



MONTGOMERY COUNTY OFFICE OF RACIAL EQUITY & SOCIAL JUSTICE

REIA #26-37 Capital Crescent Trail (CIP No. 501316)

Requesting Agency/Department(s)	Dollar Amount
Department of Transportation	\$4,845,000

Funding Source

G.O. Bonds

Finding

The Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) finds that *Supplemental Appropriation (SA) #26-37, Capital Crescent Trail (CIP No. 501316)*, has the potential to advance racial equity and social justice in Montgomery County as the funds support a project that is likely to improve walkability and cyclist safety within an area that connects two urban centers and communities with larger percentages of Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC) and low-income residents.

Background

Purpose

The purpose of SA #26-37 is to provide funding to allow the construction notice for *CIP No. 501316* to proceed to be issued. The funding increase for the project is needed specifically to complete construction of the Capital Crescent Trail prior to the opening of the Purple Line Trail, which has been accelerated to FY26.

*CIP No. 501316*¹ provides funding for: the Capital Crescent Trail (CCT), including the main trail from Woodmont Avenue in Bethesda to Silver Spring as a largely 12-foot-wide hard surface hiker-biker path; connector paths at several locations; a new bridge over Connecticut Avenue; a connection from 47th Street through Elm Street Park to the surface trail adjacent to the Purple Line, including reconstruction of the northern section of Elm Street Park; a new underpass

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beneath Jones Mill Road; planning and design for a new tunnel beneath Wisconsin Avenue; Phase 2 of the Capital Crescent Surface Trail Project along 47th Street which was previously included in CIP No. 500119²; supplemental landscaping and amenities; and lighting at trail junctions, underpasses, and other critical locations.

This trail will be part of a larger system to enable non-motorized traffic in the Washington, DC region. The trail will also connect to the existing CCT from Bethesda to Georgetown, the Metropolitan Branch Trail from Silver Spring to Union Station, and the Rock Creek Bike Trail from northern Montgomery County to Georgetown. The trail will serve pedestrians, bicyclists, joggers, and skaters and will comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Bethesda CBD Sector Plan, and the Purple Line Functional Master Plan. Also, the project will help the County achieve its Vision Zero goals to reduce deaths and serious injuries on County roadways to zero.

Additional Background Information

ORESJ developed a Capital Improvements Program Budget Equity Tool (CIP BET) and Guidance Manual¹ to help stakeholders in Montgomery County incorporate a racial equity lens into CIP project development and resource decisions. During the FY25-30 CIP budget submission cycle, the Department of Transportation (DOT) stated in their CIP BET response for CIP project No. 501316 that CCT also serves to further mend historical divisions, as the completion of the project will provide a needed link between the residents of the former segregated Black community of Lyttonsville and the former White community of Woodside. A new bridge is currently under construction as part of the Purple Line project, which will also carry CCT users over the tracks that separate them.

History shows that the Lyttonsville Community, founded in 1853 by a free Black laborer, was across the tracks from the Woodside community and other areas where Black residents were not permitted to work, access transit, shop, or reside. The new bridge, currently under construction as part of the Purple Line project, will also carry CCT users over the tracks, granting pedestrian and bicycle accessibility. The bridge will also restore and reconnect the two communities of Lyttonsville and Woodside, which have joined together in efforts to keep their communities connected with the replacement bridge. Additionally, as part of the Purple Line project, MDOT MTA will install art exhibits at each light rail station to commemorate the history and fabric of the

¹ The Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice. *Guidance Manual: FY24 Capital Improvements Program Budget Equity Tool*. 2022. Available at: https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ORE/Resources/Files/CIP_EquityTool_101322_PS2.pdf

adjacent neighborhoods, including the new Lyttonsville Park. There will be two stations in Lyttonsville, one of which will be dedicated to the Talbot Avenue Bridge, including exhibits with the old bridge's two main steel girders, murals, mixed media paintings, and graphic materials commemorating the community's history and heritage.

Relevant REIAs and Other Assessments

ORESJ has conducted REIAs since 2021. The following REIAs are relevant to supplemental appropriation #26-37.

- REIA #23-92 for Transit Services
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/23-92.pdf>
- REIA #23-72 North Bethesda Metro Station Area Redevelopment
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/23-72.pdf>
- REIA #23-52 Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) Bethesda Lots 10 – 24 Parks (P872302) and Special Appropriation #23-55 Montgomery County Government Department of Transportation (MCDOT) Farm Women's Market Garage Project (No. 502316)
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/23-52-23-55.pdf>
- REIA #23-18, Street Tree Planting Fund
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/23-18.pdf>

Analysis

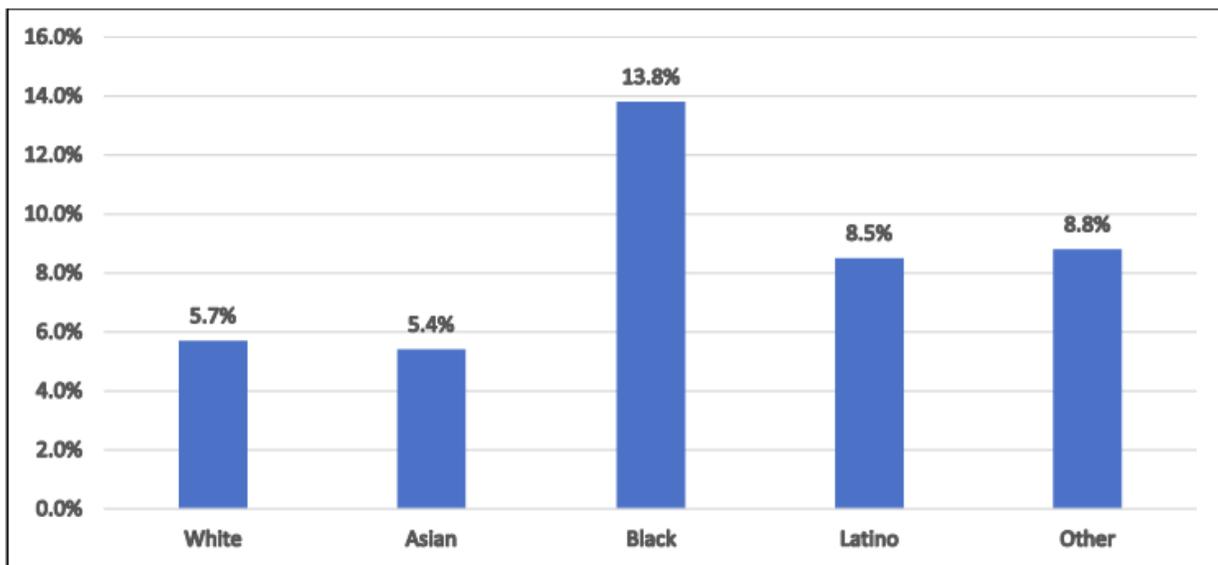
Demographic Profile

Data regarding transit experiences indicates that those who identify as BIPOC and low-income residents experience transit inequities at higher rates than other groups. The chart below shows that in 2019, Black residents were more than two times as likely as Whites to not have a vehicle.

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NO VEHICLE

Year	Racial/Ethnic Group	Montgomery County	Maryland	United States
2019	White	5.7%	5.2%	6.5%
	Asian	5.4%	6.7%	11.4%
	Black	13.8%	17.1%	18.0%
	Latino	8.5%	8.0%	10.5%
	Other	8.8%	8.6%	13.7%



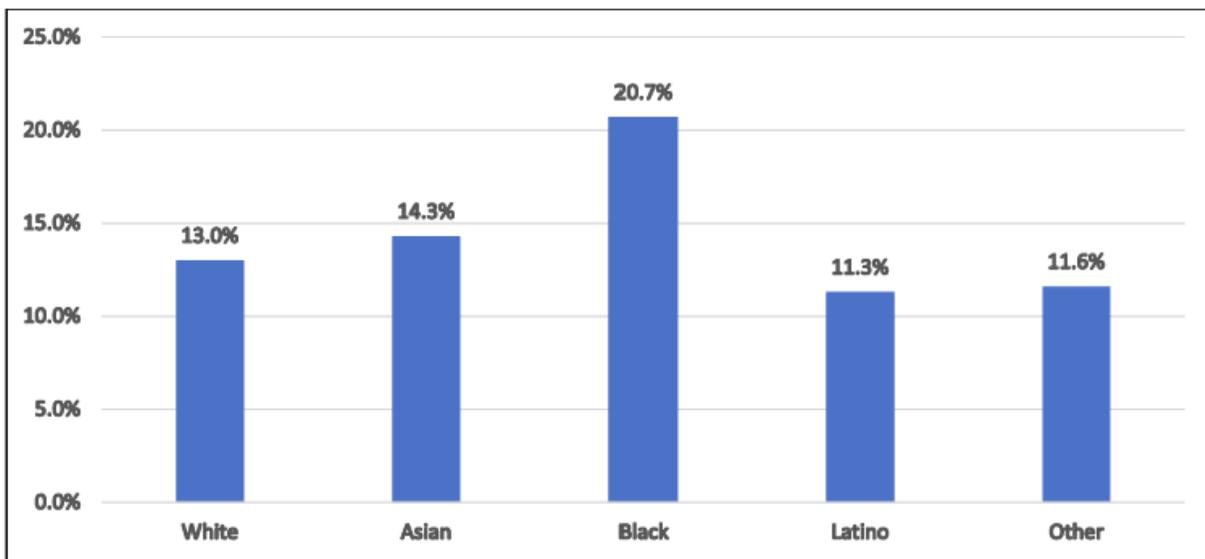
Data Source: Jupiter Independent Research Group. *Racial Equity Profile Update: Montgomery County*. 2023.

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ORE/Resources/Files/JUPITERRACIALEQUITYPROFILE.pdf>

Black Montgomery County residents were also more than 1.5 times as likely as Whites to take public transportation.

MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK - PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Year	Racial/Ethnic Group	Montgomery County	Maryland	United States
2019	White	13.0%	4.3%	3.4%
	Asian	14.3%	8.9%	10.7%
	Black	20.7%	14.5%	9.6%
	Latino	11.3%	9.1%	6.3%
	Other	11.6%	10.2%	9.2%



Data Source: Jupiter Independent Research Group. *Racial Equity Profile Update: Montgomery County*. 2023.

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ORE/Resources/Files/JUPITERRACIALEQUITYPROFILE.pdf>

For those who do not have access to a personal vehicle or who are cost burdened by public transit, the CCT project offers another means of transportation and provides improved access increasing connectivity for jobs, retail, and education opportunities.

ORESJ Research & Analysis

As previously stated, DOT completed a CIP BET for CIP project No. 501316 during the FY25-30 CIP budget submission cycle. Much like responses to the tool at the time, this supplemental appropriation request does not propose substantive changes to the project, and as such, our findings remain the same:

“The project is likely to improve walkability and cyclist safety within a project area that connects two urban centers and communities with larger percentages of BIPOC and low-income residents. Because of structural economic inequities, larger percentages of BIPOC residents lack access to a vehicle and utilize public transportation at higher rates compared to residents who are White. Access to the CCT expands transportation options that can help residents address structural economic inequities that make them more reliant on public transit. The proximity of the project area to a wide range of public amenities and economic opportunities could also help address employment and income inequities, though fully realizing those benefits depends on a number of factors outside the scope of the CCT project.”

Caveats

This REIA has been conducted with the best available information at the time of writing, including department responses to the Racial Equity and Social Justice template and research conducted by ORESJ Policy Team Analysts. While the assessment examines specific racial equity and social justice impacts of the funding request, it cannot fully address all systemic inequities that affect the communities in question, nor do we seek to examine impacts outside the scope of the funding request. We recommend using this assessment as a starting point for discussions about the program's impact on advancing racial equity and social justice in Montgomery County.

References

¹ <https://apps.montgomerycountymd.gov/BASISCAPITAL/Common/Project.aspx?ID=P501316>

² <https://apps.montgomerycountymd.gov/BASISCAPITAL/Common/Project.aspx?ID=P500119>