

FROM: Eileen McGuckian, Montgomery Preservation
RE: FY 2025 CIP BUDGET PRIORITY -- JESUP BLAIR HOUSE

We request that you include in the FY2025 CIP Budget an amount of money for restoration and revitalization of the Jesup Blair House in Silver Spring for community purposes. This treasured building has been vacant for too long and will remain vulnerable without being identified as a priority project within our Montgomery County Parks.

Since it was bequeathed for public use, Jesup Blair House has served multiple purposes -- public library, draft board headquarters, a school, most recently shelter housing. However, although owned by Montgomery Parks, the historic house has been vacant for 15 years, with surrounding old-growth trees dying one by one. Maintaining this unique physical asset and revitalizing 14.5 acres of urban green space should be a Council priority, to serve the nearby community and all of Montgomery County.

A relatively modest sum in the CIP would provide stimulation to move this long-delayed project along. We represent some of the nonprofit organizations ready to step up to help return the house to its former grandeur and fill it with contemporary community uses. We are willing to provide concrete assistance as well as creative ideas.

This project was in the County CIP budget in prior years, but the money was transferred to other higher profile Parks projects and Jesup Blair House remained vacant. Last month, windows in the house were broken by vandals who thought no one cared. Please prove them wrong.

A sum of money in the CIP would provide stimulation to re-start this long-delayed project. Will you accept this friendly challenge and offer \$400,000 in FY 2025? Funds could go directly into the Montgomery Parks Foundation or another earmarked location ready to use. The County's contribution will be matched several times over by other sources.

Needed now is your spark to provide confidence that this project will indeed be completed in the foreseeable future. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Eileen McGuckian