

Dear Council President and Members of the Montgomery County Council,

My name is Monty Boland, and I am writing to urge you to fully fund the Montgomery County Parks Department in the Fiscal Year 2027 Operating Budget.

Montgomery County's more than 400 parks are not simply amenities—they are essential public infrastructure that residents rely on every single day. These parks support our physical and mental well-being, provide safe spaces for recreation, preserve natural habitats, and strengthen the character of every community in the county. Maintaining such an expansive and heavily used system requires stable, predictable funding.

That is why I am deeply concerned about the more than **\$3.1 million shortfall** in the County Executive's recommended FY27 budget. The Parks Department requested only a modest increase to maintain existing services, and they did so while being mindful of the county's broader fiscal pressures. Even so, the recommended budget does not meet that basic need.

A reduction of this magnitude will have real, immediate consequences. The department has already indicated that it will hinder their ability to fill vacant maintenance positions—roles that are critical to keeping parks clean, safe, and accessible. It will also affect the hiring of several park police officers, whose presence is essential for timely response to incidents and for ensuring that our parks remain welcoming and secure for all residents.

These are not optional services. They are core functions that directly impact the daily lives of families, seniors, children, and countless community members who depend on well-maintained parks and reliable park police support.

Montgomery County's parks are one of our greatest shared assets. Underfunding them now risks eroding the quality and safety of a system that generations have worked to build and protect. I respectfully ask the Council to restore the Parks Department's full FY27 funding request so they can continue delivering the high-quality services our communities expect and deserve.

Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to preserving the strength of our county's public spaces.

Sincerely,

Monty Boland, Resident of Chevy Chase Maryland