

4/9/2022 PUBLIC HEARING -
FY23 Capital Improvements Program (CIP)
Sheldon Fishman

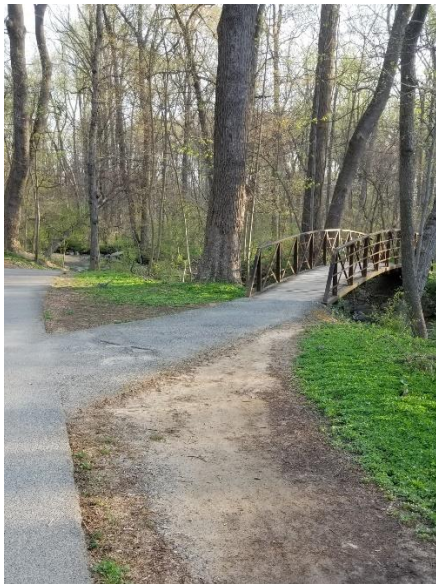
President Alborno, Vice President Glass and Members of the Council, thank you for the opportunity to address the County Council on the County's FY 2023 CIP budget. My name is Sheldon Fishman. We have lived in Montgomery County since 1974 and raised our four children here. We thank you for funding the public schools they attended, and the sports fields they competed on, the public libraries and more.

I have four budget requests. Speaker Tip O'Neill said, "all politics are local" so I will start with the most local one. We live a few blocks from Georgia Avenue and to paraphrase Sarah Palin from my backyard I can see the Beltway (495)

As you well know, you are trying to increase the density in neighborhoods like mine near public transit.

Ask #1 is: please restore the cuts and even increase the capital budget for the Parks Department so they can grow the green areas especially in urban areas where you are increasing the density.

Picture 1 is the pedestrian bridge and walking path that we use twice a day because of covid. Picture 2 shows the proximity of this path to the congested beltway.



Please expand what you are doing right. Please restore all the cuts to the Parks Department. While some elected officials advocate paving new lanes on the interstates which increase greenhouse gas, virtually all the Parks capital projects reduce greenhouse gas and sustain carbon sequestering living grass and trees.

Please turn over abandoned roads, especially in urban areas to Parks to create urban parks rather than developers to expand impervious surfaces. Please expand the takeover by the Parks Department experts in grass of the playing fields now badly sustained by the education experts of MCPS. Parks has more expertise and better equipment to do that job well to maximize the available playing time. That brings me to

Ask #2: please fund the expansion and early completion of turning over all of MCPS playing fields to the Parks Department

A related action you could take would eliminate wasteful capital funds

Ask #3. to avoid wasting \$750,000 per field, please amend the Capital Budget to prohibit use of county funds to convert any living grass playing field to a dead petroleum-based plastic synthetic turf field..

While this is budget hearing, I will point out that your choice to allow capital funds to convert grass fields to synturfs in schools such as Northwood HS and Kennedy is not just a bad budget decision. Such a budget decision violates your Climate Emergency Declaration and violates the policy to view decisions through the lens of Racial Justice. In the interest of time, this picture is worth 1,000 words connecting the dots between buying a new synturf and violating those guiding principles.



Ask #4 is to allocate capital (and operating) dollars that will fund the Montgomery County Climate Action Plan Coalition's requests to give the county's draft Climate Action Plan the urgency needed to address the climate emergency we face.

In brief, please allocate funds for the county to execute an implementation plan we hope will be announced on Earth Day and to fund efforts for community input, including the BIPOC communities. My written testimony includes more details on the Coalition's requests.

Thank you,
Sheldon

Sheldon Fishman
Silver Spring, MD 20902

Sunday, February 28, 2021

Ms. Adriana Hochberg
Assistant Chief Administrative Officer and Climate Change Coordinator
Montgomery County Government
[Executive Office Building](#)
[101 Monroe Street, 2nd Floor](#)
[Rockville, MD 20850](#)

Dear Ms. Hochberg,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Montgomery County Climate Action Plan (CAP). It is clear that much effort and thought went into the creation of the CAP. We realize this was a huge undertaking and we appreciate the many, many hours of hard work and care that you, the entire staff and the consultants did to bring this draft to fruition.

The comments that follow are from the Montgomery County (MoCo) CAP Coalition, a newly formed group of organizations in the County that has come together to identify the strengths and challenges in our County's plan, and to work collaboratively on the next steps to restore a safe climate for all of our residents. We represent over 26 organizations and groups with thousands of members in Montgomery County, advocating for climate action, racial justice and social equity, environmental protection and conservation, food justice/sovereignty, public health and more. While we represent a diverse set of priorities and expertise, we all agree on the central concern that climate change is an emergency and must be addressed immediately with bold action.

Our feedback on the CAP is direct and forceful, and our goal is to urge you to finalize a Climate Action Plan that is effective, forward-thinking, and nation-leading. The CAP also needs to lay out an implementation roadmap and a path forward as we work together to achieve the goals of the Climate Emergency Mobilization Resolution (CEMR).

In addition to our comments submitted in the attached document, we have two requests:

One - that you put forward a climate implementation plan for 2021 by April 22, Earth Day. This should announce a rapid shift into emergency mode and list the specific climate actions that the County will take this year which could include executive orders, legislation, memorandums of understanding with county institutions and agencies, agreements with major private and public employers, programs in our County, cities and communities, and aggressive collaborations with state, regional and federal agencies and other partners to push forward a climate action agenda that reduces greenhouse gas emissions from transportation, buildings,

and residences, but that also takes effective action on adaptation and the sequestration of carbon;

and

Two - that you implement an aggressive outreach program to immediately engage Black, indigenous and people of color communities (BIPOC), low-income, labor, youth and other groups as active partners and decision-makers in the climate implementation plan. This means having direct consultations with these groups and ensuring that representatives are at the table to identify and move priority climate actions forward. It is critical that these groups identify and help design actions that concurrently address key issues such as jobs, housing, transit, health, energy poverty, and food access. They must also have a voice in evaluating how potential co-benefits and 'equity enhancing measures' described in the plan will be realized. Implementation of the CAP also requires significantly increased education and opportunities for residents, communities, businesses and political leaders to engage in and support climate actions that are equally transformative in racial equity and social justice. Finally, it is important to recognize that our County's youth are also equally vital stakeholders and their voices and concerns need to be addressed by including them immediately as active partners and decision-makers in the climate implementation plan.

Please let us know if you have any questions or need clarification on our comments. We look forward to working with you in implementing the County's Climate Action Plan.

Sincerely,

MoCo CAP Coalition

350MoCo

Audubon Naturalist Society

Bethesda Green

Biodiversity for a Livable Climate

Cedar Lane Ecosystems Study Group

Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church Environmental Justice Ministry

Chesapeake Climate Action Network

Climate Health Solutions

Coalition for Smarter Growth

Conservation Montgomery

Extinction Rebellion MoCo

Friends of Sligo Creek

Give A Shift

Glen Echo Heights Mobilization

Montgomery County Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions

Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc., Executive Committee

Muslim Voices Coalition

One Montgomery Green, Inc

Query Mill Farm

Safe Healthy Playing Fields Inc.

Sugarloaf Citizens' Association

Sunrise Rockville

TAME Coalition (Transit Alternatives to Midcounty Highway Extended)

The Climate Mobilization, Montgomery County Chapter

Unitarian-Universalist Church of Silver Spring

West Montgomery County Citizens Association