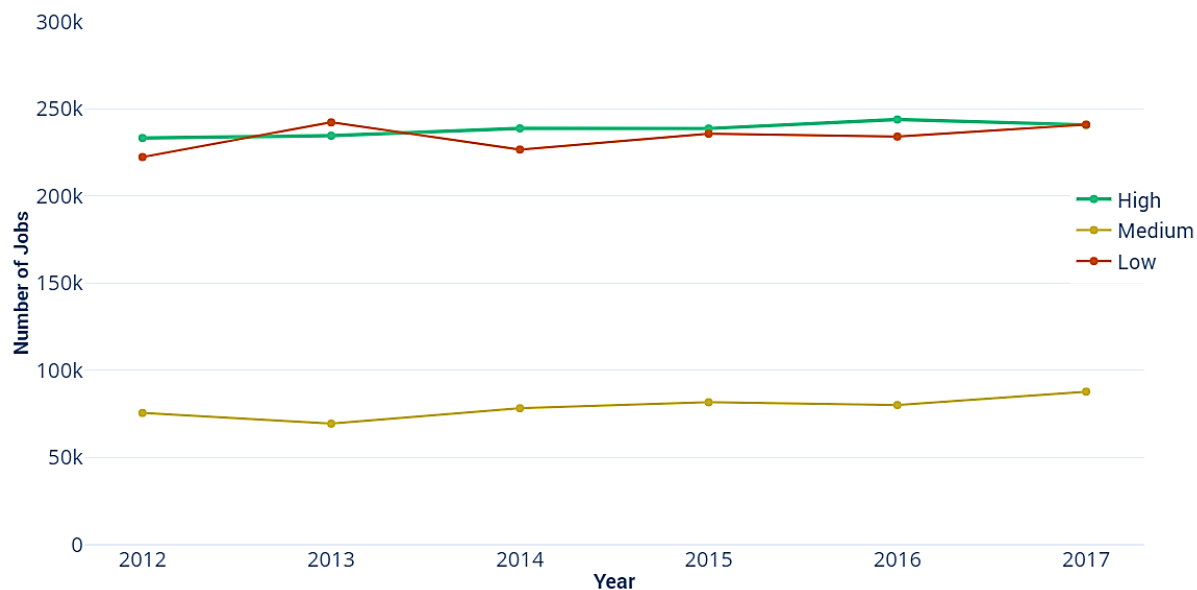
- 1) Articulate a culture of business opportunity in Montgomery County.
  - Develop and, with the County Executive's leadership, promote a distinct business "identity" for the County.
  - Create a "culture of yes" within County Government. When a business comes to the County with issues, the answer should always be "yes, let's work this out." Debunk the narrative that the County Executive is "anti-business."
  - Build a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship for small businesses (the criteria for qualifying as a small business are set by the County and vary depending on the type of business), utilizing government, media, and large businesses.
  - Provide more and better marketing for the County and our existing businesses of all sizes, emphasizing the value proposition of Montgomery County. Create an easy to find and use directory of all available resources, and ensure County employees are aware of where to direct inquiries.
- 2) Streamline resources and processes related to doing business with the County.
  - Streamline the resources and processes related to doing business with the County, including eliminating redundancies across resources.

- Benchmark county permitting regulations against competing jurisdictions and eliminate unnecessary regulations.
  - Everyone from small businesses to major corporations should know where they can go for correct and consistent answers.
  - Put small business advisors and procurement specialists in the Regional Service Centers.
- 4) Support minority/immigrant businesses and fully understand their value.
- Improve, expand, and/or incentivize County partnerships with non-profits, other jurisdictions, banks, and credit unions to increase services and other forms of support to immigrants and minorities.
  - Implement inclusive economic development: Differentiate and customize the approach towards minority-owned businesses. Place a greater emphasis on encouraging and supporting women-owned businesses. Consider giving under-represented groups additional points in the procurement process.
- 5) Establish and support County incubators. Establish and support innovation through County incubators by identifying currently empty space that could house them and connect them to Montgomery College and mentoring programs.
- 6) Provide better/more support for the local economy.
- Urge residents and businesses to buy and hire local.
  - Leverage regional projects (Purple Line, Amazon HQ2) to support business development and retention here.
  - Assist small businesses that might otherwise fail when revenue is lost as a result of County construction projects (e.g., Expand the current program in Wheaton related to the Purple Line to other locations).
  - Create a small business advisory council.
  - Give small businesses more access to capital and the County's open/vacant spaces.
  - Use tax policy to attract and encourage small businesses (e.g., implement small business tax credits based on job creation).

## Key Indicator II. Number of Family-Sustaining Jobs

**About this Indicator:** Understanding our local economy requires seeing the growth or reduction in jobs that require different levels of skill and offer different levels of compensation. We have defined three income categories as follows: Low = <75% of Median Income, Middle = Between 75% and 125% of Median Income, and High =  $\geq 125\%$  of Median Income. Median Earnings in 2018 = \$51,626.

### 1. How are we doing?



The County has far more Low and High earning jobs than Medium income jobs that can serve as a springboard to higher earnings; additionally, while the numbers fluctuate from year to year, the number of High-income earners saw negative growth in the most recent reporting year.

### 2. What is the story behind the curve?

#### Positive Factors

- County's Smart Growth strategy. The County has been implementing a Smart Growth strategy for many years and boasts both existing high-skill jobs and many good resources for workforce training that appeal to and serve our highly entrepreneurial workforce.
- Alternative night economy. The strong presence of an "alternative night economy" attracts people from neighboring jurisdictions to our many immigrant-specific establishments open at night across the County.
- Amazon headquarters in Arlington. Amazon HQ2's new location in Arlington, VA may create economic opportunities here, such as fostering small business tech start-ups in the County.

## Negative Factors

- Disconnection between economic development and poverty alleviation. There is no coordination between economic development and poverty alleviation, including with our state and federal counterparts. The downside of our investment in Smart Growth has been a degradation of affordable communities with existing resources distributed inequitably across the County while services for those most in need only manage the symptoms.
- Service economy educational pipeline. Montgomery County's economy is largely a service economy; existing low-skill workers encounter both a lack of trade jobs and limited opportunities to learn trades that offer higher-wages, while high school students are not directed towards high-skill majors or high-paying lower-skill trade jobs for those who will not go to college.
- Challenging environment for small businesses. Small businesses are challenged by increasing overhead and an environment that fails to foster the types of small businesses that accompany and complement large ones.
- Competition with neighboring jurisdictions. All businesses are facing competition with our neighboring jurisdictions on salaries/wages, resulting in a "race to the bottom."
- Insufficient advocacy. Nearly all demographic groups lack adequate advocacy on their behalf. In particular, minorities and entrepreneurs need more recognition and opportunity, seniors need improved workforce development/retraining, and highly-skilled workers need help connecting to the types of jobs for which they are trained.

### **3. What strategies do we recommend to turn the curve?**

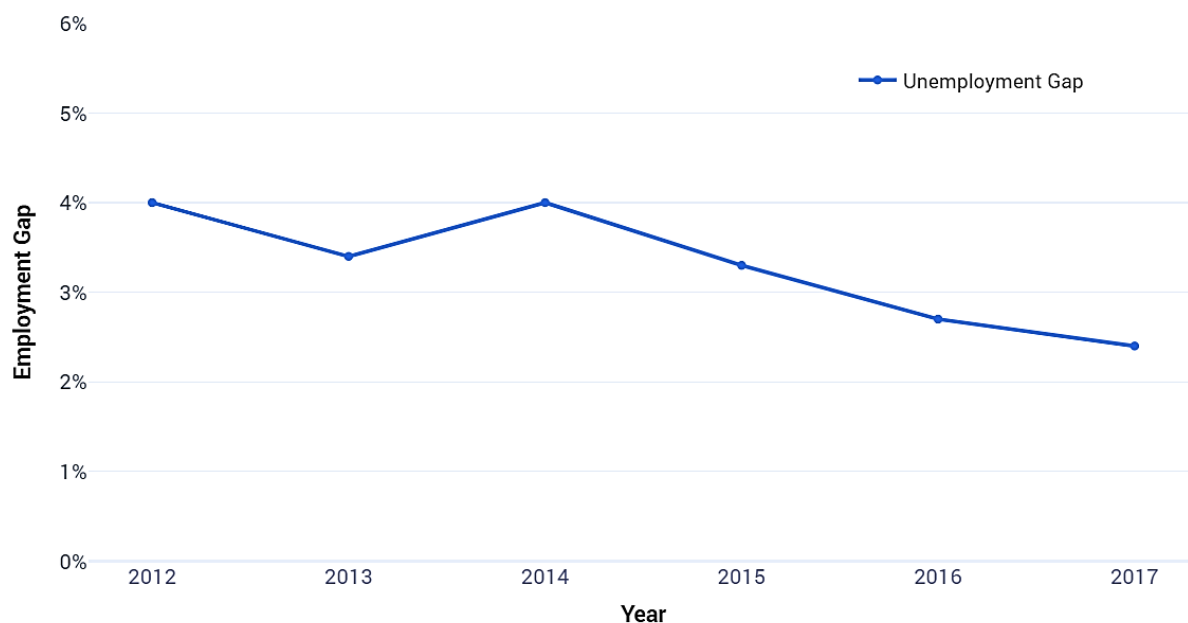
- 1) Establish a senior position on poverty alleviation and economic development. Create a high-level position in County Government that focuses on the intersections between poverty alleviation and economic development, bridging these policy areas.
- 2) Support and improve the pre-K to jobs pipeline.
  - Improve, expand, and incentivize education tied to professional success, from STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) classes for younger students to mentorships for older students to better integration with universities in the region to support a path from Montgomery County Public Schools to high-skill job preparation (including green jobs) at the college level.
  - Financially support education through guaranteed post-secondary education for all county residents, provide free pre-school and affordable child care, and subsidize technical certifications.
  - Encourage anyone in the County who wants to go into the Information Technology field to attend Montgomery College's subsidized programs.
  - For the trades, partner with the Trade Unions to train residents in apprenticeships.
- 3) Focus investments on the areas of greatest need in the county.
  - Invest in strategies that join economic development and poverty alleviation in the areas of greatest need: East County, Gaithersburg, Germantown, and Wheaton.
- 4) Support local business owners and workers.
  - Increase County support for local business owners and workers through strategies such as:
  - the provision of liability insurance for people wanting to start a small business;

- the County retirement plan providing low-cost mortgages;
  - a County retirement savings program;
  - the creation of a County debt relief program (similar to the federal government);
  - the expansion of the County's Welcome Center to add more capacity.
  - Support budding entrepreneurs with new programs such as an incubator where they can work from home (while watching their children) and can make products to be sold through the incubator.
  - Encourage joint ventures between smaller businesses to better compete for contracts and incentivize mentoring to educate small businesses on the county's procurement process.
  - Establish partnerships with medium and large businesses to create fellowships (even unpaid) to help mothers who left the labor force reintegrate back into the job market.
- 5) Stronger support for immigrant population. Take a stronger stance to protect and advocate for the County's immigrant population to boost their chances of achieving financial success and security (e.g., actively push to make County Green Card holders U.S. citizens) with a focus on East County, Gaithersburg, and Germantown.

## Key Indicator III. Unemployment Rate Gap

**About this Indicator:** The Unemployment Rate Gap is the difference between the unemployment rates of White residents versus residents of all other races. Rates are calculated using Census unemployment and total labor force data.

### 1. How are we doing?



Source: Census ACS 1-Year Tables



While the gaps between the various population cohorts are narrowing as unemployment rates are generally trending in the right direction, certainly more can be done to close them through increased professional opportunities for the County's minorities.

## **2. What is the story behind the curve?**

### **Positive Factors**

- Leadership commitments. The new County Executive and Council have expressed strong commitments to racial equity.
- A common framework. Informed by a highly-regarded racial equity workshop from the Racial Equity Institute offered Countywide by Leadership Montgomery, leaders in the County are developing a common framework for addressing racial equity in the County.
- Untapped resources. The County has in its population untapped entrepreneurial and diverse resources that – in an equitable economy that provides for the basic needs of all while rewarding effort, talent, and skill – will fuel economic prosperity.

### **Negative Factors**

- Structural racism. Historic and ongoing structural racism underlie disparities in employment and, correspondingly, educational achievement, health outcomes, access to housing, treatment in the justice system, wealth accumulation, political power, and geographic opportunity in the County.
- Lack of dialogue on racial equity. There is minimal open dialogue on racial equity in the County. Different reasons contribute to the reticence to engage, including the desire to avoid conflict that might be caused by sharing beliefs about the causes of racial inequity, a preference for the status quo over the unknown, a lack of empathy among whites, a sense of futility among minorities, and tribal mentalities.
- Addressing the stem, not the root. To the extent efforts are made to address racial disparities, those efforts are almost exclusively targeted to symptoms and not the root causes of those disparities. The County's progressive image is not supported by the substance of its efforts to address racial equity.
- Isolation/Separation. The lack of interaction and understanding between different racial groups impacts business owners who are siloed within their own racial groups and do not discuss racial issues when interacting with other groups, impacting opportunities for employers and job candidates alike.

## **3. What strategies do we recommend to turn the curve?**

- 1) Establish the position of chief diversity/equity officer. Create and appoint in the Office of the County Executive a minority individual as Chief Diversity/Racial Equity Officer. The person should be:
  - Empowered to address racial equity and justice in the County;
  - Accountable for ensuring that people in and across the County government have an understanding of structural racism and that departments are applying racial equity analyses to their programs and policies; and
  - Able to provide "accountability reports" using performance metrics.
- 2) Address structural racism.

- Address historical and structural racism in the County.
  - Within County government, ensure that County employees understand structural racism when developing and implementing County policies and programs.
  - Create an ongoing scorecard under CountyStat on the state of racial equity to ensure that no minority groups are left behind in the wake of the County's growth.
- 3) Be bold in promoting economic development and addressing structural racism. Market Montgomery County as a place that values and practices equity for all (race, gender, and all dimensions of our diversity) and be strategic with communications on racial issues, tying racial equity to business and workforce development.
  - 4) Establish a permanent civil rights advisory committee. Establish a permanent civil rights advisory committee that advises the County Executive on all minority/immigrant issues, separately from the current Human Right Commissions that reactively investigates incidents of hate/violence and complaints of discrimination
  - 5) Foster engagement. Actively convene community minority group leaders to learn and grow together.

## The Team

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Matthew Rowen

**Public feedback and questions from the CE's Listening Sessions relating to this Priority Outcome reflect concerns about:**

- Growing private sector development and job numbers to expanding the tax base, both County-wide and specifically in East County beyond the Federal Government presence there.
- Helping small businesses and incubators start and grow through offering procurement preferences to local businesses); locating tech/biotech businesses on Montgomery College campuses; and assisting local businesses that serve as community anchors/gathering spots (e.g., bookstores).
- Addressing the large numbers of empty storefronts in existing retail/commercial areas.
- Supporting economic empowerment for women and minorities.
- Keeping our well-educated students and the wealthy residents/taxpayers in the County

**A public survey on the transition website collected input from residents as well; Respondents conveyed the following related to this Priority Outcome:**

- The most frequently recommended measure was support for small businesses and entrepreneurs. Multiple respondents suggested business incubators, and there was widespread acknowledgment of the value of small businesses to the county.
- Responses commonly dealt with the importance of attracting and retaining businesses. Suggested methods included alleviating bureaucratic burdens, including streamlining the permitting process and curtailing regulations. Some respondents named technology, health, and biotechnology specifically as desirable industries to foster in the county. Viewpoints on business attraction incentives were mixed, with some supporting and others opposing tax breaks. Suggestions for fostering a business-friendly environment touched on the importance of cooperation within the business community and between business and government, and measures to encourage innovation.
- The importance of promoting equity and diversity among business owners and residents of various socio-economic backgrounds was a focus of multiple responses.
- Responses regarding tax policy included support for impact fees.
- Other topics included in multiple responses were attracting residents, schools' role in growing the economy, and social responsibility.

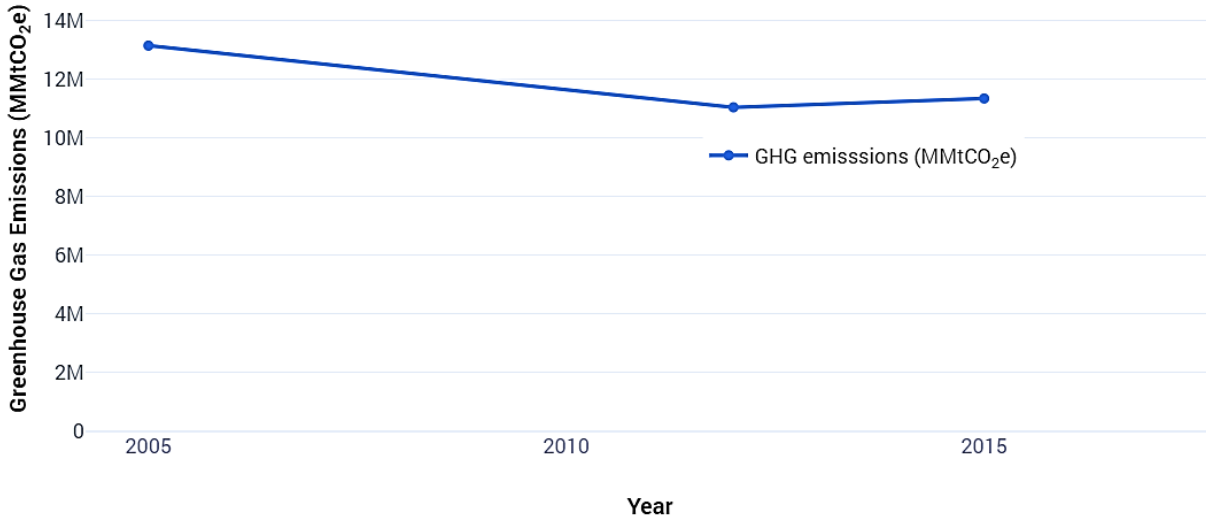
# A Greener County

*County government has committed to zero Greenhouse Gas emissions by 2035, an ambitious but achievable target, and necessary to combat the threat of climate change. In the same spirit, we should endeavor to significantly reduce our waste stream and keep our county litter-free.*

## Key Indicator I. Greenhouse Gas Emissions

**About this Indicator:** The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) issues periodic inventories of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and tracks them towards reduction goals. MWCOG is planning on the next release to reflect 2018 and then 2020.

### 1. How are we doing?



Despite a noteworthy decrease in GHG emissions between 2005 and 2012, the County saw an increase in the most recent inventory in 2015.

### 2. What is the story behind the curve?

#### Positive Factors

- Federal, state, and local policies. Certain policies and regulations have incentivized investment in renewable energy and supported energy efficiency and conservation (e.g., rebates, tax credits, etc.). Additionally, the adopted International Green Construction Code requires buildings to reduce their carbon footprint with certain measurable standards, waste reduction in connection with the construction process, stormwater protocols, and other related guidelines. The County has also adopted the International Energy Construction Code that requires tighter buildings with less energy leakage and consumption; and there are other existing programs that make County buildings greener

that can now be extended beyond County buildings. There is also existing Tree Canopy legislation and a Roadside Tree law in effect.

- Technological advances. Technology has helped develop a greener grid by bringing down the cost of renewable and other cleaner energy sources. Advances in energy efficiency technology have also helped mitigate greenhouse gas emissions.
- Public education. Outreach efforts from governments, civic organizations, and nonprofit groups have raised awareness of our environmental impact and have led to behavioral change.
- Land use. Effective local land use policies, including the Agriculture Reserve, County General Plan and Master Plans, and more transit-oriented dense development help to reduce emissions.

### Negative Factors

- Failure to include environmental considerations in growth decisions. An environmental lens should be applied in all decision making but is not currently applied. External environmental costs are not fully captured and considered.
- Population growth. Growth in the County has resulted in more human activity.
- Regional sprawl and drivers' attitude. The current car-centric lifestyle and a culture that prioritizes convenience, disposability and consumption, plus a lack of enforcement, compliance, and accountability to change behavior have resulted in more emissions from transportation.
- Sub-optimal mass transit and cheap gas. The combination of a currently unreliable transit system and inexpensive fuel make it a rational decision to drive more.
- Environmental degradation. Reductions in the County's tree canopy makes for less carbon-consuming foliage.

### **3. What strategies do we recommend to turn the curve?**

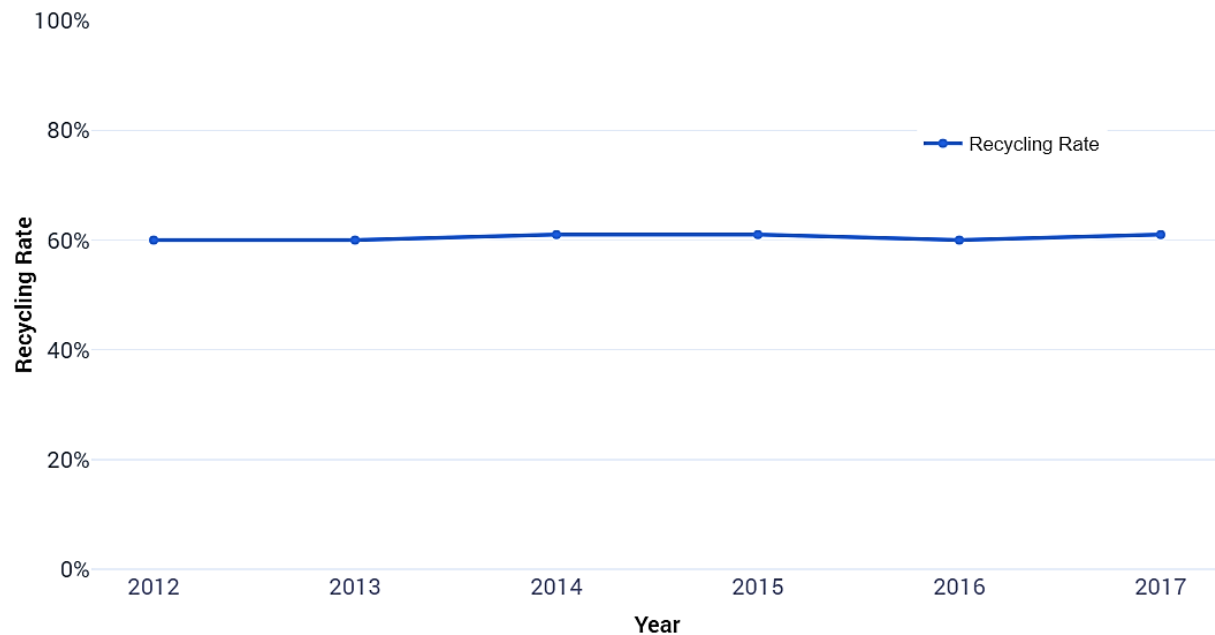
- 1) Achieve a Zero-waste goal.
- 2) Use true renewable energy sources.
  - Electrify everything and exclusively use solar and wind energy.
  - Provide County residents and businesses incentives for renewable fuel sources, reforestation, forest protection, and soil restoration.
- 3) Improve building energy benchmarking. Adjust the County's standard metric to cover all buildings of 10,000 square feet or greater. The current standard metric applies to buildings of 50,000 square feet or greater. Require buildings that are out of compliance with the benchmark to develop action plans.
- 4) Implement climate-friendly transportation solutions.
  - Develop a real-time bus tracking app to improve the public's experience using public transit and increase efficiency and reliability, and ultimately usage of this service.
  - Ban use of fossil fuels in government vehicles.



## Key Indicator II. Recycling Rate

**About this Indicator:** The rate is calculated by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) based on different waste tonnage flow data from the County's Transfer Station and Recycling Center scale records, solid waste hauler and processor reports, business recycling reports, multi-family reports, documentation of unreported commercial recycling tonnages, and contractor reports.

### 1. How are we doing?



The County is not on track to achieve a 70% recycling rate in 2020 as originally established by Montgomery County Executive Regulation 7-12 and Council Resolution 17-566. DEP has known for some time that this goal would require revision in 2019-2020 time frame, based on current knowledge of residents' and businesses' recycling practices, trends and improvements in packaging, recycling technologies, processing, and markets.

### 2. What is the story behind the curve?

#### Positive Factors

- Existing County recycling programs, policies and enforcement. There is a strong system currently in place with curbside recycling, yard waste composting, and the acceptance of a variety of materials for recycling – and there is an existing market for these items. Policies such as the Styrofoam ban and plastic bag tax have helped reduce waste and have incentivized recycling. There is strong political will and public support that has allowed these policies to be adopted.

- Education and awareness. There has been an increase in general environmental awareness, education, and peer pressure. Non-Governmental Organizations and the County have helped disseminate information to the public.
- Zero Waste planning effort. The current effort is taking a long-term comprehensive view on waste generation in the County.
- Opportunity to halt Resource Recovery Facility (RRF) operations. The current contract for the County's trash incinerator in Dickerson expires in 2021, which will create the opportunity to develop new creative and innovative solutions to encourage and improve recycling practices.

### Negative Factors

- Need for better education, outreach and enforcement. There is insufficient public awareness of County recycling programs, regulations, and definitions of recyclables. Outreach needs to be better targeted to diverse communities.
- Current behavior. We live in a society that values convenience and consumption. There is low participation in environmental programs among the County's commercial and multi-family properties.
- Industry trends. The privatization of waste and recycling hauling and the volatility of the recycling market (e.g., commodity prices for recyclable materials trending downward) present challenges in that private companies largely make decision based on potential profit while County Government takes into consideration other factors such as sustainability, and environmental and social impacts, etc. This can put the goals of each at odds with one another.
- Issues with the Zero Waste plan. The current plan is the continuation of incineration and dumping of toxic ash, and food waste is being burned. There is no financial incentive for reducing trash disposal by residents.
- The Northeast Maryland Waste Disposal Authority. This privately-owned organization has had control over the Division of Solid Waste for decades, and they receive County dollars to administer our program. Their vested interest is in incineration and therefore suppress any efforts to handle the County's trash in a greener and more responsible way.

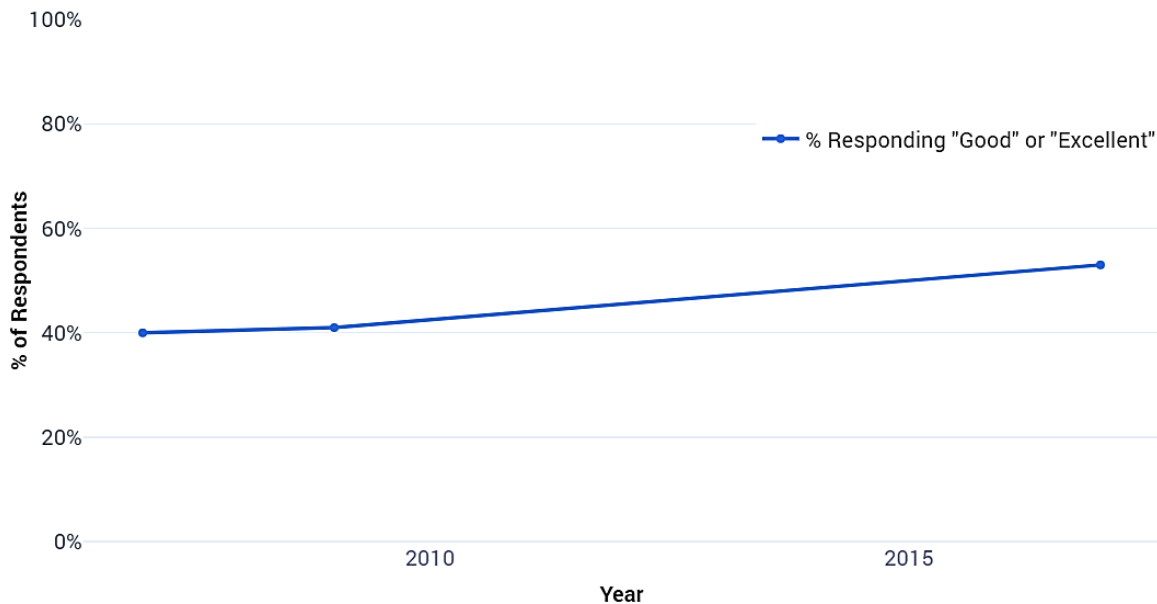
### **3. What strategies do we recommend to turn the curve?**

- 1) Modify the County's waste management plan. Eliminate incineration and put residuals in a safe and remote landfill, accessible by clean-energy rail haul. Give oversight of solid waste management to DEP (not a private entity with its own interests).
- 2) Support bottle and can deposit, including reusable glass bottles.
- 3) Implement a pay-as-you-throw program. This strategy charges residents based on the amount of trash produced rather than via property taxes or fixed fees. Make sure the fee structure is not regressive, so as not to impact low-income residents disproportionately.
- 4) Prioritize "Reduce/Refuse" to minimize waste. Elevate the priority of the "reduce/refuse" option among the "three Rs" (reduce/refuse, reuse, recycle) to reduce waste.
- 5) Support workers to unionize in the recycling and solid waste industry. Unionizing will provide better protection for workers and improve work quality.

## Key Indicator III. Resident Satisfaction with Code Enforcement

**About this Indicator:** The County's Resident Satisfaction Survey asks for the public's satisfaction with our Code Enforcement services, which handles resident complaints ranging from accumulations of solid waste to uncut high grass to sediment control violations and all manner of public nuisances and zoning violations. The 2017 survey is a representative sample of 1,075 County residents, with a margin of error of 3%. Respondents may have differing interpretations of Code Enforcement functions given the broad array of complaint types.

### 1. How are we doing?



While the most recent (2017) survey indicates improvement over prior years' responses, there is still significant room for improvement.

### 2. What is the story behind the curve?

#### Positive Factors

- Political will and systems for reporting and monitoring. Support exists for strong environmental codes (i.e., Healthy Lawns Law), and residents can rely on MC311 to report violations and CountyStat to track Service Request closure and other related measures.
- Collaboration. The County has shown a willingness to work with neighborhood groups.
- Good existing codes and laws. Examples that improve environmental quality include the Styrofoam ban, plastic bag tax, green building codes, stormwater management, and water quality.
- Good certification programs. Examples include solar and green businesses.

## Negative Factors

- Complaint based approach. The current enforcement method produces uneven outcomes among income, geography, and other demographic categories.
- Issues with code enforcement staff and structure. The responsible departments need more funding dedicated to enforcement, and staff need better training and a more integrated system. Code enforcement is operationally siloed across several departments and levels of government (e.g., stormwater management enforcement authority rests with the Department of Permitting Services via delegation from the Maryland Department of the Environment).
- Codes do not promote healthy ecosystems. The County needs enforcement on landscapes and food waste composting, and a better understanding of native plants.
- Inconsistent codes. Codes and enforcement are non-uniform among institutional, industrial, retail, single family and multi-family buildings.

### **3. What strategies do we recommended to turn the curve?**

- 1) Review all County codes for improving environmental impacts. Evaluate whether the codes are environmentally feasible and how they are applied.
- 2) Integrate the stormwater management activities of the Department of Permitting Services, Department of Environmental Protection and the Maryland National Capital Parks and Planning Commission.
- 3) Focus on equity/proactive enforcement rather than complaint-based/reactive enforcement.
- 4) Improve transparency and fairness in the Conditional Use permitting process. A Conditional Use is the grant of a specific use that is not permitted without restriction in the zone where it is located.
- 5) Penalize businesses for failure to comply with recycling requirements.

## The Team

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### **Public feedback and questions from the CE's Listening Sessions relating to this Priority Outcome reflect concerns about:**

- Addressing climate change, both as a health issue and a moral issue; ending the burning of coal and creating more clean energy production (more solar panels/solar farms, including in the Ag Reserve); reducing greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution (what happens when the current contract for the County's incinerator ends? and where does that trash go?).
- Limiting development that is incompatible with and adversely affects rural areas and/or removes trees; protecting existing green space; accelerating the replacement of trees.
- Expanding and/or better explaining existing zoning and building codes and processes that can positively impact emissions/energy use.
- Managing transportation and traffic.
- Addressing specific environmental nuisances, including: 5G small cell towers (these were also a concern under "Safe Neighborhoods" from a health/safety standpoint), gas-powered leaf blowers and plastic straws.
- The Montgomery County Stormwater Partners Network seeks to bring attention to the issue of Clean Water and their recommended steps for improving the County's water quality as described in their Clean Water Blueprint.

### **A public survey on the transition website collected input from residents as well; Respondents conveyed the following related to this Priority Outcome:**

- The most frequently discussed topic was how the county can use policy to promote sustainability, including solar energy incentives, requirements for new developments, and enforcement of existing environmental protection regulations.
- Respondents focused on renewable energy and specifically solar power as solutions for reducing emissions. Many cited pollution in various forms as a problem to be addressed.
- Respondents supported accessible, reliable, and enhanced public transit options, including expansion of the Bus Rapid Transit project. Access to transportation and its role



in equity was addressed by multiple respondents, with some prioritizing pedestrian- and cyclist-friendly infrastructure.

- Waste management and plastic reduction were cited as important by respondents, many of whom supported community education to promote recycling.
- The county's environment impact on water and green spaces was important to respondents, some of whom identified storm water management and tree cover as priorities.
- The role of the business community in environmental protection beyond that of individual residents was acknowledged.
- Other needs included in multiple responses were composting and biodiversity.

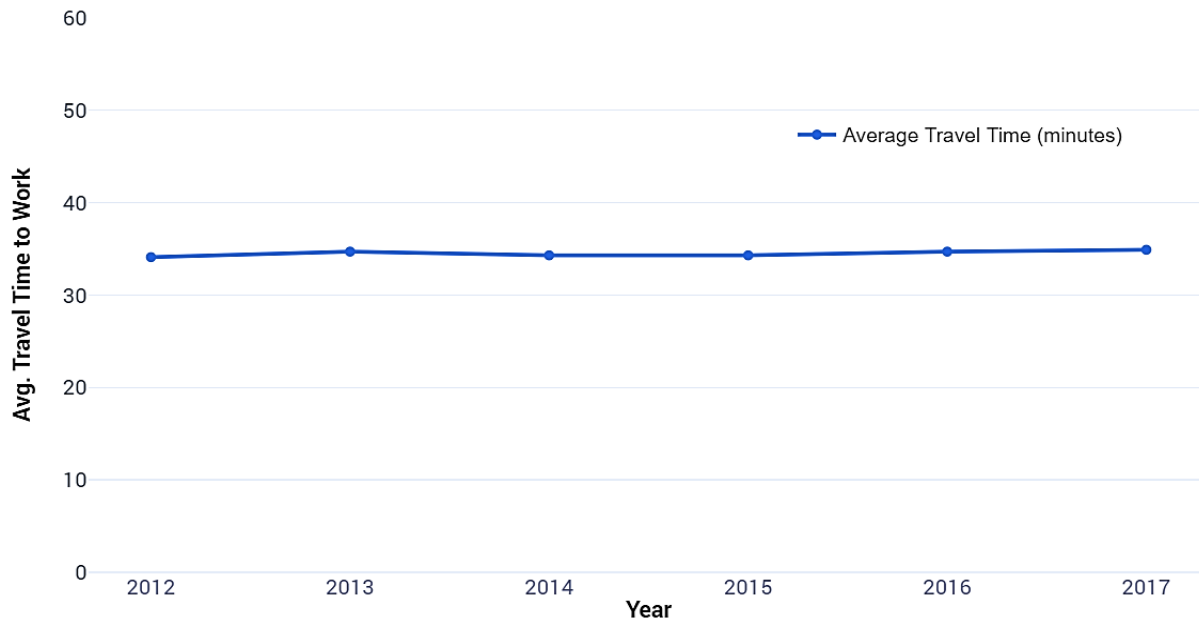
## Easier Commutes

*Nothing frustrates Montgomery County residents more than sitting in traffic. Moving people and goods more efficiently is an economic imperative, not to mention the mental health benefits. Starting with the outcomes in mind opens up many possibilities, from expanding transportation options to better utilizing our existing roadways to encouraging telecommuting.*

### Key Indicator I. Average Commuting Time

**About this Indicator:** The U.S. Census reports on residents' Average Travel Time to Work (Minutes); it is one of the longest in the country when ranked against comparable jurisdictions.

#### 1. How are we doing?



The average commute has changed very little in recent years, and if anything is trending a bit longer. The inherent challenge to conveying this issue in a single measure is that people's commuting experiences are unique, and they place different levels of importance on any given aspect. Time is only one measure of a quality commute, and a person may be very happy with the trade-off of a longer commute if it allows them to use public transit and/or walk, which has environmental and health benefits. Trade-offs exist at the macro-level as well, as policies that promote transit will benefit the environment even though they may add time to commutes, while policies that promote driving for commuting may reduce commuting times but damage the environment.

## **2. What is the story behind the curve?**

### **Positive Factors**

- Flexible work schedules. Companies, governments, and organizations are using technology to enable practices such as telecommuting and working remotely to become more common.
- Incentives. Companies and organizations offer financial and other rewards for use of transportation modes other than single occupancy vehicles.
- Smart Growth. Mixed-use development at transit hubs encourages use of buses and Metro.
- The First Mile/Last Mile (FM/LM) issue. Where there are well designed transportation options that address FM/LM (the transportation gap between the home or workplace and public transportation), FM/LM is a positive factor.

### **Negative Factors**

- Planning and policy. In a County with a growing population, sprawl development is the norm, with jobs and job growth not strategically dispersed throughout the County. Land use decisions can be an obstacle (Maryland-National Park and Planning Commission's requirement for parking) and there is a lack of redundancy (alternative routes) in road systems.
- Market forces vs. Legacy Decisions. It is less expensive to build in non-urban areas and employers often offer free parking.
- Job centers and housing affordability need to be reconciled against market forces. Dead office parks (e.g., Executive Boulevard) grab the attention for redevelopment and subsidies while the MPDU program has not meaningfully brought family-supportive housing to places with high job concentrations.
- Some old job centers are not thoughtfully repurposed while struggling job centers (White Oak, Wheaton) are not getting the full support of county resources to become the next Bethesda, Rockville, Silver Spring, etc.
- The First Mile/Last Mile (FM/LM) issue. Where there are poorly designed transportation options for the FM/LM, FM/LM is a negative factor.

## **3. What strategies do we recommend to turn the curve?**

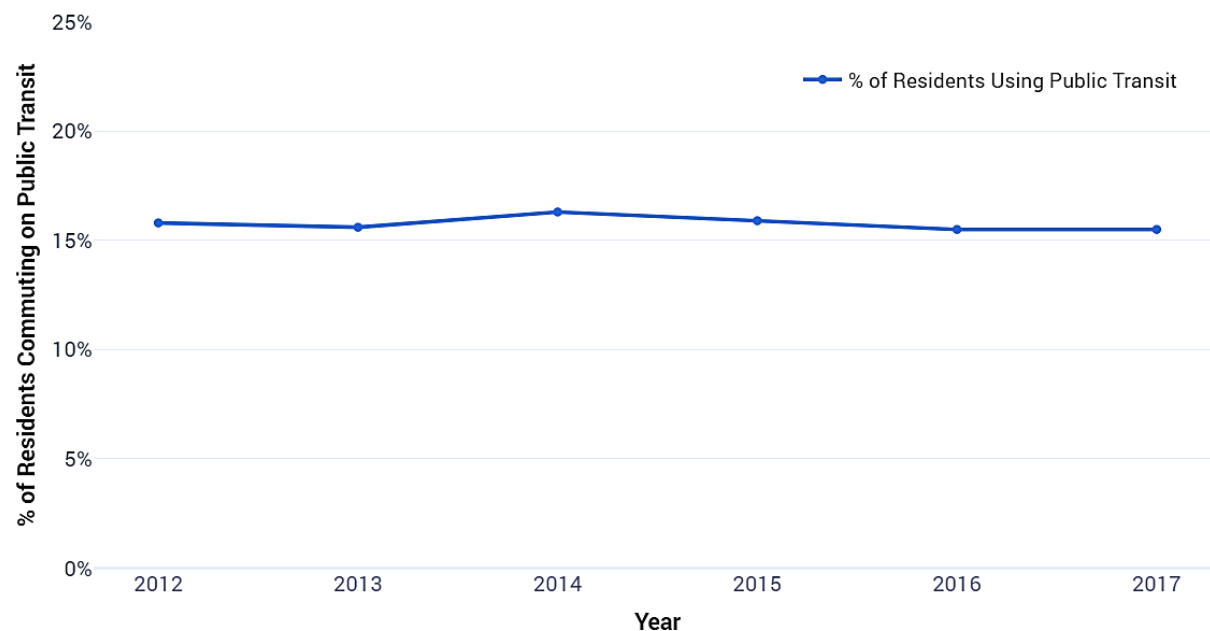
- 1) Examine tax policy, real estate tax credits, and tax increment financing. Encourage density and discourage sprawl. Make tough decisions about what to support and what to starve. Ask if the County wants to spread economic development resources thin, or focus them on places that have market forces behind them.
- 2) Fund a complete interagency coordinated comprehensive transportation system.
  - Rationalize the bus system with a greater focus on ridership vs. coverage and take into account First Mile and Last Mile issues to facilitate a more efficient and economic transit.
  - Fix the east-west mobility issue. The Purple Line and ICC are great starts, but Veirs Mill, Metropolitan Avenue/Capitol View Avenue, Plyers Mill, and other E/W connections are painfully slow and under-invested.)
- 3) Introduce adaptive traffic signals to improve traffic flow.

- 4) Consider a Montgomery County Transportation Authority. The Authority could have the following attributes: It could include governance for both BRT and Ride-On (and other County transit initiatives like bike trails, micro transit pilots, etc.); It would have separate bonding authority not linked to the County's limits; It could have a 5-7 person board made up of appointees by the County (Executive and Council), the State and perhaps larger municipalities in the County; It could have authority to levy a small increase to the State gas tax or sales tax to finance County transit projects.
- 5) Promote increased telecommuting through the technologies that enable remote work and the policies that support and permit the practice, and effectively market them to workers, starting with County employees.

## Key Indicator II. Percent of Residents Taking Public Transit to Work

**About this Indicator:** The U.S. Census reports 1-Year estimates on the percent of County residents commuting to and from work by public transportation.

### 1. How are we doing?



Census data shows consistent, if not very high, use of public transit for commuting. In 2017, the County introduced two related questions on the Resident Satisfaction Survey: The percentage of residents reporting they walked or biked instead of driving at least twice a month (38%), and the percentage of residents reporting they used public transportation instead of driving at least twice a month (39%). The 2017 survey is a representative sample of 1,075 County residents, with a margin of error of 3%. These questions will be asked next on the 2019 survey.

## **2. What is the story behind the curve?**

### **Positive Factors**

- New transit initiatives. Construction of the Purple Line and BRT (bus rapid transit) systems are underway.
- Current transit options. They are accessible, becoming more reliable, less expensive, less stressful, environmentally beneficial, and employers provide incentives to use them.
- Transportation Management District (TMD) surveys. The TMD surveys capture non-auto driver mode share (the percentage of commuters who travel to their worksite by means other than single-occupant vehicle) which informs master planning.

### **Negative Factors**

- Personal choices. Transportation costs are rarely factored into peoples' decisions on where to live, and people with higher incomes are less likely to use public transit.
- Limited support. There is a lack of funding and focus on transit from the State level, and a reluctance to increase funding through mechanisms such as an increased State gas tax or vehicle miles tax to finance transportation/transit projects.
- Planning and building systems is challenging. Rolling out BRT (bus rapid transit) system and the use of bicycles is a slow process due to insufficient funding and NIMBY (not in my backyard) attitudes. Also, there is no integrated transportation system that places enough emphasis on the first and last mile.
- Limits to current options. MARC train schedule is too limited, and other options such as Metro have limited hours, negatively impacting jobs such as restaurant workers (there are, however, trade-offs to restoring hours such as having to maintenance work during peak ridership hours).
- Siloed thinking. The County is not working closely enough with WMATA or MTA; they are seen as competition for funding.

## **3. What strategies do we recommend to turn the curve?**

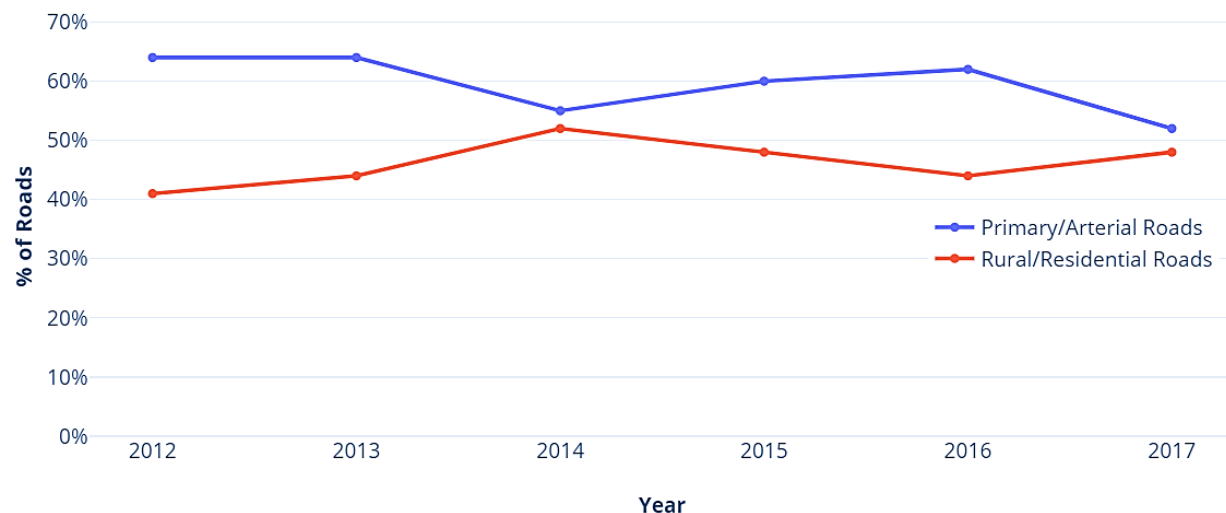
- 1) Focus on improving the three primary benefits of mass transit: (1) Speed, (2) Low-cost, and (3) Reliability
- 2) Mandate transit benefit ordinance.
  - Require employers to offer transit benefits and default to "Transit Pass Benefits." Mandate that employers offer a parking benefit cash-out so that pedestrians and bike commuters can enjoy equal footing with their co-workers who are subsidized to park and drive.
- 3) Holistic redesign of the transit system region-wide.
  - Address feeder and coverage issues.
  - Minimize duplication.
  - Address gaps and equity issues.
  - Promote bicycle and pedestrian connections to transit where jobs and housing are "cut off" from the existing transit stations (stations that have lots of housing nearby and within 1/4 mile but it is dangerous to walk/bike to transit so usage is limited).

- 4) Bus Rapid Transit
  - BRT could be financed either under the County Transit Authority concept, or as a Metro capital project with the County underwriting the annual operating costs, or as a P3 project along the lines of the State-financed Purple Line with FTA grant/loan support.
- 5) Transportation for people with disabilities.
  - “Off the Wall” Ideas: These strategies could have an impact but for different reasons are considered less feasible.
- 6) Address issues inequitable access to the Transit System. Work to change attitudes and decisions about access by offering incentives and awards.
- 7) Re-focus Transportation Management Districts. Promote the home end of the trip rather than the work end.
- 8) County supported Circular Mass Transit. Service supporting Prince George’s County, Montgomery County, and Virginia. Extend the Purple Line into Virginia.
- 9) More housing density around transit, including bus stops.
- 10) More pedestrian-friendly streets.
- 11) Expand MARC to connect with VRE (Virginia Railway Express), Metro, Amazon, and other employment hubs.

## Key Indicator III. Percent of County Roads Rated in “Good” or Better Condition

**About this Indicator:** The Montgomery County Department of Transportation’s Pavement Management System rates annually the quality of our roads to inform the planning and scheduling of road repairs and related capital improvements. The pavements’ numerical Pavement Condition Index (PCI) score is developed through an analysis of nineteen (19) discrete pavement distresses (cracking, pot holes, environmental distress, utility cuts, etc.) and ranges from 1-100 with 1 being an absolute failure and 100 representing perfect conditions. Roads with a lower PCI are candidates for systemic patching or resurfacing with hot mix asphalt. The 19 discrete pavement distresses are measured using high resolution cameras coupled with lasers mounted on slow moving vehicles (akin to Google) that accurately measure and record detailed pavement conditions.

### 1. How are we doing?



At present, half of the County’s roads are rated as less than good condition. Additionally, on the 2017 Resident Satisfaction Survey, 59% of respondents rated “road repair” as “Poor” or “Fair.”

### 2. What is the story behind the curve?

#### Positive Factors

- Appeal. There are low political barriers to fixing roads – this is a YIMBY (yes in my backyard) issue.
- Policy. There is a moratorium on utility work within three years of a repaving project.

#### Negative Factors

- Financial. Current funding appears to not be enough.
- Political. Decision-makers are too reactive to constituent complaints (squeaky wheel syndrome).
- Climate. Extreme weather increases deterioration of road pavement conditions.



### 3. What strategies do we recommend to turn the curve?

- 1) Better two-way communication between County and residents on road conditions.
  - Better promotion of the use of 311 for pothole notification.
- 2) Prioritize regular maintenance as a matter of performance management.
  - It saves money in the long run.
- 3) Decentralize County government administration of road maintenance.
  - To improve reaction time/service.
- 4) Better coordination with utilities on planned work.
- 5) Full restoration of highway user revenue from the state.
  - Would allow the County to better plan and schedule maintenance and infrastructure needs.

**“Off the Wall” Ideas:** These strategies could have the greatest impact but for different reasons are considered less feasible.

- 1) Ban large trucks from County roads to the extent allowed by Federal law. No trucks longer than 48 feet (New York City has regulations to govern the operation of trucks).
- 2) Start an Adopt-a-Pothole program.
- 3) Restrict traffic based on license plates in congested areas. Allow driving only on certain days of the week. This is relevant to both maintaining road quality and the Indicator on commute time.

## The Team

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Crystal Brockington-Sallee

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**Public feedback and questions from the CE's Listening Sessions relating to this Priority Outcome reflect concerns about:**

- Addressing increasing traffic congestion on our highways and surface roads, especially in light of future population growth; Understanding the relationship between planning/development and traffic (e.g., the Clarksburg Outlets).
- Addressing concerns about potential expansion of 270 and 495 and backups caused by the American Legion Bridge.
- Improving our road resurfacing; roads are in poor shape, especially in East County.
- Addressing the lack of public transportation between Montgomery County and Fairfax County, and between rural Montgomery County and Prince George's County.
- Mitigating the loss of commuter/Metro parking spaces in Bethesda due to the Marriott move.
- Synchronizing the County's traffic lights to improve traffic flow.
- Addressing pedestrian and bike safety concerns (this was emphasized more under "Safe Neighborhoods").
- Increasing enforcement of no parking/no stopping areas on roads.
- Developing a deer policy.
- Adding better on-site parking for Metro and mass transit especially up-county (e.g., Shady Grove), a dedicated Metro station at Montgomery College, a pedestrian bridge over Montrose Parkway and extending that road for better east-west travel.

**A public survey on the transition website collected input from residents as well; Respondents conveyed the following related to this Priority Outcome:**

- Survey responses focused primarily on the importance of promoting public transportation, with most responses referencing buses. Respondents generally focused on improving transit options and expanding geographic regions of coverage. Accessibility of bus and rail options was identified as an opportunity to promote equity.
- The second most frequent topic of responses was roads and accompanying infrastructure. Opinions were split on the merit of expanding major routes like I-270. Many respondents supported enhancing infrastructure dedicated to cyclists and pedestrians.
- Multiple responses expressed interest in promoting telework options and flexible work schedules to mitigate peak rush hour traffic.
- Some respondents supported managing development strategically to integrate residential and commercial areas and decrease commute distances.
- Area-specific recommendations expressed needs in up-county areas and Silver Spring.
- Other topics mentioned by multiple respondents were parking, ride sharing, tolls and fees, and zoning.

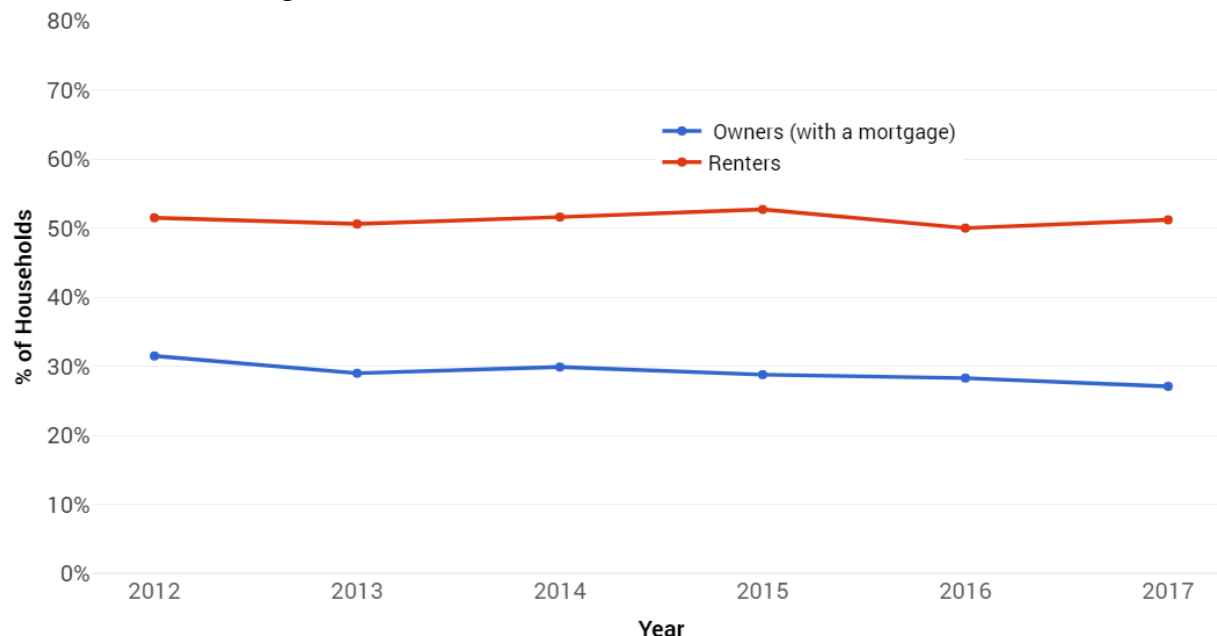
# A More Affordable and Welcoming County

Montgomery County's high cost of living reflects the fact that this is a great place to live. However, it is barrier to attracting and retaining young professionals and a hardship for many of our residents, including seniors with fixed incomes and families struggling to make ends meet, to the point where some of them experience hunger and homelessness. Even many public servants, like teachers and firefighters, can't afford to live where they work. We need to find creative solutions to make Montgomery County a place where people across the wealth spectrum can pursue their dreams and immigrants can find a home.

## Key Indicator I. Percent of Households that are Housing Burdened

**About this Indicator:** Being housing burdened is defined as when a household spends greater than 30% of its income on housing costs. The data source is U.S. Census ACS 1-year estimates.

### 1. How are we doing?



While the percent of homeowners who are housing burdened has been trending downward, more than half of renters in the County continue to spend an outsize portion of their income on a place to live.

### 2. What is the story behind the curve?

#### Positive Factors

- Existing housing programs and subsidies. There is an array of rental and homeownership programs provided by the County and the Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC),

including the Housing Initiative Fund (“HIF”) for affordable housing development, the Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (“MPDU”) program and preservation programs designed to maintain deteriorating affordable-housing stock.

- Collaborative initiatives. Programs such as HIF, MPDU, Shared Housing, Accessory Apartments, and Aging in Place provide the political energy and guidance needed to take action as a community.
- Engaged leadership. The County’s political leadership is engaged and has prioritized housing as an area of focus.

### Negative Factors

- Housing supply issues. Poor land utilization and availability results in existing housing stock demanding a high price. Barriers to development include zoning and permitting regulations, development costs (high cost of land acquisition and construction costs), and a lengthy planning process to amend and confirm master plans.
- Transportation and accessibility. The desire to live as near as possible to one’s work is a heightened priority for many due to excessive traffic, driving home values up.
- Lack of diversity in our housing stock. There is limited availability of certain types of homes that fit into affordability bands of County residents.
- Insufficient income. Some residents do not have jobs that afford even “entry-level” homes.
- Structural Racism. Structural racism inhibits the development of affordable housing in many areas of the county and is often manifested and/or compounded by NIMBYism and gentrification.
- Disengaged developers. For-profit developers are disengaged from the portions of the community that are most in need of affordable housing.
- Poor quality of lower-cost options. Significant amounts of the existing moderate- to low-cost housing in the County suffers from deferred maintenance and is deteriorating.

### 3. What strategies do we recommended to turn the curve?

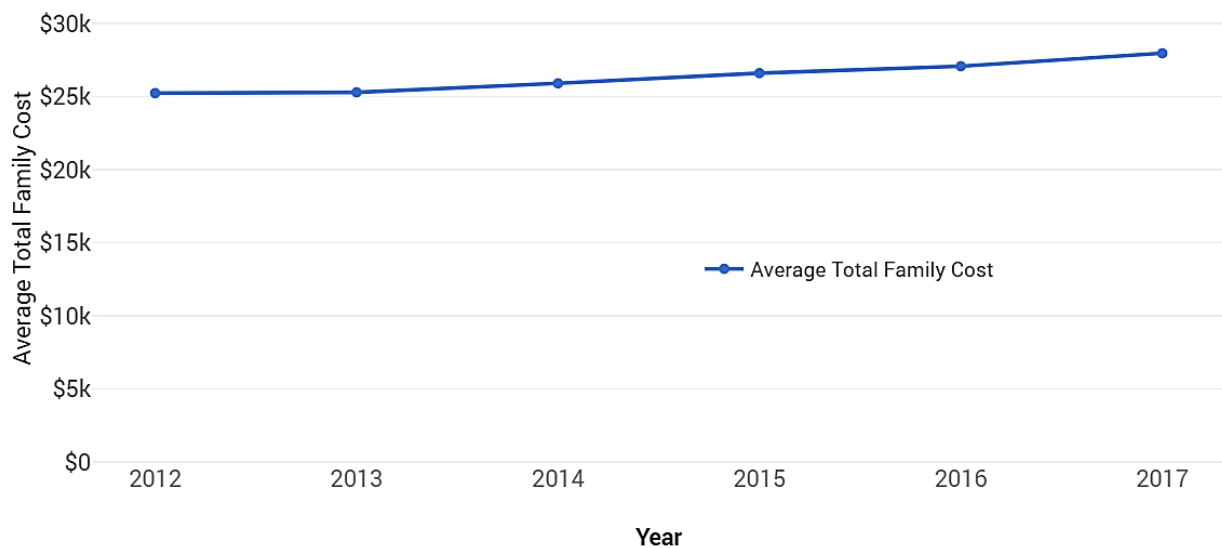
- 1) Expand Housing Initiative Fund
  - Provide a minimum of \$100 million for the annual Housing Initiative Fund to expand and support for affordable housing development.
  - Increase funding for preservation of existing affordable housing.
- 2) Zoning/Regulatory expansion of supply
  - Implement policies to expand the supply of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU is a smaller, independent residential dwelling unit located on the same lot as a stand-alone single-family home), including reducing Home Owner Association restrictions on ADUs.
  - Adjust zoning and permitting to reduce development costs and time.
  - Expand understanding of County land/building availability, consider additional regulatory support for allowing development of affordable housing on land owned by faith communities and assist in identifying faith-based organizations to collaborate on affordable housing projects.
  - Increase Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDU) requirement for density bonus.
  - Reduce parking requirements and costs for transit centric development.

- Transit-related development: Ensure a net increase in affordable units along major transit projects (e.g., Purple Line); and expand incentives for transit-centric development.
- 3) Rental policies
- Dedicate funds to tenant right of first refusal purchases, improve training and outreach on this subject.
  - Protect multi-family communities with improved tenant education
  - Incentivize utility cost reductions and subsidies to reduce monthly housing costs.
  - Expand existing rental assistance program.
- 4) Homeownership policies
- Increase MPDU requirement for more unit creation, with a focus on housing near public transit.
  - Create Moderate-Income homeownership program, including down payment loans.
  - Fair housing enforcement
  - Increase enforcement of Fair Housing law, especially on quality and accessibility.
  - Remove discriminatory barriers for immigrants and all disadvantaged groups.
  - Improve outreach and education on opportunities for home ownership and rent subsidies.
  - Provide emergency assistance and design a more effective system to prevent people from being evicted without cause.

## Key Indicator II. Access to Affordable Child Care

**About this Indicator:** The Maryland Family Network (MFN) maintains a database of all licensed childcare centers in the State. The data below represents the average cost in Montgomery County for both “home-based” care (labelled “Infant” by MFN) and “center-based” care (labelled “Preschooler” by MFN). The graph below shows the annual average cost of each as well as the total, representing a family with one child in each category.

### 1. How are we doing?



For a family with two children (one in each age category), the average annual increase in child care costs is an astonishing \$546, largely out of reach and likely unsustainable for many County families.

### 2. What is the story behind the curve?

#### Positive Factors

- Engaged leadership. The political will exists to address childcare availability and affordability.
- Training. There are available programs and educational resources for licensing childcare providers.
- Cooperation. Collaborative initiatives such as Montgomery Moving Forward, which convenes cross-sector county leaders to address complex community problems with a focus on economically disadvantaged families, leveraging the Collective Impact model.

## Negative Factors

- Financial. The County and State governments provide limited subsidies for child care for working families. Creative ways to increase the amount of subsidies are needed if demand is to be met.
- Lack of supply. Barriers to entry into the market for many would-be providers include low compensation, the high cost of real estate, necessary renovations to meet requirements, and regulations governing usable space to child ratios.
- Regulations. Stringent rules create a secondary childcare “grey market” (off the books, unlicensed providers).
- Lack of flexibility. Families are constrained by the services, hours, days, contracts, etc. that are currently provided.

### **3. What strategies do we recommend to turn the curve?**

- 1) Availability of space.
  - Commission a comprehensive study and report to assess the needs and gaps in service of the current childcare network. This could be in collaboration with MNCPPC and/or consultants to provide assessment of spaces available in the County and to document possible planning-related strategies that can increase the access of space to childcare providers.
  - Create a working group/results team to identify innovative solutions for making both private and public childcare spaces available in County.
  - Deliver an easy-to-use data portal to identify childcare vacancies/slots available at all private and public childcare providers.
  - Create incentives and programs to enable small independent child care to establish themselves and grow, including access to loans, streamlined permitting and access to relevant demographic decision-making data and information.
- 2) Funding and increasing subsidies:
  - The County should engage the employer communities as they have much to gain from increased affordable child care among their potential and existing employees.
  - Increase coordination between the County and the State’s subsidy programs.
  - Create a program that provides zero-interest loans for childcare providers to complete renovations of childcare space.
  - Match the Maryland state contributions of dollars for subsidizing the child care costs of low-income families.
  - Incentivize developers/tenants/businesses to make space available within commercial businesses and properties.
  - Create a tax credit for childcare providers at the county level.
  - Subsidize the costs of the Maryland state training for individuals that are becoming licensed childcare providers.
  - Increase the number of seats for County funded Pre-K for eligible low-income families.
  - Provide universal Pre-K for all three- and four-year-olds.
  - Explore Pay for Success financing to expand quality early childhood education slots.

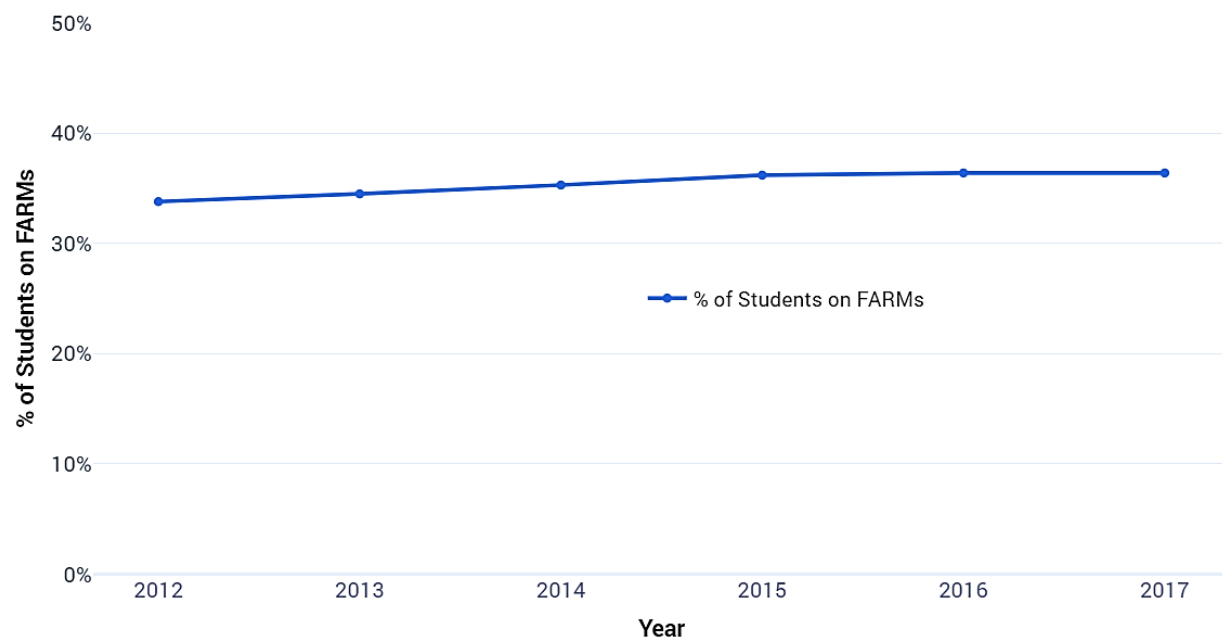


- 3) Regulations and Licensing:
  - Send formal request to Annapolis to simplify and deregulate the licensing and regulations placed upon childcare providers.
- 4) Engage and Collaborate with the Business Community:
  - Continue and empower the Montgomery Moving Forward Initiative.

## Key Indicator III. Food Insecurity

**About this Indicator:** This measure – a reliable proxy of food insecurity across the County – is reported by the Maryland State Department of Education and is comprised of the count of children that receive Free and/or Reduced Meals (FARMS) Benefits at their school. Families/Students are eligible for this benefit at 185% of the federal poverty level.

### 1. How are we doing?



The FARMS Rate has been ticking up at a slow but consistent rate across all levels of Montgomery County Schools.

### 2. What is the story behind the curve?

#### Positive Factors

- Prioritization. The County has made a choice to intentionally address food insecurity.
- The Food Security Strategy. County government continues to collaborate with community partners to fulfill the actions that are prescribed in the Strategy for a Food Secure Montgomery. Additional interactive data can be found at the FoodStat App.

## Negative Factors

- Poverty. Low incomes and a high cost of living are the key drivers of food insecurity. Competing priorities and expenses within many Montgomery County households means having to choose between paying for food, rent, childcare, health insurance, and other necessities.
- Lack of knowledge. Many households are not educated about proper nutrition and do not have information about available healthy food resources.
- Limited mobility. Some households and families do not have a vehicle, and therefore must rely on public transit to reach a grocery store or other market, making shopping for healthy food more challenging.
- General lack of awareness. Given our high median household income, many may not realize that food insecurity is an issue in Montgomery County. Food deserts exist (in East County and Up-County primarily). There are SNAP eligibility issues affecting seniors and certain immigrant populations. The recent federal government shutdown has increased the public's awareness regarding food insecurity and the reality of living paycheck-to-paycheck.

### **3. What strategies do we recommend to turn the curve?**

- 1) Build on the foundation of the Food Security Plan by accelerating the existing strategies laid out in the Plan.
  - The County Executive can convene an annual food security summit to review the status and gaps in implementation of the Plan
- 2) Continue to develop the coordination of pick-up/distribution sites across the county:
  - Increase data collection on people and families picking up food from non-profit food assistance providers, school, and government assistance programs.
  - Develop publicly available application for identifying where distribution sites are in the County.
  - Create a program that can give access to County facilities not currently in use to house non-profits that work to combat food insecurity.
- 3) Availability of healthful food production in the County:
  - Implement County funded subsidies for particular healthy foods.
  - Incentivize production of healthful food in the Agricultural Reserve and high-density areas in the County.
- 4) Partnerships
  - Partner with school system to cover service gaps when serving children and families.
  - Expand current family grocery markets at high schools, like the one at John F. Kennedy High School.
  - Seek collaborative efforts with Healthcare, MCPS, Parks, and in workforce development settings, senior housing.
  - Partner with grocery stores near schools with family markets.
  - HHS could keep track of the areas most in need and make specific requests or food recovery and distribution organizations to direct their efforts there.

5) Education and Policy Strategies:

- Expand education programs on nutrition, culinary skills, farming, and waste reduction.
- Seek and promote healthful food subsidies from the state and federal government such as the Maryland State Priority Funding Areas incentives.
- Social services and faith based groups working with the County government should increase efforts to educate the broader public regarding food insecurity along with ways they can engage to address this fundamental injustice.

## The Team

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**Public feedback and questions from the CE's Listening Sessions relating to this Priority Outcome reflect concerns about:**

- Supporting our immigrants and the distinct immigrant communities to be successful through: better information (including language access), access to legal services, support to achieve citizenship, support for our non-profits and faith groups, positive interactions between MCPD and immigrant communities, and inclusion in an accurate 2020 Census count.
- Maintaining effective Office of Community Partnerships Advisory Groups (perhaps better organize/consolidate where there are many groups that seek to help a single sub-population) and protecting the Gilchrist Center.
- Increasing affordable housing and rents – for millennials and seniors (aging in place) and those in between; addressing the lack of diversity of socioeconomics in some neighborhoods.
- Developing Equity policies and remembering that diversity has many dimensions including seniors, people with disabilities, and the homeless.

- Combating discrimination and hate crimes and improving code enforcement, especially in areas where the quality of life has declined because of crime, overcrowded housing and code violations.
- Maintaining our libraries and other cultural centers.

**A public survey on the transition website collected input from residents as well; Respondents conveyed the following related to this Priority Outcome:**

- The issue featured in the greatest number of responses by far was housing affordability. Some respondents focused on the role of development in the creation of new low- and moderate-income units. Multiple respondents cited taxes, zoning, and land use as factors in the cost of living and housing affordability.
- Respondents supported efforts to promote diversity and foster engagement of communities. Some responses specifically referenced assisting immigrants in connecting to services and their community.
- A recurring topic was equity and ensuring that the county is free from discrimination and offers opportunity to all. Multiple respondents supported the provision of human services to promote equity and inclusion.
- Transportation and integrating new development with public transit were identified as an important factor in housing and accessibility.
- Other issues discussed in multiple responses were the cost of living, employment and pay, libraries, equity in schools, and support for seniors.

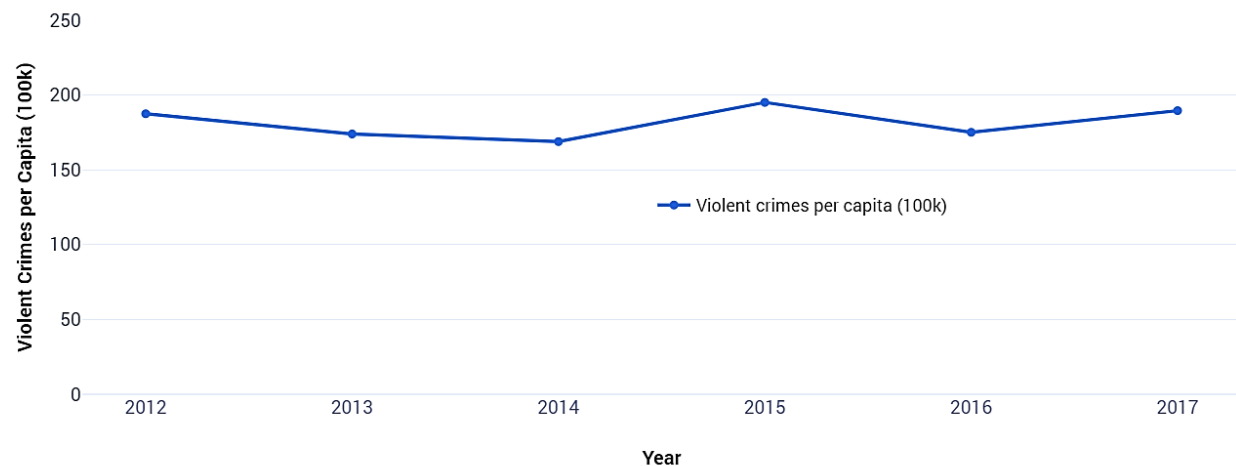
## Safe Neighborhoods

*The recent Montgomery County resident survey reinforced that safety is the foundation of our quality of life. Safe neighborhoods don't just have low crime; they are walkable, active communities with places for people to congregate and have fun.*

### Key Indicator I. Violent Crime Rate (per 100,000 population)

**About this Indicator:** Violent crimes are offenses that involve force or threat of force. Violent crime is composed of four offenses: murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.

#### 1. How are we doing?



Montgomery County enjoys low levels of violent crime, though the rate has been stubbornly consistent in recent years after a considerable drop in the five years between 2006 and 2011. The team focused their discussions on gang-related violent crime, while acknowledging that not all violent crime can be attributed to gangs and recognizing that the designation of any crime as “gang-related” is at the discretion of the Montgomery County Police Department. It is important and relevant to note that the number of gang-related violent crimes committed in the County has risen from 49 in 2013 to 75 in 2016 and the same number in 2017.

\* NOTE: Beginning January 1, 2017, MCPD began reporting details about its individual crime incidents through the FBI’s National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). Under NIBRS, MCPD records all offenses associated with an incident, rather than only the most severe offense, which provides greater specificity in reporting (greater capability to break data into more categories). 2017 data for Takoma Park, Park Police, and Maryland State Police were based off legacy (SRS) reporting. Therefore, caution should be used when comparing to prior years.

## **2. What is the story behind the curve?**

### **Positive Factors**

- County and Non-profit leadership and programs. County programs include HHS's Positive Youth Development Initiative and the Department of Correction and Rehabilitation's Youthful Offender Program. There are also non-profits in areas that specifically focus on at-risk youth and offer evidence-based intervention programs, including "strength-based" models, and effectively communicate and collaborate on shared goals.
- Good services in schools. Wraparound services at schools of all levels help drive better-than-expected education outcomes through services like ESOL (English as a Second Language) programs, MCPS Pupil Personnel Workers, MCPS Parent Community Coordinators, HHS Linkages to Learning Programs, High School Based Wellness Centers, and the Street Outreach Network.
- Collaboration across local government. The Positive Youth Development Initiative helps to lead with information sharing, and has multiple areas of focus, including individuals fleeing violence in South/Central America, African American youth, and other youth. The Police gang unit and the State's Attorney's gang prosecution unit have a shared focus on gang activity that allows County law enforcement to connect the dots on gang operations.
- Practitioners with experience. Many people involved in these efforts have in-depth knowledge and personal experience with the struggles faced by our youth.
- Regional factors associated with lower crime. The County's high education, economic prosperity, and availability of public services naturally counteract some crime.
- Effective government services. Drug Court helps people to get off drugs and out of gangs in coordination with HHS (Positive Youth Development Initiative programs), non-profits, the Street Outreach Network, Safe Space Program and the County's Gang Unit; enabling numerous diversion and reentry opportunities.
- County funding: Dollars are directed to youth services and other programs focused on the most vulnerable populations, such as family intervention and reunification services.
- Recreation centers and community centers: These facilities provide youth a place to go rather than the streets, such as two Youth Opportunity Centers and three (soon to be four) Safe Space Programs.

### **Negative Factors**

- Poverty and unemployment. Poverty and unemployment underlie most of the other negative factors listed below. In the wake of the Great Recession, we experienced a breakdown in the fabric of neighborhoods and social services. Two generation poverty and "fragile families" are major factors in gang involvement.
- Isolation and truancy. Too many youth lack support from their schools, families, community institutions, and health services. Young people who are not in school or another structured environment have more opportunities to become engaged in violent crime.
- Complex trauma. The system has difficulty assessing and adapting to the needs of individuals with deeper and more complex issues, including trauma.
- Drugs. Drugs and drug addiction are factors in a significant number of violent crimes.
- Easy access to guns. It is easy to move guns between jurisdictions without records and to exploit existing loopholes in the law.

- The challenge of successfully reunifying families. People who flee their home countries seeking a better life may not be “bringing crime here,” but when families are “fragile” and not effectively brought back together, that plus a lack of opportunity in our communities provides an opening for MS-13 or other gangs, including regional gangs which can be more complex, to recruit.
- Community prejudices, fueled by extremist views in the media. Biases in the criminal justice system cause youth of color to be viewed as predisposed to criminal activity, and the youth internalize the message. Negative media messages cause fear and distrust and drive immigrant communities into isolation.
- Incarceration. Parents who are in jail means they are not present to supervise or guide their children, and there is a lack of fatherhood services and employment supports specifically targeting gang-involved youth. Mass incarceration leads to cycles of criminal behavior.
- Over-reliance on old methods. Crime suppression rather than prevention and intervention, and a reactive criminal justice system, all address the symptoms rather than the root causes of gang violence. This focus on symptoms, when compounded by ignorance and bias in the system, causes legitimate associations among youth of color to be criminalized.
- Fragmented regional and County leadership. While there are collaborations, we do not have leadership with sufficient authority to develop or coordinate a response to gangs.

### **3. What strategies do we recommended to turn the curve.**

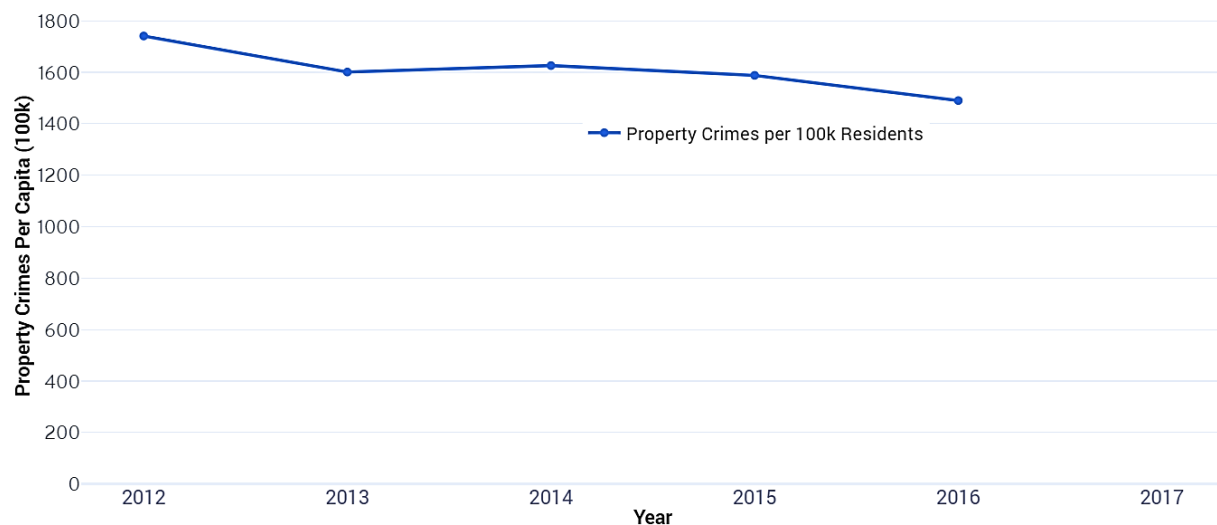
- 1) Identify service gaps and enhance/expand existing prevention and intervention programs. Conduct a needs-based assessment to identify where and how to allocate resources based on community needs. Coordinate with non-profits, County government, schools, and community programs to offer community-based services and trauma-informed care that lead to truancy prevention and youth leadership development. Fund training and professional development opportunities for service providers and create grant opportunities for non-profits.
- 2) Leverage Positive Youth Development services.
  - Needs assessment on Positive Youth Development services. With community input, find the most effective strategies and gaps in services. Build greater collaboration between community providers and government in the Positive Youth Development group. Have region-based youth groups report quarterly on activities.
  - Increase appropriations for Positive Youth Development. Provide greater access to support services and peer groups. Target youth with the highest needs using data from the Department of Correction and Rehabilitation, State’s Attorney’s Office, and the school system (e.g., truancy).
  - Provide training that is culturally-based. Partner with MCPS to ensure accountability for their participation in the Positive Youth Development Initiative and hold effective bias and restorative justice training for educators and administrators.
- 3) Improve job readiness/career training.
  - Improve WorkSource Montgomery. To help reduce truancy, work with schools to improve economic development and career training.

- Support Kirwan Commission recommendations. Support the Commission's recommendations for alternative education options for at-risk youth.
  - Create a job-readiness program. One that specifically targets gang-involved youth or youth that commit acts of violence.
- 4) Engage families and at-risk youth. Develop a family strengthening strategy that helps to build resilience and protective factors to prevent gang membership. Engage at-risk youth to improve their relationships with County government and school system. Create a systematic approach to mentoring in the county. Re-evaluate and re-define gang-related violent crime so we do not criminalize legitimate associations among youth of color.
  - 5) Provide greater County leadership on gang violence prevention. Assign a senior staff member in the County Executive's office the role of overseeing gang violence prevention. Develop short and long-term strategies adaptable for different communities or situations. Obtain support from county law enforcement and the State's Attorney on these strategies and engage the State Department of Juvenile Services and State Department of Corrections.

## Key Indicator II. Property Crime Rate (per 100,000 population)

**About this Indicator:** Property crime includes offenses where the object of the perpetrator is the taking of money or property, but there is no force or threat of force against the victims. Property crime includes the offenses of burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson.

### 1. How are we doing?



While the property crime rate has been trending in the right direction (though 2017 data is not yet available), it is vitally important to continue or accelerate the progress being made to keep Montgomery County attractive as a place to live, work, and play.



## **2. What is the story behind the curve?**

### **Positive Factors**

- Tech-focused community building. Neighborhood-based Social media and listservs (e.g., Nextdoor) are connecting neighbors and keeping them informed of activity in the neighborhood.
- Good police work. Crime-solving and effective community policing reduce the crime rate.
- Home-based technology. Alarms and cameras help the community and police be more effective in stopping crime.
- An improving economy. Crime is reduced as more people find employment.
- Drug Court. This service helps people get off or stay off drugs without incarceration.

### **Negative Factors**

- Poverty and unemployment. These factors underlie most of the other negative issues listed below. In 2015, 7.5% of County residents were living below the poverty line, a 67% increase from 2005.
- Fear of reporting crime. Some victims fear being identified to ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) and more broadly fear contact with all law enforcement services.
- Drug use. People who need money to pay for drugs may steal to fund their habit.
- Perceived safety in suburban areas. This “positive” can lead people to be more careless and fall victim to theft or other crime.
- Gaps in government services. The County lacks systematic workforce training for impoverished communities, comprehensive mental health services, and effective methods to integrate immigrant communities into the larger fabric of the County – all of which leave some people segregated and with few opportunities to make a living.
- Truancy. Frequent absences and a lack of follow-up means that kids are on the streets rather than in school.
- Law enforcement’s focus. There is diminished focus/follow-up on lower-level crimes as police officers concentrate on more serious crimes.
- Porch piracy. An increase in people having packages delivered to homes creates crime of opportunity.
- Poor residential property management. Property managers are not addressing safety in their buildings or complexes. This undermines community cohesion and makes communities less safe.
- Food insecurity. Hunger and desperation drives shoplifting.
- Neighboring jurisdictions. Crime does not recognize borders and can overflow into Montgomery County; greater coordination on these issues is needed.

## **3. What strategies do we recommended to turn the curve?**

- 1) Analyze and use data: Access to high quality data to help understand nuances, to correct misperceptions about who is committing the crimes, to correctly formulate strategies for prevention, and to target resources and interventions.
- 2) Improve workforce enhancement programs: For youth/young adults aged 18-25 years old, connecting youth with employment opportunities including entrepreneurial opportunities.

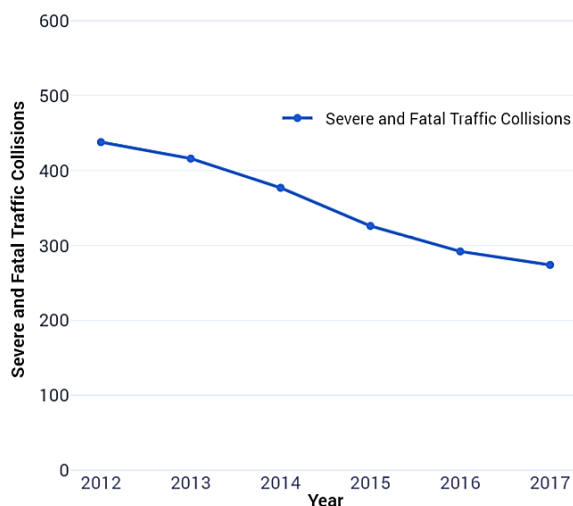
- 3) Encourage partnerships between community service officers and community leaders: based on the health promoters' model and through law enforcement communicating with the public on how to address crime in their community, and provide law enforcement with information on how they can support current interventions.
- 4) Increase funding to non-profits and faith-based communities that provide social services along with supporting community organizations and leadership.
- 5) Limit coordination with ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) to build trust in the community. Expand anonymous reporting options.

## Key Indicator III. Number of severe and fatal crashes for all roadway users

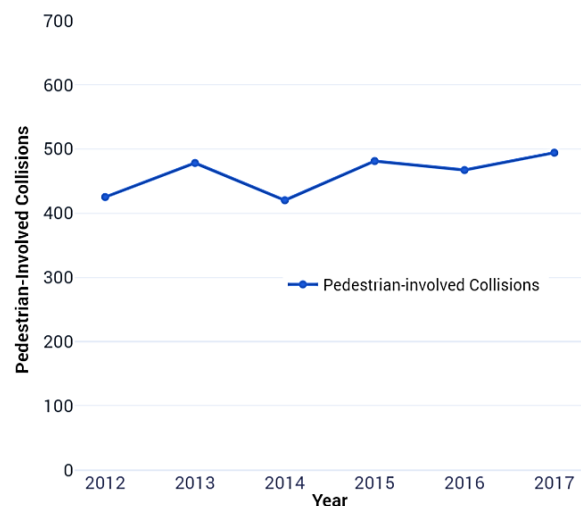
**About this Indicator:** Injuries can occur to the driver, passenger, pedestrian, or cyclist. Fatal crashes include crashes where at least one person involved in the crash had an injury result in death within 1 year of the crash. Severe, or serious, injuries include crashes where at least one person involved in the crash had severe lacerations, broken or distorted extremity (arm or leg), crush injuries, injuries other than bruises or minor lacerations to the skull, chest or abdomen, significant burns, unconsciousness at the scene of the crash, and/or paralysis.

### 1. How are we doing?

Severe and Fatal Traffic Collisions for all for All Roadway Users



All Pedestrian-involved Collisions



While progress is being made on this indicator, the County's ambitious Vision Zero initiative aims to eliminate all severe and fatal crashes from our roadways by 2030. The team's discussion in this area focused on the County's pedestrians, noting that the number of all pedestrian-involved traffic collisions increased 16% from 2012 to 2017 (425 to 494).

## **2. What is the story behind the curve?**

### **Positive Factors**

- Infrastructure. Road improvements and traffic calming features including crosswalks, sidewalks, bike lanes, circles, and raised light crosswalks make walking and biking safer. This is a positive factor in the locations where these features are added.
- Public transit. More metro and bus users means fewer cars on the road.
- Vision Zero plan. The two-year and subsequent ten-year plans set objectives and track data for strategic planning with the goal of eliminating pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries.
- Collaboration. There is cross-community advocacy in this area.
- Public education campaigns. The County and State conduct education campaigns throughout the year targeted at drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists.
- Financial deterrents. There are new fines for distracted driving.

### **Negative Factors**

- Population growth. More density, people, and cars in region create more traffic on roads and more pedestrians who are potential victims of collisions.
- Human behavior. More distracted people, both drivers and pedestrians, and more people are out at non-daylight hours, wearing dark clothing that is harder to see.
- Infrastructure. The design of roads and lighting is not based on current behavior or needs of a pedestrian friendly environment, and there is lack of traffic calming road features and signage to discourage speeding in some locations.
- Layers of government. There is a lack of coordination between the State and local governments with respect to roadway/infrastructure construction and design.
- Students. More students may be using public transit instead of traditional yellow school buses that have the proper signals to let drivers know students are exiting/boarding the bus. This may be attributed to increasing numbers of students going to schools outside their home boundary and a possible decrease in the number of after-school buses.
- Transit troubles. Less reliable mass transit creates more drivers on roads.
- The judicial system. When pedestrian-involved accidents are not taken seriously, people are not discouraged from dangerous behavior.
- Non-road sharing culture. Drivers often believe that cars always have the right-of-way.

## **3. What strategies do we recommend to turn the curve?**

- 1) Account for Human Behavior in Road Design: Embrace and incorporate Vision Zero principles and develop a 10-year Vision Zero action plan, develop a Pedestrian Master Plan, look to implement leading and innovative practices from other jurisdictions (including international examples), collaborate with the Planning Board to set forth development processes that integrate these principles in practice.
- 2) Fund and Implement Improved Infrastructure and Technology: Provide additional funding for targeted infrastructure improvements, and be forward leaning in the use of technology for traffic control and de-confliction/collision avoidance. Specific examples include but are not limited to: analysis and redesign of streets, additional hawk signals or other pedestrian activated signals, automated enforcement enhancements, promote technology to disable phones while driving, more crosswalks, signal timing analysis, better signage and marking (adjusting the placement of stop lines at traffic lights, adjusting the

placement of stop signs for pedestrians, pedestrian bridges where appropriate, improved lighting, etc.). Consider innovative partnerships, e.g., reevaluating the ownership/maintenance structure for street lighting, incentives for businesses to improve infrastructure, etc.

- 3) Streamline state and local coordination. Work with the Maryland State Highway Administration to expeditiously implement recommendations (including existing traffic studies and analysis) into meaningful improvements along State highway corridors – particularly in high-incident areas. Streamline the coordination process, while ensuring local community input and engagement.
- 4) Use data to inform the distribution of resources (including integration of an equity policy and focus on high incident areas). Actively use data to make decisions, and use data to prioritize the areas most in need of improvement to focus resources accordingly. Specific examples include high incident areas, areas with most vulnerable road users (e.g., elderly, children, people with disabilities), and areas where enhanced pedestrian infrastructure would improve social justice. Analyze the road network and pedestrian network to create convenient and safe pedestrian connections between points of interest.

## The Team

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Lindsay Lucas

## Public feedback and questions from the CE's Listening Sessions relating to this Priority Outcome reflect concerns about:

- Prioritizing the risk to pedestrian safety where there are no sidewalks, inadequate crosswalks and/or traffic calming features and poor street lighting; also mentioned was a lack of lighting at certain outdoor recreation areas. This infrastructure needs to be considered in the planning phase and also added when there is a temporary obstruction to walking, such as a construction site.
- Training our police department and developing transparent policies and procedures to reduce/eliminate racial bias and profiling and increase trust in the community; consider looking at the entire Criminal Justice system comprehensively.
- Enforcing “No Parking” rules in certain areas where too many parked vehicles can create hazards and inconveniences for residents (e.g., around schools when there are events and some neighborhoods where many box trucks park).

- Improving the condition of East County roads and understanding where development increases traffic and incentivizes drivers to find unsafe neighborhood cut-throughs.
- Ensuring emergency preparedness of residents.
- Revitalizing of blighted properties and improving code enforcement.
- Including parks and public spaces in development plans.
- Finding the County's role in combating hate crimes, domestic violence, and human trafficking.
- Increasing security at County's homeless facilities.
- Dealing with the noise and health issues from current flight paths to/from area airports.
- Addressing 5G cell towers and the unknown health risks (these were also a concern under "A Greener County" but from an environmental nuisance standpoint).

**A public survey on the transition website collected input from residents as well; Respondents conveyed the following related to this Priority Outcome:**

- The most frequently discussed topic was the county's police force, with an emphasis on the importance of community policing. Respondents commented on a need for police support, accountability, and social justice in enforcement.
- Respondents supported engagement and inclusion efforts to increase safety and boost equity, including fostering cohesion among neighbors.
- Multiple responses focused on a need to increase pedestrian safety and create more walkable communities.
- Respondents identified a need for gang prevention and gun control.
- Other topics mentioned by multiple responses included domestic violence, education, mental health, streetlights, and social services.

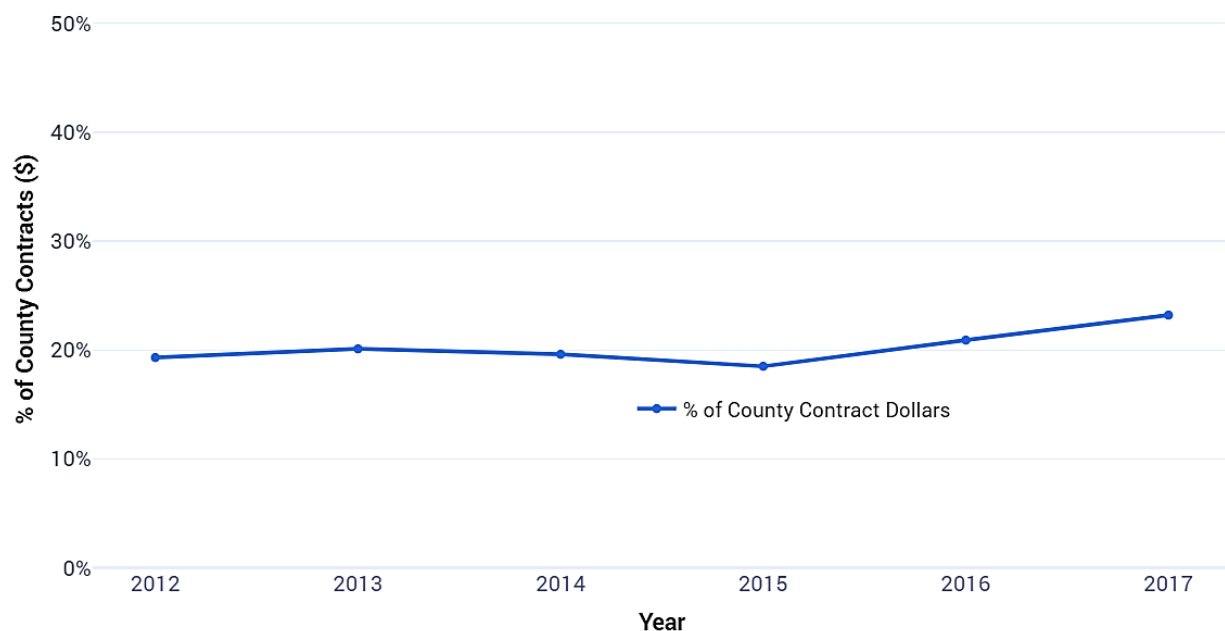
# Effective, Sustainable Government

*The recent Montgomery County resident survey showed that fewer than half of residents feel that the value they get for their tax dollars is 'excellent' or 'good.' We need to restructure county government so that it is more cost-effective and ensure that it is fiscally sound for the future.*

## Key Indicator I. Percent of County Contracts with Minority, Female, and Disabled-Owned (MFD) Businesses

**About this Indicator:** The County's Procurement Office has distinct MFD purchasing goals for four categories of contracts that are subject to MFD rules (Construction, Professional Services, Non-Professional Services, and Goods) with an overall benchmark of 20% of eligible purchases to come from MFD-owned firms.

### 1. How are we doing?



As of 2016 the County has consistently exceeded the 20% MFD Procurement benchmark, though progress is appearing to level off.

### 2. What is the story behind the curve?

#### Positive Factors

- Structural advantages for MFD firms. There are six different agencies/groups that can certify MFD vendors, and preferences exist for MFD and Local Small Business Reserve Program (LSBRP) contracts (a point advantage in the contracting process). Additionally, the County Council passed LSBRB rules and the Office of Procurement has MFD goals in

place, which has created positive inertia for existing MFD firms to keep competing for contracts.

- Assistance from the County. There is increased outreach to minority business organization (e.g., the black chamber of commerce), plus semi-annual seminars and forums hosted by the Office of Procurement and training is available to new firms. The County's Office of Procurement has goals for contracting with MFD-owned business across four categories: Construction, Professional Services, Non-Professional Services, and Goods. The overall benchmark is 20%.
- Increasing activity. The number of contracts to MFD firms has been increasing year-over-year. Many County businesses are owned by people of color and these vendors are becoming more familiar with doing business with the government.

### Negative Factors

- No requirements for prime contractors. Currently, a prime contractor is not required to have MFD or LSBRP firms as subcontractors for contracts under \$50,000.
- Office of Procurement practices. Current process and policies are perceived to be cumbersome (requiring some level of technical skill to manage).
- Institutional Racism. Institutional racism is built into the regulatory system. In addition, it seems like only certain minority groups get the contracts.
- Leadership. MFD firms need leadership from the County Executive to make this a priority
- Out-of-County Competition. Competition from out-of-County MFD firms further disadvantage applicants.
- Non-profits cannot get MFD certification.

### 3. What strategies do we recommend to turn the curve?

- 1) Contracting requirements and increasing targets for MFD and LSBRP Firms.
  - The County Executive could increase the current requirement goals for the percentage of contracts that must be given to MFD and LSBRP firms.
  - Procurement requirements should cover all groups (goods, industries, services, products, etc.)
  - Set required targets within specific demographics and understand which minority groups are getting the contracts, and if any are being left out. The demographics of purchasing should match the makeup of the business community or perhaps overall County-wide demographics.
- 2) Improve procurement regulations and process and the outreach and training that is conducted on obtaining County contracts.
  - Examine and remove burdensome regulations that hinder MFD and LSBRP vendors for competing for County contracts. The improved process should ensure a consistent experience across county departments.
  - Simplify and improve outreach to help more firms get a County contract. One option would be to use the Office of Community Partnerships for outreach to specific communities.

- 3) Add a liaison role to promote MFD and Local Businesses.
  - The Procurement liaison would advocate for local, small businesses and ensure MFD and LSBRP firms are competing for County contracts.
- 4) Too many studies; need act on existing recommendations.
  - Mandate the County to implement the recommendations of the recent disparity study that showed low participation from African-American owned businesses.
- 5) Increase funding for minority business start-ups.
  - Give minority businesses funding to start businesses so that they can compete. Funding could be provided through the incubators and economic development programs.

## Key Indicator II. Resident Satisfaction with Value of Services for Tax Dollars

**About this Indicator:** The County's Resident Satisfaction Survey asks respondents to rate "The value of services for the taxes paid to Montgomery County."

### 1. How are we doing?



In the most recent survey (2017), satisfaction in this area dipped below 50%, continuing a downward trend from prior surveys. The 2017 survey is a representative sample of 1,075 County residents, with a margin of error of 3%. The County did not administer this survey between 2009 and 2017, and the next survey is being planned for spring 2019.



## **2. What is the story behind the curve?**

### **Positive Factors**

- “Good government” practices. Montgomery County has a high quality workforce and values access to services, transparency and accountability, collaboration between government and non-profits to provide needed services, and operates with a high level of integrity.
- Available resources and amenities. We are a relatively wealthy county and can provide a high quality of life and the resources and variety of services that meet the needs of our residents, including parks and recreation, community centers, schools, and very nice facilities for the public.
- Communication. The County’s website is effective and there are a number of transparency tools and public-facing accountability mechanisms (though residents may not have a complete understanding of how tax dollars are being spent).
- Visible investments. Initiatives such as community revitalization (e.g., downtown Silver Spring and Wheaton) create positive feelings about community, which can translate to positive ratings for local government.
- High employment rate. When jobs are available for residents they are happier, which can translate to positive ratings for local government.

### **Negative Factors**

- Financial sentiment. Real or perceived high level of taxation, especially property taxes, housing prices, etc. for regular residents while developers benefit from numerous incentives.
- Obstacles to access. It can be hard to find and obtain the service needed, whether searching on the County website or using MC311 to reach an employee. The physical locations of some service locations (e.g., Regional Service Centers) may be inconvenient and thus a barrier to service.
- Structure and responsiveness of County government. Residents may encounter too many layers of authority, which can slow the County’s response. There is a lack of information flow between the County and residents and systems such as the County’s new hiring process and the building/permitting process are lengthy and complicated.
- The overall negative feeling about government at all levels (Federal, State, and Local) also influences public opinion.
- Lack of innovation. County services are neither innovative nor smart. For example, MC311 and government IT in general need improvements, too much licensed software is purchased, and there should be wi-fi and solid cellphone coverage all over the County.
- Transportation headaches. Drivers experience traffic congestion, poor road quality and frustration with speed cameras, and transit users have insufficient options in certain locations.
- Decaying infrastructure. Essential utilities, both public and private are aging or already outdated, such as water and sewer systems that are not being kept up for replacement. The modernization of neglected properties (e.g., Glenmont shopping center) needs to be prioritized.
- Issues at MCPS. County schools must contend with issues that people care deeply about such as class size, school boundaries, and the achievement gap.

- Increasing poverty. There are insufficient services and programs with the coverage to properly address poverty, while some feel the County spends too much on immigrants and those in need. People see more homeless and panhandlers, who could benefit from increased or more strategic workforce training.

### **3. What strategies do we recommend to turn the curve?**

- 1) Improve customer service through training of front-line staff, enhancements to 311 to better locate the right information, and overhaul of County websites.
  - Create positive customer service in phone and in-person interactions by not acting simply as a “gatekeeper” or being dismissive when a caller is trying to reach a County employee or service.
  - Improve 311 so the right information can be easily found.
  - To enable customers to get better answers, improve staffing and training and decentralize the intake process, with an emphasis on frontline staff.
  - Allow 311 Customer Service Representatives more discretion to transfer calls into the departments for unique requests.
  - Overhaul MC311 website to be more customer friendly and to make it easier to find information.
  - Develop a customer-friendly MC311 mobile application for service requests.
  - Overhaul county websites - All County Government websites need to be more customer focused. The website should have large knowledge base and how-to videos. The site should have ability for Skype or online chat options for getting help.
- 2) Increase accountability of County Government and require department directors to define success for customer satisfaction.
  - Create a mechanism or forum that enables more public accountability for outside agencies such as the Housing Opportunities Commission, Parks, and Planning.
  - Department directors must be out in the public to get direct input and define success both publicly and to their employees. Directors must be held accountable to the set standards.
- 3) Utilize process improvement methods to improve service delivery.
  - Make County Government more efficient, improve customer service, and cut costs simultaneously through process re-engineering and continuous improvement tools such as Lean, Six Sigma, etc.
- 4) Improve hiring systems and software to simplify the hiring process and make it more equitable.
- 5) Ensure better representation of County interests at the State level.

## Key Indicator III. General Obligation Bond Rating

**About this Indicator:** The County is evaluated annually by the three Rating Agencies: Fitch, Moody's, and Standard and Poor's. A higher rating of the municipal entity indicates strong financial conditions and practices that will result in lower interest rates and an improved ability to access the municipal debt market even when general financial market conditions are not favorable.

### 1. How are we doing?

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
AAA	AAA	AAA	AAA	AAA	AAA	AAA

Montgomery County boasts an active streak of AAA Bond Ratings – the highest achievable – over the past several decades, with a current outlook of “Stable”; which is remarkable given the fiscal challenges presented by the Great Recession and the subsequent downgrading of other jurisdictions.

### 2. What is the story behind the curve?

#### Positive Factors

- Strong and steady fiscal management. Montgomery County Government consistently demonstrates effective financial management practices and policies. County leadership has taken steps to increase reserves, improve funding of retiree health obligations, and reduce future borrowing.
- Resident profile. The County has a highly educated workforce, a healthy percentage of high-income residents, and low unemployment.
- Community assets. The excellent school systems receive proper funding, the value of County real estate, and the mix of life science and other high-skill industries provide an enviable array of qualities valued by communities.

#### Negative Factors

- Fiscal challenges. County revenue is growing slower than the cost to maintain current services. Debt service costs are large and growing, and the county's ability to increase tax rates is constrained by state law and the county charter. These factors affect our capacity to absorb the consequences of the next recession.
- Changing county demographics and needs. The high cost of living may be driving away young people needed to grow the tax base, creating an imbalance. Similarly, older residents may choose to move out of the County.
- Economic vitality. The County is highly dependent on the federal government as an employer, while not enough new businesses are being created to diversify our economy and bring new jobs to grow the tax base.
- Negative perceptions. Some view the new County Council and County Executive as not being fiscally restrained. There is also a feeling in Annapolis that Montgomery County is so wealthy that it does not need resources.

### 3. What strategies do we recommend to turn the curve?

- 1) Slow the growth of personnel costs. Hold down the growth of County compensation costs and overall headcount to ensure expenditures do not exceed revenues just to keep the same level of service.
- 2) Continue to examine the structure and efficiency of government. Elected leaders need to ensure taxpayer dollars are being used to meet the community's needs and do so in an efficient and equitable manner.
- 3) Grow the tax base. Actively recruit businesses to either relocate to or startup in the County.
- 4) Develop a long-term financial plan. The County should understand where its costs and revenues are headed under different economic scenarios and take action to ensure that we are on a sustainable fiscal path.

## The Team

### Team Captain:

April Kaplan

### Team Members:

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Tufail Ahmad

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Girma Allaro

Joanne Antoinne

Jeffrey Buddle

Marsha Coleman-Adebayo

Kathleen Connor

Torrie Cooke

Bill Conway

Peter Ettinger

Janice Freeman

Bill Frick

Pat Grant

Amilcar Guzman

Joan Kleinman

Chong Lee

Lesley MacDonald

Nagender Madavaram

Abbe Milstein

Sayed Naved

Barron Oakcrum

Linda Plummer

Gino Renne

Vernon Ricks

Ash Shetty

Jeffrey Slavin

Milford Sprecher

Herman Taylor

C. Marie Taylor

Dale Tibbitts

Beth Wong

Robert Wu

### Facilitators:

Heloisa Vila

Phil Lee

### Recorder:

Wade Holland

### Public feedback and questions from the CE's Listening Sessions relating to this Priority Outcome reflect concerns about:

- Finding efficiencies and operating the government in a cost-effective manner.
- Managing the County's growing debt and debt service levels.
- Ensuring public and community input, in general but particularly to the Planning Board and regarding development.
- Ensuring money flows to the County back from the State.
- Preventing public corruption like the DED theft issue.
- Getting more women into leadership and decision-making roles and looking at ranked choice voting in local elections.

**A public survey on the transition website collected input from residents as well; Respondents conveyed the following related to this Priority Outcome:**

- The greatest number of responses advocated fiscal responsibility and sustainable government.
- Respondents emphasized the importance of the county's responsiveness to residents and engagement of citizens in government. Multiple responses advocated increased means of proactively seeking constituent input.
- Improved performance and adherence to best practices was identified as important, and respondents advocated innovation and agility to improve service delivery.
- Respondents raised the issue of equitable access to government for residents of diverse backgrounds and areas of the county. Multiple respondents supported hiring equity and professional development for staff.
- Multiple responses identified the need for decreased bureaucracy and increased coordination, efficiency, and transparency.

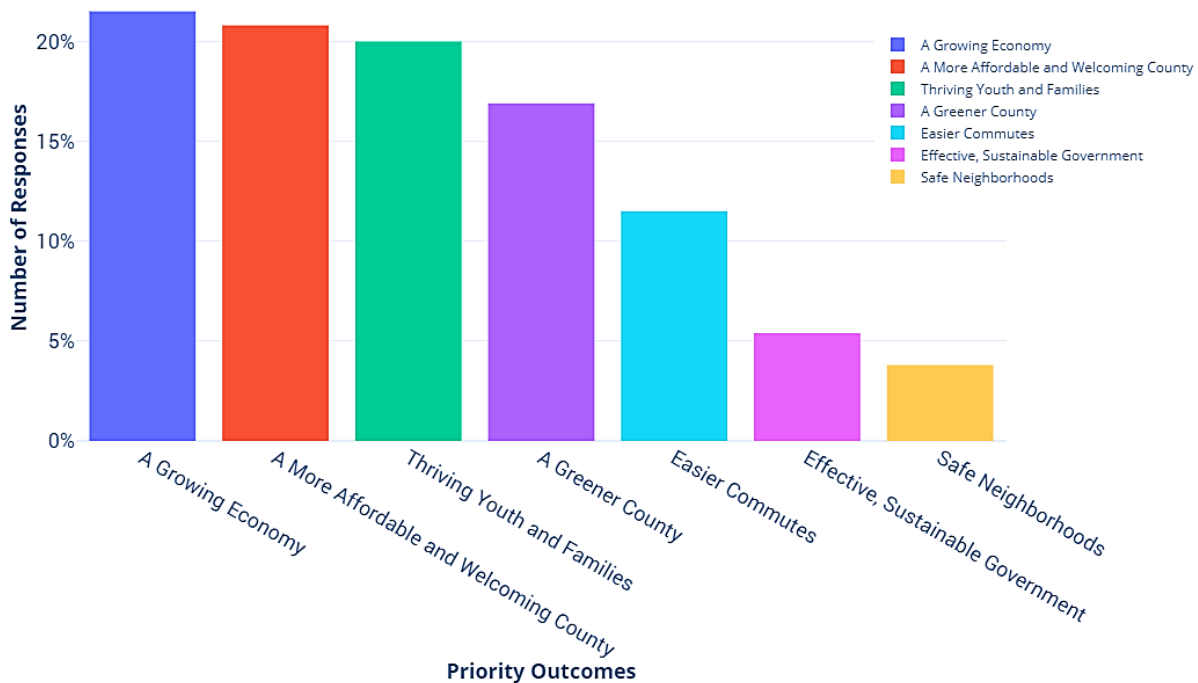


## **Section II: Listening to the Community**

County Executive Marc Elrich Transition Report

## Public Feedback

A survey was conducted to obtain feedback from County residents on which priorities were most important to them. Below are the responses to the question “What is the most important issue facing Montgomery County?”



## Responses

Below are synthesized responses that were collected from survey that speak to each of the seven priority outcomes.

### Thriving Youth and Families

- The most frequently cited issues were schools and education. Respondents supported investment in schools to ensure quality education and meet students’ non-academic needs, including access to food and social services. Many responses focused on the importance of culturally competent services and equity among schools and among students within the same school.
- Early childhood education and childcare were likewise priorities for respondents, many of whom suggested the implementation of universal pre-kindergarten. The availability of affordable childcare was recognized as an issue closely tied to equity in that it affects parents’, and by extension, children’s, opportunities for success.
- Many respondents identified recreation as a priority, with suggestions to support parks and green spaces and provide after-school and summer programming.
- Survey responses highlighted the importance of health care and mental health, including culturally competent resources and education for diverse populations.
- A variety of social services were identified as important for youth and families, with a focus on their role in promoting equity.

- The issue of affordable housing was frequently cited as an important factor for thriving youth and families, and some respondents acknowledged the overlap among priority outcomes.
- Other needs included in multiple responses were career development, community engagement, drug and alcohol prevention, financial literacy, higher education, parenting and violence prevention, and transportation.

### **A Growing Economy**

- The most frequently recommended measure was support for small businesses and entrepreneurs. Multiple respondents suggested business incubators, and there was widespread acknowledgment of the value of small businesses to the county.
- Responses commonly dealt with the importance of attracting and retaining businesses. Suggested methods included alleviating bureaucratic burdens, including streamlining the permitting process and curtailing regulations. Some respondents named technology, health, and biotechnology specifically as desirable industries to foster in the county. Viewpoints on business attraction incentives were mixed, with some supporting and others opposing tax breaks. Suggestions for fostering a business-friendly environment touched on the importance of cooperation within the business community and between business and government, and measures to encourage innovation.
- The importance of promoting equity and diversity among business owners and residents of various socio-economic backgrounds was a focus of multiple responses.
- Responses regarding tax policy included support for impact fees.
- Other topics included in multiple responses were attracting residents, schools' role in growing the economy, and social responsibility.

### **A Greener County**

- The most frequently discussed topic was how the county can use policy to promote sustainability, including solar energy incentives, requirements for new developments, and enforcement of existing environmental protection regulations.
- Respondents focused on renewable energy and specifically solar power as solutions for reducing emissions. Many cited pollution in various forms as a problem to be addressed.
- Respondents supported accessible, reliable, and enhanced public transit options, including expansion of the Bus Rapid Transit project. Access to transportation and its role in equity was addressed by multiple respondents, with some prioritizing pedestrian- and cyclist-friendly infrastructure.
- Waste management and plastic reduction were cited as important by respondents, many of whom supported community education to promote recycling.
- The county's environment impact on water and green spaces was important to respondents, some of whom identified storm water management and tree cover as priorities.
- The role of the business community in environmental protection beyond that of individual residents was acknowledged.
- Other needs included in multiple responses were composting and biodiversity.

### **Easier Commutes**

- Survey responses focused primarily on the importance of promoting public transportation, with most responses referencing buses. Respondents generally focused



on improving transit options and expanding geographic regions of coverage. Accessibility of bus and rail options was identified as an opportunity to promote equity.

- The second most frequent topic of responses was roads and accompanying infrastructure. Opinions were split on the merit of expanding major routes like I-270. Many respondents supported enhancing infrastructure dedicated to cyclists and pedestrians.
- Multiple responses expressed interest in promoting telework options and flexible work schedules to mitigate peak rush hour traffic.
- Some respondents supported managing development strategically to integrate residential and commercial areas and decrease commute distances.
- Area-specific recommendations expressed needs in up-county areas and Silver Spring.
- Other topics mentioned by multiple respondents were parking, ride sharing, tolls and fees, and zoning.

### **A More Affordable and Welcoming County**

- The issue featured in the greatest number of responses by far was housing affordability. Some respondents focused on the role of development in the creation of new low- and moderate-income units. Multiple respondents cited taxes, zoning, and land use as factors in the cost of living and housing affordability.
- Respondents supported efforts to promote diversity and foster engagement of communities. Some responses specifically referenced assisting immigrants in connecting to services and their community.
- A recurring topic was equity and ensuring that the county is free from discrimination and offers opportunity to all. Multiple respondents supported the provision of human services to promote equity and inclusion.
- Transportation and integrating new development with public transit were identified as an important factor in housing and accessibility.
- Other issues discussed in multiple responses were the cost of living, employment and pay, libraries, equity in schools, and support for seniors.

### **Safer Neighborhoods**

- The most frequently discussed topic was the county's police force, with an emphasis on the importance of community policing. Respondents commented on a need for police support, accountability, and social justice in enforcement.
- Respondents supported engagement and inclusion efforts to increase safety and boost equity, including fostering cohesion among neighbors.
- Multiple responses focused on a need to increase pedestrian safety and create more walkable communities.
- Respondents identified a need for gang prevention and gun control.
- Other topics mentioned by multiple responses included domestic violence, education, mental health, streetlights, and social services.

### **Effective, Sustainable Government**

- The greatest number of responses advocated fiscal responsibility and sustainable government.
- Respondents emphasized the importance of the county's responsiveness to residents and engagement of citizens in government. Multiple responses advocated increased means of proactively seeking constituent input.

- Improved performance and adherence to best practices was identified as important, and respondents advocated innovation and agility to improve service delivery.
- Respondents raised the issue of equitable access to government for residents of diverse backgrounds and areas of the county. Multiple respondents supported hiring equity and professional development for staff.
- Multiple responses identified the need for decreased bureaucracy and increased coordination, efficiency, and transparency.

**What are your ideas for building a more equitable and inclusive Montgomery County?**

The following topics were expressed in response to the equity question and not captured in a priority outcome above:

- Expand access to English language classes for immigrants; increase resources and services available in residents' native language
- Prioritize racial equity; combat white supremacy; establish a Department of Equity
- Focus not only on affordable housing but on resolving homelessness
- Encourage volunteerism and community leadership
- Enact voting reforms; open year-round voter registration

# County Executive Marc Elrich Transition Report

