

establishment of joint ventures on large projects over \$10 million, where economically feasible, to ensure prime contracting opportunities for all businesses, including certified MFDs. It must be noted that this type of joint venture poses potential illicit “front” risks, and Montgomery County must examine these joint ventures carefully.

IX. CONCLUSION

It is clear from this Study that Montgomery County has made great efforts to establish a fine-tuned procurement process that is set up to provide equal access to all firms. In addition, the Local Small Business Reserve Program was a significant attempt to benefit MFDs and all small business owners in obtaining contracts with the County. Notwithstanding such efforts, GSPC’s analysis found that there is still statistically significant underutilization of MFDs, with the exception of Hispanic American owned businesses, in almost every business category throughout the Study Period.

In addition to determining that there is an inference of past or present, passive or active discrimination in the Maryland marketplace, it is GSPC’s conclusion that there may also be a disconnect between Montgomery County’s true efforts and the perception of the business community. In addition, GSPC believes that there are several new programs that may be implemented in an attempt to bridge the gap between MFD availability and utilization in future years. Such recommendations have been made to Montgomery County as a result of the findings herein.

GSPC will make every effort to follow through and provide assistance to the County in the development of such recommendations into action and potential legislative plans.

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