



# Digital Equity - Montgomery Connects

(P341700)

Category	General Government	Date Last Modified	01/10/24
SubCategory	Technology Services	Administering Agency	Technology Services
Planning Area	Countywide	Status	Ongoing

## EXPENDITURE SCHEDULE (\$000s)

Cost Elements	Total	Thru FY23	Est FY24	Total 6 Years	FY 25	FY 26	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29	FY 30	Beyond 6 Years
Planning, Design and Supervision	4,030	573	338	3,119	979	920	812	136	136	136	-
Construction	16,716	2,914	1,324	12,478	3,918	3,680	3,248	544	544	544	-
Other	321	321	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>21,067</b>	<b>3,808</b>	<b>1,662</b>	<b>15,597</b>	<b>4,897</b>	<b>4,600</b>	<b>4,060</b>	<b>680</b>	<b>680</b>	<b>680</b>	<b>-</b>

## FUNDING SCHEDULE (\$000s)

Funding Source	Total	Thru FY23	Est FY24	Total 6 Years	FY 25	FY 26	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29	FY 30	Beyond 6 Years
Current Revenue: Cable TV	9,687	3,330	679	5,678	1,845	1,020	773	680	680	680	-
Current Revenue: General	2,380	478	983	919	52	580	287	-	-	-	-
State Aid	9,000	-	-	9,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL FUNDING SOURCES</b>	<b>21,067</b>	<b>3,808</b>	<b>1,662</b>	<b>15,597</b>	<b>4,897</b>	<b>4,600</b>	<b>4,060</b>	<b>680</b>	<b>680</b>	<b>680</b>	<b>-</b>

## APPROPRIATION AND EXPENDITURE DATA (\$000s)

Appropriation FY 25 Request	884	Year First Appropriation	FY16
Appropriation FY 26 Request	4,600	Last FY's Cost Estimate	20,165
Cumulative Appropriation	9,483		
Expenditure / Encumbrances	4,690		
Unencumbered Balance	4,793		

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Digital Equity - Montgomery Connects project provides for capital funding to support Montgomery County's digital equity initiatives. Internet service accessibility, affordability, and adoption are critical factors in addressing equity disparities. Funding will support planning, design, and construction of: MoCoNet residential broadband in affordable housing developments to close the digital equity gap through the provision of free or low cost, reliable and robust residential Internet services, and devices, at affordable housing throughout the County; Public WiFi and Advanced Wireless Conduit Networks to provide conduit and fiber to support public WiFi and wireline and wireless broadband networks in commercial and community gathering areas of Montgomery County. Innovation Testbeds to spur development and expansion of traffic, transit, and pedestrian sensors, Internet of Things (IoT), advanced robotic, and cybersecurity IoT applications and innovation in Montgomery County; Purple Line Fiber to connect Montgomery County research and higher education facilities to MAX and Internet2 at the University of Maryland, College Park; and White Oak Science Gateway Conduit Network to provide broadband conduit infrastructure in Viva White Oak and other White Oak commercial development

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projects.

## ESTIMATED SCHEDULE

Digital equity installations began in FY21 and will continue through FY30. White Oak Science Gateway conduit construction will be performed concurrently with Viva White Oak construction. Design for public WiFi, advanced wireless, conduit, and testbeds in commercial and community gathering areas are underway and outreach to potential private partners is in development. Purple Line fiber connections are dependent on the Purple Line and third-party construction.

## COST CHANGE

The increase is due to the addition of FY29 and FY30 to this ongoing project. State Aid for FY23 has been shifted to the operating budget.

## PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

Digital Equity - Montgomery Connects is a digital equity program, designed to ensure that businesses and underserved residents of affordable housing units in Montgomery County have as much reliable, secure, and robust broadband service as they need to live, work, learn, and keep our economy moving at the speed of our ideas. Digital Equity - Montgomery Connects also supports the County's racial equity and social justice goals by focusing our digital equity deployment of devices and residential broadband in affordable housing developments and underserved communities. Digital Equity - Montgomery Connects helps ensure that all residents have the broadband service and devices to participate in the digital world; expanding access to competitive broadband services in commercial buildings to support small and large businesses; and by leveraging infrastructure development and strategic conduit network deployment to create robust public WiFi and public private partnerships to support leasing of County broadband assets. Access to reliable broadband infrastructure throughout the County supports business growth and innovation in biotech bio-health, cybersecurity, IT services, financial services, media and similar high-bandwidth-consuming sectors, and for federal and state government, research and higher education institutions. Ensuring that all businesses can access reliable broadband services is essential to ensuring equity.

## OTHER

This project was previously named ultraMontgomery until 2023 when it was renamed to Digital Equity - Montgomery Connects. This change was made to better describe the purpose of the project.

In 2021, the Great Seneca Fiber Highway was completed to provide the shortest distance, low latency connection between Great Seneca and Ashburn, Virginia data centers. Phase 2 of the East County Fiber Highway to provide regional north-south interconnections between White Oak and Howard County and east-west connections between Burtonsville and WSSC Water in Laurel is in planning. In response to COVID-19, funding for rural broadband is being provided through state and federal broadband grants and the Digital Equity - Montgomery Connects project pivoted to focus County broadband deployment on providing service to low-income affordable housing developments where residents do not have access to or have difficulty affording robust broadband service. Engineering, planning, and design work provided by the Digital Equity - Montgomery Connects CIP has been instrumental in preparing state grant applications. Because other resources can support rural broadband deployment, funding from the Digital Equity - Montgomery Connects CIP for low-income affordable housing is being prioritized over rural broadband.

## FISCAL NOTE

State Aid in FY23 was shifted from the capital budget to the operating budget.

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## DISCLOSURES

The County Executive asserts that this project conforms to the requirement of relevant local plans, as required by the Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act.

## COORDINATION

FiberNet (P509651); Technology and Enterprise Business Solutions (TEBS); Purple Line Department of Transportation; Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission; Montgomery College; WSSC Water; Information Technology Policy Coordination Committee; Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation; and affordable housing developers in Montgomery County.

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This map shows the location of affordable housing developments in the County that would be served if ultraMontgomery receives the requested funding.