

March 27, 2024

Re: Proposed FY25 County Budget

Dear Montgomery County Council Members,

The Montgomery County Forest Coalition applauds County Executive Elrich's FY25 proposed budget, which prioritizes several environmental programs that support tree and forest health in Montgomery County. We are especially grateful for funding for the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Tree Montgomery Program, which will add a staff position to more effectively expand the County's tree canopy. We are also pleased to see funds included for the Department of Transportation's (DOT) street tree planting program, which will add more trees in county rights of way, and ensure safety on roads and sidewalks that will maintain the county's tree canopy.

In addition to the budget requests referenced above, the Montgomery County Forest Coalition also strongly supports funding for the following purposes:

- 1. Funding for Removal of Invasive Plants on County Property** – Invasive plants have quickly spread in recent years, overwhelming our parklands, roads, and neighborhoods. To control invasives on both park and non-park lands bordering our roads, Montgomery County should allocate additional funding to the Montgomery County Parks Department and DOT, that is dedicated to the removal of invasive species that are killing parkland and roadside trees.
- 2. Additional Funding for Tree Stump Removal** – The proposed FY25 funding for stump removal will not adequately address the significant backlog of requests in Montgomery County. Therefore, we are requesting additional funding for this program. Failure to remove stumps in a timely fashion result in community blight and most importantly, prevents new street trees from being planted where existing trees once stood.

We look forward to working with you and county staff in the year ahead to continue to advocate for Montgomery County's trees and forests. If you have any questions related to our requests, please do not hesitate to reach out to any of the organizations listed below.

Sincerely,

Anna Mudd, Senior Policy Director
Potomac Conservancy

Karen Metchis
ACQ Climate

Kit Gage, Advocacy Director
Friends of Sligo Creek

Amanda Farber
Conservation Montgomery

RG Steinman, Board Member
Friends of Ten Mile Creek and Little Seneca
Reservoir

Caroline Taylor, Executive Director
Montgomery Countryside Alliance

Jeanne Braha, Executive Director
Rock Creek Conservancy

Jonathon Nowick, Co-Director
Tree Friends United

Denisse Guitarra, MD Conservation
Advocate
Nature Forward

Ginny Barnes, Vice President
West Montgomery County Citizens
Association

Lucy McFadden, Coordinating Committee
Member
Climate Action Coalition, Montgomery
County