



Western Montgomery County Citizens Advisory Board

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March 6, 2023

The Honorable Marc Elrich
County Executive
101 Monroe Street, 2nd Floor
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Mr. Elrich:

The Western Montgomery County Citizens Advisory Board (WMCCAB) has asked me to write expressing our strong and unanimous support for Montgomery County's efforts to attract to the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H) to North Bethesda.

Securing ARPA-H for North Bethesda will support County and community goals, including expanding this neighborhood's established – and growing – status as a health and science hub, while creating much-needed family-supporting jobs near public transportation.

The North Bethesda location also offers strategic advantages to both ARPA-H and the County. ARPA-H is an independent entity within the National Institutes of Health, which is two quick stops away on Metro's Red Line and less than 15 minutes down the Pike on RideOn's 46 route.

ARPA-H funds considerable work at the Henry M. Jackson Foundation, the second-largest biosciences employer in the Washington-Baltimore region and one of Maryland's largest nonprofit organizations, also based in North Bethesda, less than two miles away from North Bethesda Metro.

The new Institute for Health Computing will be an ARPA-H neighbor in North Bethesda, too, creating another health-sciences anchor in this local cluster of public, private, and educational sector bioscience innovators.

This co-location of these and other organizations will help secure their presence here in Montgomery County for the long-term and attract supporting businesses. It will also build the bio-health scientific community, which can enjoy the benefits of convenient in-person collaboration connected by an environmentally friendly transportation network – a scenario that supports the county's climate and business goals.

In fact, we believe that establishing ARPA-H in North Bethesda will have an economic

multiplier effect on the area, much as locating the Defense Advanced Research Project Agency (DARPA) near the Pentagon has had around Pentagon City.

WMCCAB applauds our colleagues and neighbors on the White Flint Downtown Advisory Committee and the Pike District Partnership, who, along with Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services, have advocated for this project. We support their view that bringing ARPA-H to North Bethesda will help meet the goals and intent of the White Flint Sector Plan.

We have also been pleased to see our local legislators backing ARPA-H in North Bethesda. Councilmembers Kate Stewart and Natali Fani-Gonzalez have both been strong supporters of bringing ARPA-H to the North Bethesda location. Sen. Chris Van Hollen has also commented on the importance of the “natural ecosystem” -- that exists only in North Bethesda – for ARPA-H.

WMCCAB urges Montgomery County make clear in its advocacy efforts with the Federal government that North Bethesda is the right and only location for ARPA-H. Any ambiguity about the North Bethesda location could signal to our Federal partners that Montgomery County is not committed to sharing ARPA-H’s goals and building on the existing biosciences base.

We fear that could scuttle the entire effort.

Please continue in your leadership for bringing ARPA-H to North Bethesda. We thank you for your efforts and appreciate your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



[Kristen A. Nelson \(Mar 7, 2023 11:49 EST\)](#)

Kristen A. Nelson

Chair

Western Montgomery County Citizens Advisory Board

Cc: Jake Weissman, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer
Melanie Wenger, Director of Office of Intergovernmental Relations
Judith Costello, Special Projects Director
Thomas Lewis, Development Ombudsman
Peter C. Fosselman, Director, Regional Services

Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services