

Testimony of Link Hoewing
Chair, Fair Access Committee for the Western County
FY27 Operating Budget
April 7, 2026

I am Link Hoewing of the Fair Access Committee for the Western County.

I have noted in past testimony that what we are advocating is not “new spending” but rather “catch up” funding that helps address many of the inequities we have long faced in our area. We thank you for your continued support as we work together to address the shortcomings of the past.

There are a number of projects or programs that need support in the FY27 operating budget. I will provide a quick overview of the key initiatives that we are advocating that need your support.

Community Center with Clinic – While not yet needing funding for programs and staff, the Center is in the FY27 CIP for design, and it is important that it move forward. We urge support for the design funding, and in the future funding for the construction and completion of the Center by 2030.

Pool Bubble – We have made the case for this common sense, efficient proposal. It remains unfunded, but it is an important part of ensuring our area, which often can be 20 miles or more from indoor swimming facilities, is treated equitably. Over 1600 seniors, numerous young families, and our very successful swim team deserve this facility.

Ride On Bus Improvements – We have spent several years developing a series of proposals, including what we call “Reverse Flex”, to make our public bus service work for many who need to get to work and make needed and important medical appointments. We have seen new flex areas come online and believe our proposals should be implemented. Much of the support for this project would come from operating funds.

Rural Roads Maintenance – The well over 160 miles of Rustic and rural roads, many of which are in our area, are our main streets. They make life convenient and support our farmers who need to be able to safely move equipment to their fields. We have learned there is no budget line item committed to rural roads maintenance and the equipment for maintaining rural

roads at our depot is badly in need of updating and improvement.

WUMCO Funding – WUMCO has taken the lead in helping identify the often hidden needs of so many in our area who can't easily get to routine medical and dental visits. WUMCO needs the continued line item funding resources in the county's HHS budget dedicated to supporting the management of its medical, dental and counseling programs.

Poolesville Seniors Grant – A deeply flawed county grants program denied Poolesville Seniors a county grant that had been awarded for many years to support what has been acknowledged as a standout program for seniors. They have since received support but it is not adequate to keep up with the needs. We have no community center, and the county provides no programming in our area. Poolesville Seniors programs are not supplemental as they are in other areas. They are the way our seniors get access to programs available elsewhere. They deserve to have full funding from the county to support their work.