



**Testimony to Montgomery Council
Operating Budget of Montgomery Parks**

April 2, 2024

From: Friends of Sligo Creek
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As you may know, Friends of Sligo Creek is nonprofit community organization dedicated to improving, protecting and appreciating Sligo Creek, the Park and surrounding watershed, including Long Branch. For all of its more than 20 year history, FOSC volunteers have worked closely and collaboratively with Montgomery Parks.

This knowledge helps us understand the deeply deleterious effects of the cuts proposed for the Parks Operating Budget. Parks had proposed a modest 1.2% increase in its programmatic budget. Instead, it faces cuts to the existing budget which would limit tree care, trash removal, treatment of the worst non-native invasive plants, equipment to monitor water quality, and help with the massive Sweep the Creek events in which hundreds of FOSC volunteers and many others throughout parks, assist. These activities in many ways help to magnify the massive volunteer efforts which are critical to park health – and so have repercussions well beyond their particularities.

We support the increases in programs, which Parks proposed. These would improve lots of areas in parks, including in the Sligo watershed, facilitate stormwater maintenance. Further it is intended for use in improved security for the parks. Given that Sligo is a *very* heavily utilized park, this is of high import to us.

Let us just mention one issue in the CIP budget. We have learned that Parks is seeking to return roadway maintenance to it from DOT. This makes complete sense. Further, the environmental understanding Parks brings to road repair and maintenance is of critical import to the health of the whole park area.

Thank you for fully funding the Parks budgets.

Kit Gage