



OFFICE OF RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE


Marc Elrich
County Executive

Tiffany Ward
Director and Chief Equity Officer

MEMORANDUM

August 18, 2022

To: Jennifer Bryant, Director
Office of Management and Budget

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

Re: Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) for Supplemental Appropriation (SA) #23-6 Energy Conservation (No. 0507834) and #23-7 Exelon-Pepco Merger Fund (No. 0362105)

- I. **FINDING:** The Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) finds that Supplemental Appropriations #23-6 Energy Conservation (No. 0507834) and #23-7 Exelon-Pepco Merger Fund (No. 0362105) have potential to advance racial equity and social justice in Montgomery County as they take steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions contributing to climate change, which disproportionately harms Black Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities and low-income communities. However, there is not enough information about the process of site selection or project design to conclude that these supplemental appropriations will advance racial equity and social justice in the County. Therefore, ORESJ's finding is inconclusive.
- II. **BACKGROUND:** Supplemental Appropriation #23-6 and #23-7 relate to the County's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by enhancing the energy efficiency of county facilities. Supplemental Appropriation #23-6 will fund a range of activities in 21 county facilities¹ to help fulfil the county's building energy design standards. Supplemental Appropriation #23-7 will support planning, design, and implementation of energy saving projects across the County. Both projects support the County's Resilience Hubs, which are facilities that can be used during a major power grid outage as a temporary shelter, to store medicine, charge mobile phones, and serve as a central gathering place.

¹ The list of 21 county facilities is in the data analysis section.

The County's Climate Action Plan²—aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the County—highlights in a chapter³ called “Racial Equity and Social Justice” the many interlocking inequities in housing, transportation, and health that disproportionately impact Black Indigenous and People of Color and exacerbate the harms of climate change. The chapter concludes with a section on the impacts of environmental racism and racial equity and social justice guiding principles that should be considered across all areas of the CAP. Therefore, any effort to address greenhouse gas emissions or the consequence of major grid outage should consider these principles.

Available information indicates that the 21 facilities were selected based on a combination of operational and safety needs as well as potential greenhouse gas reduction. Each of the 21 selected facilities has a Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) Socioeconomic Environmental Justice (EJ) Score⁴. The score is a part of the MDE EJ Screening Tool and aims to help users better understand the nature and number of environmental stressors and potential disparities in communities⁵. Importantly, the tool does not instruct users in how to address EJ disparities. Instead, it points to geographies that because of historical and current environmental inequities are more likely to be burdened by climate change harms, and it encourages users to enhance outreach and communications with these communities to determine solutions, both immediate and long-term. In Montgomery County, the median score among the 21 selected sites was 28%, with a maximum of 63% found in Silver Spring and a minimum of 8.9% found in Damascus. For context, the score in the New Hampshire Estates neighborhood (census tract 7020) in East County is 98% while in Poolesville (census tract 7005) it is 10%. It is unclear how these scores factored into the County's selection process, and to what extent areas of greatest need—as measured in the MDE EJ Screening Tool—were prioritized. Using these scores and prioritizing sites and community engagement (either with scale of investment or immediacy of improvements) would be a strong application of a racial equity lens to this funding request.

In addition, while the full analysis of the Resilience Hubs is beyond the scope of this REIA, their efficacy will be affected by the extent to which community members are aware of and feel welcome in utilizing them. This includes conducting outreach activities and providing other services that may be necessary for residents to take full advantage of the Hub, such as transportation to the site.

² Montgomery County Climate Action Plan: Building a Healthy, Equitable, Resilient Community. June 2021.
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/green/Resources/Files/climate/climate-action-plan.pdf>

³ Montgomery County Climate Action Plan, Page 19-44

⁴ The score uses three socioeconomic indicators based on census data: minority population, poverty rates, and English proficiency.

⁵ Maryland Department of the Environment. Beta MDE Environmental Justice Screening Tool. Available at:
<https://mdewin64.mde.state.md.us/EJ/>

III. **DATA ANALYSIS:** Below is the list of 21 facilities that will receive energy efficiency and other upgrades as part of Supplemental Appropriation #23-6 and #23-7. As mentioned in the background section, the median Socioeconomic Score across sites is 28%; the maximum is 63.64% in Silver Spring and the minimum is 8.97% in Damascus.

Facility Name	Account Address	<u>Socioeconomic Score % (Tract)</u>
<u>DAMASCUS CRC></u>	<u>9701 MAIN ST, Damascus, MD, 20872</u>	8.97%
<u>LIQUOR WAREHOUSE*^></u>	<u>201 EDISON PARK DR, Gaithersburg, MD, 20878</u>	12.46%
<u>ANIMAL SHELTER^></u>	<u>7315 Muncaster Mill Rd, Derwood, MD, 20855</u>	12.52%
<u>STRATHMORE CONCERT HALL^></u>	<u>5301 Tuckerman Ln., Rockville, MD, 20852</u>	15.23%
<u>DAMASCUS LIBRARY/SENIOR CENTER></u>	<u>25520 OAK DRIVE, Damascus, MD, 20872</u>	17.66%
<u>ROSS BODDY CRC></u>	18529 Brooke Road, Sandy Spring, MD, 20860	17.92%
<u>DENNIS AVE HEALTH CTR^></u>	<u>2000 Dennis Avenue, Silver Spring, MD, 20902</u>	22.01%
<u>NORTH POTOMAC CRC></u>	<u>13850 TRAVILAH RD, ROCKVILLE, MD, 20850</u>	25.69%
<u>3rd DISTRICT POLICE STATION></u>	<u>1002 Milestone Drive, Silver Spring, MD, 20904</u>	26.60%
<u>5th DISTRICT POLICE STATION</u>	<u>2000 Aircraft Drive, Germantown, MD, 20874</u>	28.05%
<u>BLACKROCK CENTER FOR THE ARTS</u>	<u>12901 TOWN COMMONS DR, DICKERSON, MD, 20874</u>	28.05%
<u>AFI/ BLACKBOX^></u>	<u>8641 COLESVILLE RD, Silver Spring, MD, 20910</u>	28.61%
<u>BRIGADIER GENERAL CHARLES MCGEE LIBRARY^>cB</u>	<u>900 WAYNE AVE, Silver Spring, MD, 20902</u>	28.61%
<u>SILVER SPRING CIVIC BUILDING AT VETERANS PLAZA></u>	<u>8535 Fenton Street, Silver Spring, MD, 20910</u>	28.61%
<u>COUNCIL OFFICE BUILDING*^></u>	<u>100 MARYLAND AVE SUITE B, Rockville, MD, 20850</u>	29.01%
<u>GREY COURTHOUSE>B</u>	<u>27 COURTHOUSE SQ, Rockville, MD, 20850-2308</u>	29.01%

Facility Name	Account Address	Socioeconomic Score % (Tract)
<u>ROCKVILLE MEMORIAL LIBRARY*></u>	21 MARYLAND AVE, Rockville, MD, 20850-2323	29.01%
<u>PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER^>B</u>	1300 Quince Orchard Blvd., Gaithersburg, MD 20878, US	32.36%
<u>EAST COUNTY SERVICE CENTER</u>	3300 Briggs Chaney Road, Silver Spring, MD, 20905	37.47%
<u>WHITE OAK CRC></u>	1700 APRIL LANE, Silver Spring, MD, 20904	44.88%
<u>PROGRESS PLACE (NEW)></u>	8106 GEORGIA AVE, Silver Spring, MD, 20910	63.64%

cc: David Dise, Director, Department of General Services
 Ken Hartman, Director, Office of Strategic Partnership, Office of the County Executive