

Upcounty Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2016
(July 2015 – June 2016)



Montgomery County Executive Isiah Leggett



Montgomery County Council



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Nancy Floreen
President



District 1
Roger Berliner
Vice-President



At-Large
Marc Elrich



District 5
Tom Hucker



District 3
Sidney Katz



At-Large
George Leventhal



District 4
Nancy Navarro



District 2
Craig Rice



At-Large
Hans Riemer

Table of Contents

Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board

Letter from Chairperson Mark Firley
About the Board
Board Photo
Board Officers and Liaisons

Issues and Comments

The Year in Summary

2015-2016 UCAB Guest Speakers

Upcounty Regional Services Center

Greetings from the Regional Director
Regional Services Boundary Map
Services at the Kramer Upcounty Regional Services Center

*Upcounty Citizens
Advisory Board*



UPCOUNTY CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

A Letter from the Chair, 2015-2016

As one reflects on the activities of the Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board for the 2015-2016 term, it is fair to say that this was a year of transition. Many new people sat around the table, and there were enough continuing members to provide some sense of continuity.

Like the County Executive and Council whom we serve, the structural changes in the County's finances were front and center on our agenda. The Board's focus has shifted to a degree from the "big project" mode to providing counsel on our longer term desires and the creation of priorities that reflect what can be done in the shorter term with constrained resources.

Our discussions and explorations allowed us a wide range of topics, but there are common themes in them all.

1. The Upcounty (North County) area provides perhaps the most significant reserve of land use diversity in the County. Our Agricultural Reserve area can and should be a major contributor to that diversity, and ways to allow our agricultural and related uses to remain vital and profitable are key factors to success here.
2. The economic life of our part of the county remains a struggle. While the economy as a whole is struggling, we cannot expect vibrancy. The sad fact is that the North County area has been hit hard with a combination of reduced demand for business space, high costs of doing business, and higher than average rates of stress on personal real estate (marginal or "under-water" mortgages). As long as the overall picture remains difficult, prioritizing our efforts in this space will remain challenging. At most, wholly new paradigms of regulation and permitting may need to be created; at the least, we need to understand that we cannot decouple residential and business growth and expect an optimal outcome.
3. Development and infrastructure models are changing – the recent Zoning Code rewrite and the efforts to create a new Subdivision Staging Policy are positive, foundational components – but much work needs to be done. Development efforts need to find ways to leverage infrastructure: schools, water systems, fire stations, libraries, recreation centers, and transit are required earlier in the life of individual communities, when installation is less expensive and disruptive, and when citizens can gain improved quality of life more quickly.
4. Transportation continues to be one of the most contentious issues. We recognize those challenges as part of a larger, indeed regional, problem. The added burdens of "through commuting" beyond Montgomery's borders severely impacts the north county area, in part because public transit is lacking, in part because needed state and federal road projects have not materialized, and in part because we have not kept pace in locating jobs into the area to match anything like the population growth. Our Land Use Committee concluded the year with an important joint meeting of Montgomery, Frederick, and State officials on the topic, and we look forward to being a facilitator and host of more such exchanges in the future.
5. The quality of our schools continues to be a concern. The consistent high achievement of our students is by no means assured given our circumstances. Our population is changing rapidly, with many more families and care-givers who have lower levels of personal resources (time, uncommitted funds, and required skills) to "backstop" the formal school system. This creates more demand for school services at a time when real economic limits are beginning to assert themselves. Innovation and a continued focus on providing primary skills (language acquisition, literacy, basic and applied computation) is critically important. We believe sustained efforts here can help to close the "achievement gap" and to pave the way for later successful emphasis on diverse educational outcomes – from practical "ready to work" skills (which though seemingly "old-fashioned" are key to a truly diverse and sustainable workforce) to the highest levels of STEMM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Medical) education.

6. Retaining our senior population and increasing our appeal to millennials may well be served by common approaches – co-location of services and businesses with residential space, increased transit options, lower footprint housing (with higher density leveraging business interest). Access to quality medical care from pediatrics on one hand to geriatrics on the other is another incentive. Unifying our approaches rather than segmenting the populations (as traditional models have done) may allow us great benefits in this space.
7. Quality of life is not dependent on simple growth – it is dependent on growth that:
 - a. Provides economic opportunity for our citizens – from doctors and lawyers to skilled trades to laborers. A diverse population means a diverse economy and that can be a source of increasing strength and resilience for the County.
 - b. Enables mobility and flexibility of time and transportation modes. One-size, one-rush hour models will no longer serve the community.
 - c. Provides for sufficient health and safety resources
 - d. Supports lifelong educational opportunity – from elementary to post-secondary to career oriented deliverables.
 - e. Provides communication channels that enhance productivity and inter-connection of our population– from interactive broadband to a variety of information and entertainment carriers.
 - f. Allows people to locate living, earning, and spending space conveniently
 - g. Is fast and flexible enough to adapt. We are wrestling with reforms to permitting services to new delivery systems in the “self-service” economy (Uber, Airbnb, and the like). Planning and regulation must have a long range component but the rate of change in our community may require us to supplement strategic plans with tactical ones – the 50-year cycle may well require 5 to 15 year reviews or even sun-setting provisions to keep pace with realities on the ground.
8. Lastly, grand ambitions (however noble) cannot be realized if they are not sustainable – for all the talk of “green” and “sustainable” structures and development we are only beginning to grapple with the fact that there is another kind of sustainability – economic sustainability. We must be careful not to outrun either the capacity or the political consensus to fund our desires. Everyone wants, a smaller number needs, and a smaller number still are willing or able to invest. To govern is to choose, and to choose is to prioritize. We understand the difficulties, but counsel discretion and judgment. By happy experience, we have come to expect that of our elected leaders, and that is both noble and desirable.

It has been an honor to Chair the Board during this term, and I submit this report in the hope it will serve as a precis of our work and a stimulus to further discussion.

Respectfully submitted,



Mark J. Firley
Chair, Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board
2015-2016 Term

About the Board

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/upcounty

The Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board (UCAB) provides advice and recommendations to the County Executive, County Council, and Upcounty Regional Director on issues affecting the northern portion of the county known as the “Upcounty” in addition to acting as a two-way communication link between the County and the community. The twenty volunteer members of UCAB are appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council.

Geographic Scope The Upcounty region is defined as being roughly north and west of Shady Grove Road and it comprises about one-half of the geographic area of Montgomery County and one-third of its population. It ranges in character from urban to rural in communities such as Barnesville, Boyds, Clarksburg, Damascus, Darnestown, Derwood, Gaithersburg, Germantown, Goshen, Laytonsville, Montgomery Village, North Potomac and Poolesville. Therefore, UCAB’s members are selected for geographic balance as well as for diversity of background, community and professional experience and expertise.

Structure UCAB operates in public meetings and has two standing committees: the Land Use Committee and the Quality of Life Committee. UCAB’s leadership consists of the chairperson, a first vice-chair, and a second vice-chair along with the chair of the Land Use Committee and chair of the Quality of Life Committee. Other UCAB members also provide liaison to various other County boards and committees.

Issues Usually after a planning retreat in July, the UCAB and each of its committees meets monthly from September through June. The UCAB’s committees study a wide variety of issues and help to craft the board’s resulting recommendations. The Land Use Committee has reviewed and commented on master planning practices in the Upcounty, issues related to urbanization, the County’s Growth Policy, development pressures on the Agricultural Reserve, the evolution of the Life Sciences Center at Shady Grove, issues faced by agricultural and related businesses, affordable housing, and growth of the Germantown Campus of Montgomery College. The Quality of Life Committee has reviewed and commented on out-of-school programs for youths, programs for immigrant families and children at risk, mental health services, library services, safety of young drivers and pedestrians, public safety, services for seniors, and the general health of the county’s community. Positions have been taken on many of these issues while others may continue to be examined for comment.

Recommendations During the year, UCAB interacts formally and informally with county officials, county and state agency staff, and community leaders in order to understand issues comprehensively before forwarding comments or recommendations to the County Executive and/or County Council. UCAB also meets with the Executive during the year to discuss Upcounty priorities and to summarize their work at their annual meeting, and traditionally, the Executive’s priorities for both the operating budget and the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) have been responsive to UCAB’s recommendations. In the past, the Board has also hosted receptions for officials and community leaders in order to promote networking and the sharing of ideas. On an annual basis, the board meets with State legislators who represent the Upcounty area in the General Assembly, and various county department heads to explore issues and solutions. Additionally, UCAB traditionally hosts the County Executive’s annual Capital and Operating budget forums to solicit community comments. Those comments are then prioritized by the board and forwarded to Executive Branch departments and the County Executive.

The Upcounty Regional Director, Catherine Matthews, can be contacted at 240.777.8040 or via email at catherine.matthews@montgomerycountymd.gov.

Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board 2015-2016



Left to right sitting: Darlene Kerr (Germantown); Tobi Printz-Platnick (Boys/Germantown); Arthur Edmunds (Laytonsville); Robert Nelson (Goshen); David Rosenbaum (Germantown);

Left to right standing: William Roberts (Gaithersburg); Dennis Barnes (Montgomery Village); Kevin Linck (Montgomery Village); Brian Donohue (Clarksburg); Mark Firley (Montgomery Village); Kraig Walsleben (Damascus).

Not available when photo was taken:



***B. Scott Graham
(Comus/Ag Reserve)***



***Mamady Kamara
(Gaithersburg/Germantown)***



***Daisha New
(Poolesville)***



***Linda Moore
(Montgomery Village)***



***Pat Seals
(North Potomac)***



***James Wallace
(Gaithersburg)***



***Ian Weston
(North Potomac)***



***Joel Yesley
(Gaithersburg)***

Officers

Chair – Mark Firley

1st Vice Chair – Pat Seals

2nd Vice Chair – Brian Donohue

UCAB Committee Chairs

Land Use – Arthur Edmunds

Quality of Life – Daisha New

Liaisons to Other Boards and Committees

Airpark Liaison Committee – (vacant)

Dickerson Facilities Implementation Group – Beth Daly

Permitting Services Advisory Committee – Darlene Kerr

Shady Grove Implementation Advisory Committee – (vacant)

Smart Growth Initiative Implementation Advisory Group – Kevin Linck

Speed Camera Advisory Committee – David Rosenbaum

Upcounty Regional Recreation Advisory Board – Daisha New

PEPCO Community Advisory Group – Kevin Linck

Comprehensive Economic Strategy Community Advisory Group – Pat Seals

Commission on Aging Data Task Force – Robert Nelson

Issues and Comments

Year in Summary

While the full Board hosted presentations and discussions of general interest to the northern county community such as economic development, master plan reviews, and priorities for the General Assembly, the Land Use Committee of the Board primarily focused on assessing issues affecting land use in the Upcounty or North County. The Board's Quality of Life Committee focused on issues that affect the daily lives of residents and businesses such as access to services, public safety and security, housing, substance abuse and education. This year, both committees discussed the future of the county's Agricultural Reserve, and traffic congestion.

The North County is still generally known as the "development frontier" but with large amounts of land reserved from development by the Agricultural Reserve. We have an increasingly heterogeneous population with a different profile of support requirements and, we acknowledge that the affordability of service may constrain our ability to provide additional support. In addition, the county is attempting to retain both millennials and seniors, while the budgets of the next several years are expected to be highly constrained.

We are concerned that . . .

- development has already outstripped our infrastructure;
- schools are struggling to keep pace with a growing enrollment;
- transportation congestion is being addressed but with long-term projects that still do not have confirmed timeframes for operation;
- public safety is improving with increased numbers of personnel, but as more communities grow, those numbers still need to increase;
- there is a lack of economic development that is tied to a "density" problem;
- the density required to attract business is much higher than new development has historically provided;
- zoning changes should be helpful, but we need fundamental re-imagining of the process as well;
- without economic development, we create more bedroom suburbs that are disconnected from services and infrastructure, a costlier retro-fitting of support systems (roads, schools, fire and police stations), and higher costs but perhaps with a lower quality of life.

Over the past year, the full board and each of its committees explored these concerns in meetings with the following topics:

- New MARC Rail Station Communities Plans for Germantown & Boyds
- Economic Development - Development of County Services Park East
- Strengthening the Agricultural Reserve
- The Universities at Shady Grove Campus Expansion
- Montgomery College's Master Plan
- State Road and Intersection Projects
- An Introduction to the Germantown Alliance (Germantown interests)
- "How Resilient Are We in the County?"
- Housing Trends in Montgomery County
- Transient Housing – Licensing and Registration (Airbnb)
- Drug Use Among Youths
- Universal Pre-K Education Model
- Montgomery Village Master Plan
- Preparing for the General Assembly 2016
- Recommended Changes to the County's Dept. of Liquor Control
- Update on the Nighttime Economy Task Force Recommendations
- Montgomery County Charter Review Commission

- General Discussion with the Damascus Community
- General Discussion with Council President Nancy Floreen
- The Comprehensive Economic Strategy

These discussions and presentations included the participation of residents from some of the affected communities. This allowed for a more direct and engaging conversation where committee members and the experts gather unfiltered input from constituencies affected by the county government's land use and service delivery decisions. A brief summary of the discussions and recommendations follow.

Economic Development

We need to focus more on co-locating business and residential development. Create conditions where small to medium sized businesses can occupy space in the northern county area which will reduce the demand for and stress on long-haul commuting, etc. and other systems, and therefore reduce costs.

Need to focus on workforce development for all sectors of business in order to keep a diverse group of industries in the county.

Education

Fund the county's school system at Maintenance of Effort (MOE) levels. More would be nice, but there are other competing needs and, for many residents, increased taxation is a disincentive to remaining in Montgomery County. The underlying MOE law may need modification. It discourages certain forms of change, preferring adjustments within a delivery system that might not match the needs of today's or tomorrow's citizens. In addition, diversity and workforce development demand innovation beyond traditional outcome sets.

The Quality of Life Committee explored the "Universal Pre-K" education model with representatives from Montgomery County Public Schools and the Department of Health and Human Services. They specifically discussed: the definition of the model; benefits of universal pre-K; the County's current pre-kindergarten program --- its opportunities and deficiencies; and other early childhood programs and services. While the County currently administers several early childhood programs that are funded by the county, state and federal government, we have not found enough funding for universal pre-K. In addition, the programs that are offered to residents are based on income and should have the income limits increased in order to encourage more participation. Further conversation between the guest speakers and Quality of Life Committee revealed that the slots allocated toward early childhood programs were not being filled because the vouchers only pay for half of the school day. Employed parents did not have the flexibility or resources to enroll their children in a half day educational program.

The Quality of Life Committee will recommend that the County Executive and County Council increase funding toward the pre-k program to provide for a full day program. The increased funding would result in greater program participation, especially for lower income families. We further recommend that funding be reinstated for Montgomery County's "Back-to-School Fair." The "Back-to-School Fair" is significant in notifying the community about early childhood programs and services.

Infrastructure

The Upcounty is struggling with population and housing growth that continues to outpace commercial development and infrastructure and we are still developing in near-greenfields conditions. **Keep funding to continue the "smart growth" transformation in zoning, development, transportation, and facilities construction. Prioritize multi-modal transportation relief for existing communities and find ways to build around existing public infrastructure in new development. Look for data-driven solutions and pick less capital intensive projects to bridge us to better times.**

Agricultural Reserve

On December 7, Jeremy Criss from the Montgomery County Office of Agricultural Services; Carolyn Taylor, Executive Director of the Montgomery Countryside Alliance; and Michele Cropp, Vice-President of the Montgomery County Farm Bureau presented and discussed ideas for preserving the Agricultural Reserve. There is difficulty in obtaining subsidies in certain areas for the farms, including funding for farmland purchase and preservation. The Rotating Lab has been a positive contributor in a range of issues - - - from educating children about where their food comes from, to the challenges in obtaining high speed internet services.

The Agricultural Reserve is one of the important elements in land use planning and a reservoir of economic, cultural, and biodiversity for the County as a whole and in particular, the identity of the Upcounty as a place for retaining open space. The Land Use Committee recognizes that there are challenges to accessing basic services for this region of the county, such as connecting to high speed internet and obtaining subsidies in certain areas for farms. The Agricultural Reserve and sustainable farming continues to be a priority for the North County.

While we acknowledge the concerns and efforts to access essential services and support such efforts, the Land Use Committee believes the Reserve provides a unique and valuable way of encouraging sensible limits to growth, and that the presence of agricultural resources so close to major population centers can reasonably and viably contribute to the security of our food supply and provide educational and recreational opportunities to the entire county. We also believe that any changes proposed for land use within the Reserve be carefully matched to the character of the Reserve and be designed to have minimum possible impact on the overall character of the Reserve.

Transportation

As with previous Land Use Committee reports, transportation continues to be an important area of concern for the residents of the North County. The challenge remains to improve traffic flow throughout the Northern County using various modes including, but not limited to, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT); MARC Rail System access for more commuters, and the implementation of improvements along MD Route 355, MD Route 27, and the I-270 Corridor up to the Frederick County Line.

The committee supports the concept of Bus Rapid Transit and the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT). However, neither plan addresses the immediate commuter problem in the North County area as a priority. BRT is not expected to be deployed into the North County area until fairly late in the build-out schedule. We also believe that this represents a missed opportunity for the County to offer relief to the citizens of the North County by prioritizing improvements that have more of a short term impact.

We recommend accelerating plans for the installation of adaptive or so-called “intelligent” traffic signaling projects in the Upcounty area as a first measure of relief for traffic congestion in the Germantown/Clarksburg corridor. We also recommend initiating study of ramp metering and other flow control measures to improve highway flow (and thus capacity) in the I-270 corridor.

We support the intersection and other roadway improvements between Germantown and Clarksburg that should be done as soon as possible. We understand that at least some of these projects are currently underway or under study, and we express our desire to make them a priority in the CIP. Our discussion on the CIP projects also pointed out to us that economic, effective remedy of the transportation issues in the area may be benefitted by increased coordination of efforts between the County and the State, especially as it regards MD Route 355 and MD Route 27.

We believe that continued progress on the Observation Drive project is vital to the success of transportation efforts in our area.

We believe that from a standpoint of pedestrian safety alone, the extension of the hiker/biker path along MD Route 355 (Frederick Road) would be warranted so that it served the area from Milestone Manor Lane in Germantown to the Clarksburg community. Because of the increasing population in the area, we have selected it as part of our highest priority list.

Recreation

Renovate the Upcounty Community Recreation Center. This facility benefits a geographically, culturally, and economically diverse population and receives broad community support.

We continue to support the relocation of the carousel in Wheaton Regional Park to Ovid Hazen Wells Recreational Park to form the centerpiece of a phased improvement to that park in Clarksburg.

Continue progress on the Magruder Branch Hiker-Biker Trail Extension.

Security and Homeland Security

The County's resiliency plan relates to its emergency management and homeland security protocols. Natural hazards affecting our community are effectively handled but the general public still needs to be encouraged to make family plans and know what precautions to take during a state of emergency. **It is our understanding that the county could use additional water sources in the event of an emergency with the projected needs of our population. We will continue to monitor this observation and may offer a recommendation in the future.**

Germantown Interests

With development construction continuing in this community, a local group of stakeholders has convened the "Germantown Alliance." The first Alliance was formed in 1979 and dissolved several years ago once most of the projects they advocated for were finally realized --- recreation centers, fire stations, schools, library, etc. This new group has been formed to advocate for today's needs and those anticipated in the future in order to nurture and support a safe and healthy community.

Housing Trends

With the urbanization of the county comes an effort to concentrate new construction around mass transit hubs, ease traffic congestion through the application of express bus lanes. **The question also remains of how to address traffic congestion and new neighborhoods' circulation needs as is the case in the Clarksburg area. This discussion will continue into the next year.**

Transient Housing – Licensing and Registration

The Quality of Life Committee discussed the County Council's legislation that addresses fees, enforcement, and the requirements that consider living in neighborhoods. The accountability of companies and hosts is important to the community.

Drug Use Among Youths

The Quality of Life Committee discussed with representatives from the Health and Human Services Department and Police Department the status of illegal and prescription drug use, juvenile recovery centers, drug awareness campaigns, enforcement by local authorities, and associated crimes. We applaud the County's law enforcement agencies and their program to collect prescription drugs. **The Quality of Life Committee will recommend that the Board continue to support funding and other resources for community education campaigns and rehabilitation programs.**

Discussion - “How Resilient Are We in the County?”

Guest: Charles Crisostomo, Acting Director, Office of Emergency Management & Homeland Security

December 7, 2015

Discussion - “Strengthening the Agricultural Reserve”

Guests: Jeremy Criss, Montgomery County Office of Agricultural Services; Carolyn Taylor, Executive Director, Montgomery Countryside Alliance; and Michele Cropp, Vice-President, Montgomery County Farm Bureau.

January 4, 2016

Discussion - “Life Sciences Corridor Loop Design Guidelines”

Guest: Steve Findley, Area 2 Planner, Montgomery County Planning Department

January 9, 2016

Discussion - “Housing Trends in Montgomery County”

Guest: Gwen Wright, Planning Director, Montgomery County Planning Department

March 7, 2016

Presentation - “The Universities at Shady Grove Campus Expansion”

Guest: Karen Mitchell, COO, The Universities at Shady Grove

March 14, 2016

Discussion - Council Bill #2-16, Transient Housing - Licensing and registration

Guest: Kathleen Mitchell, Legislative Aide to Councilmember Riemer

April 4, 201

Presentation - Montgomery College’s Master Plan”

Guest: Sandra Filippi, Senior Campus Planner, Montgomery College

April 11, 2016

Discussion - “Our Youth’s Use of Drugs”

*Guests: Ben E. Stevenson II, Substance Abuse Prevention Program Manager, Montgomery County Health and Human Services
Lt. Ron Smith, Special Investigations Division’s Drug Enforcement Section, Montgomery County Police*

May 9, 2016

Discussion - “Universal Pre-K” Education Model

*Guests: Barbara J. Andrews, Ph.D., Administrator, Early Childhood Services Children, Youth and Family Services, Mont. Co. Department of Health and Human Service
Verna Washington, Supervisor, Division of Title I and Early Childhood Programs and Services
Montgomery County Public Schools*

June 6, 2016

Discussion- “State Road & Intersection Projects in Upcounty”

*Guests: State Legislators serving northern part of Montgomery County (invited)
Delegate Carol Krimm, Frederick County (invited)
Erica Rigby, District 3 Engineer for Project Development, State Highway Administration
Marcus Tadros, I-270 Corridor Project Manager, State Highway Administration
Gary Erenrich, Acting Deputy Director of Transportation Policy, Montgomery County Dept. of Transportation*

Testimonies and Correspondence



UPCOUNTY REGIONAL SERVICES CENTER

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

Catherine E. Matthews
Director

February 16, 2016

The Honorable Isiah Leggett
County Executive
Executive Office Building
101 Monroe Street
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Mr. Leggett,

On behalf of the Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board, I would like to extend our thanks for having your recent budget forum in Germantown. We appreciate the honor you have shown us with your attendance and your willingness to engage in dialog on the topics of the evening. We are also grateful for the presence of your staff from the Office of Management and Budget, Jennifer Bryant and Crystal Brockington-Sallee who represented your staff very well.

I cannot help but observe that a number of the Board members and quite a few of the guests were heard to remark that you showed both exemplary candor without the loss of civility we see all too often today in challenging and tense discussions.

As Lawson observed: "To govern is to choose." In the present difficult circumstances, the choices are constrained and the act of governance is all the more difficult. Nonetheless, your willingness to engage the citizens here speaks both to your integrity and skill, and it is all the more appreciated because these are difficult times.

We thank you for your time and attention, and look forward to submitting our budget priorities to you. Even though much of the process is behind us, we believe that it is wise to share our thoughts on priorities on the grounds that fate has had a curious way of forcing us to adapt during the fiscal year of late.

Therefore, we trust that at least some consensus on our part may assist the Executive and the Council in future deliberations.

Respectfully,

Mark J. Firley
2015-16 Chairperson
Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board



UPCOUNTY CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

July 21, 2015

The Honorable Isiah Leggett
Montgomery County Executive
101 Monroe Street
Rockville MD 20850

Dear Mr. Leggett:

The Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board wishes to recommend seven projects as their highest priorities in the context of the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) for FY17-22. The Board is acutely aware of the increasing fiscal constraint under which the county government is now forced to operate, and have tried to prioritize our requests in light of that reality.

We have divided the list voted upon by the entire board into two sections that reflect our two standing committees, Quality of Life and Land Use.

From the perspective of the Quality of Life Committee, priorities concern parks and recreation issues.

- a) Renovation of the Upcounty Community Recreation Center - This item benefits a geographically, culturally, and economically diverse population and receives broad community support.
- b) Relocation of the carousel in Wheaton Regional Park to Ovid Hazen Wells Recreational Park to form the centerpiece of a phased improvement to that park in Clarksburg.
- c) Continuing progress on the Magruder Branch Hiker-Biker Trail Extension.

From the perspective of the Land Use Committee, priorities focus on transportation issues.

- a) Accelerating plans for the installation of adaptive or so-called “intelligent” traffic signaling projects in the Upcounty area as a first measure of relief for traffic congestion in the Germantown/Clarksburg corridor. We also recommend initiating study of ramp metering and other flow control measures to improve highway flow (and thus capacity) in the I-270 corridor.

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Mr. Isiah Leggett
July 21, 2015
Page Two of Two

- b) We support the intersection and other roadway improvements between Germantown and Clarksburg that should be done as soon as possible. We understand that at least some of these projects are currently underway or under study, and we express our desire to make them a priority in the CIP. Our discussion on the CIP projects also pointed out to us that economic, effective remedy of the transportation issues in the area may be benefitted by increased coordination of efforts between the County and the State, especially as it regards MD Route 355 and MD Route 27.
- c) We believe that continued progress on the Observation Drive project is vital to the success of transportation efforts in our area.
- d) We believe that from a standpoint of pedestrian safety alone, the extension of the hiker/biker path along MD Route 355 (Frederick Road) would be warranted so that it served the area from Milestone Manor Lane in Germantown to the Clarksburg community. Because of the increasing population in the area, we have selected it as part of our highest priority list.

We thank you for the opportunity to comment and hope that these recommendations receive favorable consideration.

Sincerely,



Mark Firley
Chair

*Upcounty Regional
Services Center*



UPCOUNTY REGIONAL SERVICES CENTER

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

Catherine E. Matthews
Director

Dear Community Friend,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board (UCAB) for their dedication in representing and serving their community in the many important discussions that are impacting residents, businesses, places of worship, and small neighborhoods in the northern part of Montgomery County and countywide.

The Board works hard to be inclusive and encourages residents from all interests and demographic groups to stay informed and get involved in their community. One easy way to do that is to attend the meetings of the Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board to learn what the pressing issues of the day are and to share your ideas for creative solutions. The Board reserves time on their monthly meeting agendas to hear from residents and is interested in knowing what you think.

Once again, I encourage you, as a member of this community, to share your time and knowledge in helping to shape the northern area of the county for the days ahead and to offer suggestions for addressing future needs whether they are facilities, programs, or access to services.

I also want to thank the many County and State officials, departmental staff, and civic leaders for the time and expertise that they generously gave to help clarify the issues for the Board and to explore possible solutions.

UCAB has represented this region and county well, and I am fortunate to have the opportunity to work with them. Join us. We look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely,

Catherine Matthews
Regional Services Director

Upcounty Regional Services Boundary Map



Proudly serving approximately 300,000 residents of Barnesville, Beallsville, Boyds, Clarksburg, Damascus, Darnestown, Derwood, Dickerson, Gaithersburg, Germantown, Goshen, Laytonsville, Montgomery Village, North Potomac, Poolesville, Tobytown and Washington Grove.

The Upcounty Regional Services Center

The Upcounty Regional Services Center (URSC) is a 100,000 square foot facility that, in 2014-2015, housed 10 county agencies and 10 community partner agencies who together offered 28 different services. The Center is located at 12900 Middlebrook Road in Germantown, Maryland and provides a county presence for the northern region of Montgomery County where a third of the county's population or more than 280,000 people reside. The service area encompasses approximately 200 square miles and is bordered on the north by Frederick County, on the east by the Olney area, on the south by the Shady Grove Metro area and Rockville, and on the west by the Potomac River.

Administration Office

The Center is anchored by the Upcounty Regional Services Office (URSO) that functions as a link to the County Executive's Office; coordinates policy making and service delivery that focus on the particular needs of the Upcounty area; offers effective and timely problem-solving assistance to neighborhoods, individuals, community organizations, businesses, and agencies; and coordinates service delivery and assistance to the agencies housed in the Center. More specifically, the office offers an effective, timely liaison between Montgomery County and its citizens and businesses, and works with individuals, community groups, regional citizens advisory boards, and other public agencies to:

- research and disseminate information;
- identify and assess regional problems and issues and facilitate solutions;
- bring community perspective to major policy issues;
- assist with site evaluations for public facilities;
- promote a sense of community; and
- provide general on-site supervision of the center and build collaboration among partner agencies.

Major services provided to the public by the URSO this year included:

- providing information and making referrals for county and other governmental entities about local programs, activities, and community issues;
- assisting individuals, groups, and neighborhoods in developing solutions to local problems;
- assisting new non-profits as they get established and build capacity to provide services;
- leveraging funds/resources for community-based initiatives (i.e. transit station safety);
- providing a county government presence and serving as the public's regional access point for communicating with county government;
- serving as one regional repository and the public's point-of-access for government and regional planning documents (master plans, sector plans, county budgets, Capital Improvements Program, maps, Mid-County Corridor Study, etc.);
- providing education and strategic-planning assistance to groups, neighborhoods and communities for local issues; and
- disseminating center and community information and special announcements through the center's webpage, mailing lists, e-newsletter and web-based events calendar.

In a broader effort to bridge the gap between citizen needs and county public services, the Upcounty Regional Director regularly looks for opportunities to bring relevant services from a variety of other agencies and organizations to the Center.

Other Center Agencies & Services in 2011-2012:

Conflict Resolution Center of Montgomery County **301-942-7700**
Provides dispute prevention, resolution and education to individuals and community organizations. Call to schedule an appointment or visit www.crcmc.org

Gilchrist Welcome Center **240-777-6950**
This welcome center for new residents offers information and referral services, County programs and services provided by the County government as well as community organizations and non-profits. At the Upcounty Regional Services Center, the Gilchrist Center offers English as a second language (ESOL), citizenship preparation classes and pro bono legal services. Call for more information regarding other upcoming programs or visit www.montgomerycountymd.gov/gilchrist

Office of Community Partnerships - Faith Community Liaison **240-777-2503**
The County's Liaison to faith communities offers information and problem-solving assistance primarily to places of worship in order to encourage inclusiveness and engagement in county government initiatives and processes and other civic activities. www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cec

Housing Initiative Partnership (HIP) **301-916-5946**
As a contract partner to the County's Department of Housing and Community Affairs, HIP provides foreclosure intervention counseling for Montgomery County homeowners. Bi-monthly foreclosure prevention workshops are provided followed by a one-on-one appointment with a certified housing counselor to discuss options available for families to remain in their homes or transition into other sustainable housing arrangements. Bilingual counseling services are available. www.hiphomes.org

WorkSource Montgomery **240-777-2050**
(workforce development services)
WorkSource Montgomery provides workforce solutions to local businesses and strengthens local job seekers' skills so that all of Montgomery County can compete in the global economy. Its "One-Stop Career Center" provides an array of services to job seekers and employers. <http://worksourcemontergy.com>

Peppertree Children's Center **301-540-1170**
Montgomery County, as part of a commitment to families and children, provides space in many public buildings for community child care. Peppertree Children's Center is a contractor to the Department of Health & Human Services and offers full-time and part-time care for children ages 6 weeks through 12 years. Morning preschool is also offered. NAEYC accredited. www.peppertreechildrenscenters.com

Department of Health and Human Services
www.montgomerycountymd.gov/hhs

Housing Stabilization Services/Emergency Services **240-777-4448**

- Rental assistance
- Eviction prevention
- Foreclosure avoidance
- Court ordered evictions
- Past due or disconnected utilities
- Burial assistance
- Information and referral for food and prescriptions
- Homeless assessment services for families with children

Income Support Programs

240-777-3420

- Temporary Cash Assistance for families
- Food Stamp Program
- Transitional Emergency, Medical and Housing Assistance (TEMHA) for residents who are totally disabled and cannot work
- Medical Assistance

Public Health

240-777-3380

- Maternal and Child case management and home visitation
- “Access” nurse service, including assisting clients with Health Choice access as well as enrolling women into the County maternity program and acting as a health resource to walk-in clients
- Children’s immunization clinics
- Pregnancy tests, information and referral

Service Eligibility Unit (SEU)

240-777-3591

- Helps find health coverage for uninsured Montgomery County residents through: Maryland Children’s Health Program, Prenatal Care, Care for Kids, Dental
- Provides information and phone numbers for food, shelter, and clothing needs (Financial eligibility required)

Dental Program

240-777-3290

- General dental services to children 0-17 years
- General dental services to maternity clients enrolled in the HHS maternity program
- Emergency service limited to preliminary evaluation and provided to children and seniors who are established clients.

Child Welfare

240-777-1742

Continuing protective service, foster care service, case management, and home visitation; assist with family reunification. Aftercare services, in-home monitoring of children returned to families.

Affordable Healthcare Enrollment

240-773-8250

Residents are assisted with enrolling in affordable health plans.

Family Service Agency Inc.

301-972-0307

Serves youth and families from five school cluster communities in Clarksburg, Germantown, Damascus, Gaithersburg, and Poolesville. Services include individual and family counseling, psycho-educational/skills groups, information and referral, crisis intervention, community outreach/education, and tutoring. Visit www.guideprogram.org

Community Use of Public Facilities (CUPF)

240-777-2746

This regional CUPF office offers scheduling of meeting rooms at the Upcounty Regional Services Center, school facilities, library meeting rooms, Executive Office Building space, Council Office Building space, and school fields for community use in the Upcounty area. Visit www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cupf

Volunteer Center

240-777-2600

Individuals, groups, and businesses can register for volunteer opportunities and offer their skills and talents. Student Service Learning (SSL) students can find projects and get credits to fulfill their graduation requirements. Visit www.montgomeryserves.org.

Office of Human Resources**240-777-5116**

The Center serves as the main training site for the County's Office of Human Resources where county employees are offered workshops, seminars and other training activities as scheduled. www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ohr

Montgomery County Public Schools**Office of Organizational Development**www.montgomeryschools.org**301-601-0300**

The mission of the Office is the organizational development of a leading, self-renewing organization focused on achieving the school system goals by strengthening the knowledge, skills, beliefs, and practices of Montgomery County Public School's staff and stakeholders.

Transportation Services**301-840-8130**

This office coordinates and administers transportation services for Montgomery County Public Schools.

Maryland Leadership Workshops**301-444-8623**

Staff work with individual students and small groups at the middle school and high school levels to develop leadership skills during a summer camp experience. The program is in partnership with the Maryland State Department of Education, Maryland Association of Student Councils, and Leadership Maryland.

Wellness, Fitness and Performance Institute**240-777-6946****Department of Recreation**

The vision of the Health, Wellness and Performance Institute is to enhance the Wellness, Fitness and Performance of Montgomery County Residents. The institute has three pillars, wellness, fitness and physical performance. The mission of the wellness pillar of the Institute is to increase the physical activity and healthy eating practices in Montgomery County residents. The mission of the fitness pillar of the Institute is to enhance the cardiorespiratory endurance, muscular stabilization, strength, endurance, and flexibility of Montgomery County residents. The mission of the performance pillar is to enhance the performance of occupational, recreational, senior Olympic and student athletes in Montgomery County.

*Prepared by the Upcounty Regional Services Center
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