



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL

ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

September 14, 2021

Montgomery County Board of Elections
18753 North Frederick Avenue, Suite 210,
Gaithersburg, MD 20879

Dear Members of the Board of Elections,

We are writing in strong support of an early voting site at the Bauer Drive Community Recreation Center on 14625 Bauer Drive in Rockville, Maryland. The Board of Elections is currently considering making the White Oak Community Recreation Center and the Dacek Community Recreation Center early voting sites for the 2022 elections, and we understand that the Board is also reviewing the possibility of adding Bauer Drive as an early voting site. There will be a public hearing on September 18 and the Board may take a vote on early voting site selection on September 20. Montgomery County currently has 11 early voting sites. By law, the Board is required to add two sites for the 2022 elections to bring the total to 13, and may add a 14th site “if the local board and the governing body of the county agree to establish an additional early voting center.” In 2015, when the Board was considering several venues as early voting sites, Councilmembers Nancy Navarro and Sidney Katz shared their support for Bauer Drive, citing the need for increased access to more residents. We support the designation of Bauer Drive as an early voting center in addition to the White Oak Community Recreation Center and the Dacek Community Recreation Center, for the following reasons:

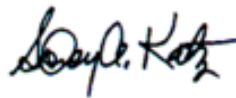
- Making Bauer Drive an early voting site is consistent with the changed demographic landscape of our county that shows significant growth in this part of the county. These demographic changes are reflected in the May 18th 2021 briefing of the Council on demographic trends in the county, by staff from the Montgomery Planning Research and Strategic Projects Division.
- This would be consistent with our racial equity and social justice goals in reaching out to our diverse population. Specifically, the population of Earle B. Wood Middle School on Bauer Drive, shows the increased diversity of the community. The student population is 44.5 percent Latino, 13.0 percent African American and 11.2 percent Asian, with 25.4 percent White.
- Designating Bauer Drive as an early voting site would also provide expanded opportunities for residents in surrounding communities like Wheaton and Leisure World to vote in the coming elections.
- The review of the Bauer Drive site shows that it is a prime location with access to public transit, one that can accommodate needed equipment and spacious enough to allow the implementation of necessary COVID-related protocols.

- Also, having early voting sites at Bauer Drive and White Oak would help to alleviate wait times on Election Day at polling places along Route 28 and Route 29 that your staff previously identified:
 - Data concerning peak wait times for the 2018 General Election Day showed four different polling places in precincts bordering Route 28 (Norbeck Road) with peak wait times exceeding the 30- minute national maximum standard, and two additional nearby Rockville polling places with peak waiting times exceeding 60 minutes.
 - The same data showed five different polling places in precincts along the Route 29 (Columbia Pike) corridor with peak wait times exceeding the 30-minute national maximum standard, with three additional precincts along Route 29 exceeding 60 minutes.
 - The Brennan Center for Justice has advocated using early voting sites to help shorten Election Day lines.

We understand that there will be a need for additional funds to stand up Bauer Drive as an early voting center, and commit to ensuring that the appropriate resources and supports necessary to implement this laudable initiative are available. We look forward to collaborating with you to install 14 early voting sites for 2022 in Montgomery County.



Marc Elrich, County Executive



Sidney Katz, Councilmember, District 3



Tom Hucker, Council President



Nancy Navarro, Councilmember, District 4



Gabe Albornoz, Council Vice President



Evan Glass, Councilmember, At Large



Andrew Friedson, Councilmember, District 1



Will Jawando, Councilmember, At Large



Craig Rice, Councilmember, District 2



Hans Riemer, Councilmember, At Large

CC:

Marc Elrich, County Executive

Rich Madaleno, Chief Administrative Officer

Marlene Michaelson, Council Staff Director

Craig Howard, Council Staff Deputy Director

Ken Hartman-Espada, Director of Strategic Partnerships

Alysoun McLaughlin, Deputy Election Director

Carlos Camacho, Council Staff