

Silver Spring, MD 20904  
9 February, 2022

My wife and I have lived in Montgomery County for 52 years and never before have written to the county government regarding a budget issue. But the proposed 7.3% cut in the CIP budget for the Parks Department compels us to voice our distress. We chose to live in Montgomery County and pay higher taxes rather than live closer to where we worked because of the quality- of- life amenities: the parks, the schools and the cultural attractions.

The parks of Montgomery County are a gem and are heavily used by a broad cross-section of residents of all ages and backgrounds. Our children and grandchildren have benefited every year from the athletic facilities, the playgrounds and the opportunity to engage with nature.

Our particular favorite is Brookside Gardens. We appreciate the ability to walk in a serene and tranquil setting while enjoying the abundant natural displays and attractive hardscape. But there is much more to Brookside: the lectures and demonstrations, the botanic art, the shows by various botanic interest groups, the concerts, and profusion of birds and other wildlife, the opportunity for hundreds of volunteers to work beside the professional staff and give something back to the community, and the availability of remembrance opportunities. The value of Brookside has grown over the years as its offerings have increased, and each increment of improvement has been met by increased utilization. And, of course, during the pandemic the accessibility of such a wonderful outdoor space has been a particular benefit for the entire community.

The parks are one of the unique identities of Montgomery County. It would be a shame to diminish the funding for such an irreplaceable asset.

Edward Portner