



Your Business Is
Our Only Business

THE GREATER BETHESDA-CHEVY CHASE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE 2015-2016 STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

The Greater B-CC Chamber of Commerce develops its legislative and policy agenda based on the following principles:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Systemic change is needed to (i) foster a political and regulatory culture that recognizes the relationships between local business successes and the County's well-being; and (ii) replace outdated and irresponsible fiscal policies with proactive planning and innovation.

LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION

Increased growth and development around existing and planned Metrorail, Purple Line, and Rapid Transit Vehicle stations will grow our tax base, attract new businesses and residents, remove vehicle trips from our roadways, and improve quality of life.

PUBLIC HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND SAFETY

These facets of our community are vital to attracting new businesses and residents and retaining existing ones, and maintaining the stature and quality of life for which the County and region have become well known.

CULTURAL ENRICHMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

The County and the Greater B-CC region can remain on the cutting edge of cultural enrichment and environmental awareness through novel and innovative partnerships and approaches.

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OUR MISSION: Build an environment that encourages business to grow and prosper within the thriving greater BCC-Pike region.

OUR VISION: The greater BCC-Pike region will be the best place to work, live and play in the Washington Metropolitan Area.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES: Our Chamber supports its members by providing both a voice and a forum to help shape public policy and enhance opportunities for exposure, connections, and growth. Our responsibility is to lead by example, holding ourselves to the highest governance principles, ethical standards and business practices.

2015-2016 ADVOCACY AGENDA

The Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce works to achieve a thriving Montgomery County and greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase region by supporting efforts to strengthen economic vitality; improve competitiveness; attract new businesses, residents, and nonprofits while supporting and retaining existing ones; and recognize the business community's contributions to the quality of life in our County and region.

To accomplish this mission, the Chamber promotes and advocates the following agenda at the state and local levels:

STATE OF MARYLAND AGENDA

Economic Development

- Remove Montgomery County's authority as the single wholesaler and retailer of alcoholic beverages (*i.e.*, distribution and sale of beer, wine, and liquor to on-premise and off-premise licensees).
- Responsible State budgets that address the structural deficit, systemic pension reform, and general spending restraints.

Transportation

- Implementation of the Purple Line light rail and trail along the master-planned alignment.
- Across-the-board improvement of the Metro system (including management, safety, reliability, and communications) and dedicated regional funding for WMATA that is reliable and predictable.
- Accelerated construction of the State portion of Montrose Parkway (east of Rockville Pike to Veirs Mill Road).
- Oversight and vigilance of the Maryland Transportation Trust Fund to ensure that funds are directed, as appropriate, to the greater BCC community.
- Innovative, coordinated, and long-term transportation improvements to address the impacts of BRAC-related expansion at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center and growth at the National Institutes of Health.
- Support for high priority, regional, game-changing, innovatively funded (*e.g.*, electronic tolling) transportation improvements that will increase capacity and improve the performance of the Washington, D.C. area transportation network, such as multi-modal capacity improvements to I-270 and I-495, widening and re-design of the American Legion Bridge, and consideration of the addition of a new multi-modal bridge crossing north of the American Legion Bridge.

Health, Education, and Safety

- Reform the state's maintenance of effort (MOE) law, which currently mandates a minimum annual per-student funding allocation to the school system, to give the county more flexibility to address its fiscal situation and ensure that each county agency and department receives its necessary share of the annual budget.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY AGENDA

Economic Development

- Remove Montgomery County's authority as the single wholesaler and retailer of alcoholic beverages (*i.e.*, distribution and sale of beer, wine, and liquor to on-premise and off-premise licensees).
- Reform of the liquor licensing process to provide flexibility and better opportunities for licensees.
- Responsible County budgets that address the structural deficit, systemic pension reform, and general spending restraints.
- Targeted economic development expenditures to attract new and retain existing businesses and residents, in order to sustain and grow the tax base (*e.g.*, expenditures to support the newly created Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation).
- Mandatory in-depth governmental analysis of the cost of compliance and fiscal impact on regulated parties prior to adoption of all proposed County legislation and regulations.
- Legislation and programs that support small businesses and non-profits, such as procurement reserves, redevelopment impact funds, and education.
- Repeal of legislation that directly or indirectly have adverse fiscal impact on businesses in the County.
- Promoting a diversity of business opportunities for employees of all ages, recognizing the positive effect that a diversity of employment opportunities provides for the County's long-term economic viability and vitality.

Land Use and Transportation

- Approval and ongoing support for master and minor sector plan amendments (*i.e.*, the Bethesda Downtown Plan, White Flint II, Westbard, and Rock Spring Park) and redevelopment proposals that foster transit-oriented development, bring new tax revenue to the County, and promote sustainability and smart growth principles.
- Support for a reality-based Subdivision Staging Policy, slated for adoption in 2016, to utilize transportation tests that are cogent to the community, reflect increased use of transit, and are focused on solving the identified problem(s) by effectively directing mitigation/funds.
- A comprehensive school capacity solution that ensures sufficient and realistic resources in a timely fashion within the County's Capital Improvements Program, and eliminates the potential for subdivision approval moratoriums.
- Short- and long-term improvements to Metro stations in the BCC Pike area including the Bethesda Metro Station through the Bethesda Metro Improvement Task Force in partnership with WMATA and other parties.
- Support for our area urban district services (*i.e.*, the Bethesda Urban Partnership and the White Flint Urban District).
- Protect and expand the Bethesda Circulator service and Ride-On bus routes to transit nodes and employment centers within the greater BCC region.
- Implement a Rapid Transit Vehicle (RTV) system, and collaborate with the County's Transportation Management Districts (TMDs) to promote considered approaches to bikeshare, telecommuting, transit ridership incentives, and other programs that help reduce vehicle trips.
- Accelerated construction of the State portion of Montrose Parkway (east of Rockville Pike to Veirs Mill Road).
- Improvements to technology and services for Parking Lot District (PLD) users and protection of the fiscal integrity of the Bethesda PLD.
- Continued independence of the County's TMDs, specifically Bethesda Transportation Solutions and the North Bethesda TMD, in recognition of the key roles they play in "branding" the areas that they serve.
- Reinvestment of fees and taxes generated in the Bethesda Urban District, including the Bethesda PLD, to improve and upgrade existing facilities and services including street lighting, streetscape, and pedestrian facilities.

Health, Education & Safety

- Support the Suburban Hospital campus enhancement project, to ensure continuation of quality health care in the region.
- Improving our community's public health and safety by restoring and maintaining budgetary resources allocated to our first responders, and preserving the significant contribution of volunteers in providing first-class fire, rescue, and EMS services.

Culture & Environment

- Legislative awareness of the fiscal challenges facing cultural arts organizations, including the need for sustained annual County government funding for them.
- Partnerships with Bethesda Green to promote sustainable business and living practices by providing education about eco-friendly programs, best practices, and business incentives.
- Support for public-private partnerships that encourage innovation in cultural arts and environmental practices.