

TO: County Council, Montgomery County
FROM: Anne E. Sumner, MD,
RE: 2025-2029 CIP
DATE: January 26, 2024

I write to support the fully funding the Montgomery County Department of Parks budget request. In particular, I ask that you fully fund the Lyttonsville Green project.

I enthusiastically and wholeheartedly endorse the plan for the Lyttonsville Green developed by the Montgomery Parks Staff. As a longtime resident of Montgomery County who profoundly understands that a bright and equitable future depends on learning about our history from both a local and a national perspective, I believe a way must be found to preserve and memorialize the Talbot Avenue Bridge. This bridge played an extraordinarily important role in Lyttonsville's history. For residents, the Talbot Avenue Bridge provided a critical transit route between their homes in Lyttonsville and the rest of Montgomery County which was often both unwelcoming and unsafe.

The park as currently envisioned will preserve this vital history and memorialize the significant contributions made by leaders from Lyttonsville in the national and local struggle for equal rights. Ideally, the opening of this new park and the resulting publicity can also serve to promote the important work done by the planning staff in their "Mapping Segregation" project. This project documents the real estate covenants in Montgomery County which prevented both Black and Jewish Americans from buying houses in White neighborhoods. A reference to the map will be included in the interpretive signage on the Heritage Terrace along with information on the "Sundown Laws" which required each day that Blacks leave White areas by sundown. This signage will, in essence, be providing context for why and how the Bridge was an important and safe way home for Lyttonsville Black residents.

Please know that members of the community are eager to enthusiastically work with the Montgomery County Park staff. Developing the signage for the Heritage Terrace will ensure that important local history will become known to and memorialized for local residents, as well as to all who walk the Capital Crescent Trail and use the nearby Purple Line Station.

Please appreciate that the creation of this green is consistent with the promises made in the Greater Lyttonsville Sector Plan which calls for the creation of a public space network along the Purple Line.

In closing, I sincerely, enthusiastically, and wholeheartedly ask the Council to approve the funding necessary to complete this vitally important project which commemorates and memorializes Montgomery County history.