



OFFICE OF RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE


Marc Elrich
County Executive

Tiffany Ward, Director
Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice

MEMORANDUM

November 23, 2021

To: Jennifer Bryant, Director
Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice

From: Tiffany Ward, Director
Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice 

Re: Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) for Special Appropriation: #22-40 FiberNet

- I. **FINDING:** The Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) finds that the racial equity and social justice impacts are inconclusive for Special Appropriation #22-40. Given the universal nature of how FiberNet will strengthen existing government operations (not necessarily change them) and a lack of data about constituents who are most likely to benefit from enhanced network capabilities, ORESJ is not able to determine the extent to which this appropriation will advance racial equity.
- II. **BACKGROUND:** The purpose of Special Appropriation #22-40 is to address aspects of the County's network that are outdated. Funded improvements will 1) refresh old network, routing and firewall equipment; 2) support cybersecurity data recovery; and 3) improve the County's ability to access backup data in order to strengthen the County's business continuity capabilities.

Updates to the County's network capabilities will ensure continuity of government, including services that effect all County residents. However, we know based on the racialized history of US public policy¹ and racial disparities in the County², that not all

¹ Elaine Bonner-Tompkins and Victoria Hall. Montgomery County, MD Office of Legislative Oversight. See Chapter 2 "Background on Racial Disparities and the Cost of Racism" in *Racial Equity in Government Decision-Making: Lessons from the Field*. 2018. Available at: https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OLO/Resources/Files/2018%20Reports/OLOReport2018_8.pdf.

² Jupiter Independent Research Group. Montgomery County, MD Office of Legislative Oversight. Racial Equity Profile Montgomery County. Available at: https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OLO/Resources/Files/2019%20Reports/OLO2019-7-6_20_19.pdf

residents have access to or are included in the design of these services. Further, a strengthened network will increase the efficiency or reliability of existing services but will not alter the nature of those services to be more racially equitable. So, while enhancing network capabilities could help address potential delays or failures in the provision of public services (which could create benefits for those more likely to interact with those services), it's important to recognize that unless those services are designed and delivered in ways that are racially equitable it is unlikely that enhanced network capabilities will address or reduce racial disparities.

cc: Ken Hartman, Director, Strategic Partnerships, Office of the County Executive
Julie Knight, Analyst, Office of Management and Budget
Gail Roper, CIO/Director, Technology and Enterprise Business Solutions