



FY25-30 CIP for Montgomery Parks

BY: Kit Gage, Advocacy Director
Friends of Sligo Creek

TO: Montgomery County Council

Hearings February 6, 2024

Friends of Sligo Creek is a nonprofit community organization dedicated to protecting, improving and appreciating the ecological health of Sligo Creek, the Park and the surrounding watershed. We are active Weed Warriors, litter removers, water quality assessors, support stormwater projects and native plant and tree planting. We also hold walking and hybrid educational events. In addition, we have for more than 20 years worked cooperatively with Parks and the DEP.

We are strong advocates of much of the work of Parks, and often recommend to and discuss with them particular projects and efforts. Because Sligo is under particularly heavy use, by people (as well as deer...), we support both infrastructure projects – trails and bridges – to make peoples' use safer, including people with different abilities. At the same time, we support the protection of the Park from people. Because we are focused almost exclusively on Sligo, we serve as active and thoughtful extensions of eyes and ears of Parks.

The \$24 million in cuts proposed for Parks could have very specific and deleterious effects on Sligo specifically: much of the repair of larger structures – bridges and paths – will be long delayed. This will make the paths less accessible and more dangerous to everyone. Parks is working to reduce the size of and move parking lots further from the creek. This will be stalled. Streams won't be stabilized in Brashear's Run and Bennington Road tributaries. A major fish blockage won't be addressed. The Safe Routes to School and Vision Zero goals will not be sufficiently addressed.

We are in a Climate Emergency. Volunteer efforts – even those as active as ours – will not suffice.

Further, there are several long-term issues Parks needs to address that require CIP funding:

- Replace rubberized playing fields, playgrounds, etc with grass turf and ADA compliant shredded wood to improve child safety and remove PFAS and other pollutants.

- Install Recycling containers
- Expand the PR effort in multiple languages to increase diverse appreciation of and care for the Park.
- Complete the transition to electric leaf blowers and electric mowers.
- Reduce regular mowing of turf by allowing more areas to grow and do once a year mow, supporting more native plants, and improve the biome.

Please restore the \$24 million cut from Montgomery Parks' CIP budget.

Kit Gage

Friends of Sligo Creek

PO Box 11572

Takoma Park MD 20913

www.friendsofsligocreek.org

advocacy@fosc.org