

Testimony in support of the Council's APPROVAL of the Montgomery County  
Parks Department **FULL OPERATING BUDGET REQUEST.**

My friends and family have depended on Montgomery County parks our entire lives, and even more so during the pandemic. The parks provide a serene and peaceful environment where we can exercise, enjoy fresh air, picnic, boating, etc. We are always bragging to out of town people what wonderful parks we have and how lucky we are to live here. It is always a surprise to me that MD comes in so low on "best places to live" surveys when our parks are so wonderful. We are already losing so many seniors to other states because of our high Cost of living, taxes, etc. Please, at least, let us keep up our wonderful parks before even more people move away.

The County Executive's proposed budget includes \$124.9 million for Montgomery Parks, representing less than 2% of the total county operating budget; unfortunately, the County Executive reduced Montgomery Parks request by \$1.7 million. Approval of the Parks Department **FULL OPERATING BUDGET REQUEST** is a small price to pay to continue to attract business investment, expand the diversity of the community and enhance senior retirement to Montgomery County.