



# THE GREATER BETHESDA CHAMBER of COMMERCE

Smart Business, Bright Future

## THE GREATER BETHESDA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE 2019-2020 ADVOCACY AGENDA

The Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce stands ready to collaborate and advocate based on the following principles:

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Advance systemic change at all levels of government to (i) foster a political and regulatory culture that recognizes the relationships between local business successes, both large and small, and the County's regional competitiveness; and (ii) support responsible fiscal policies with proactive planning and innovation.

### **LAND USE, TRANSPORTATION, AND HOUSING**

Increase growth and development around existing and planned Metrorail, Purple Line, and Rapid Transit Vehicle stations integrated with infrastructure and road projects to grow the tax base, attract new businesses and residents, reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicles and improve quality of life. Advocate for and support for government policies and incentives that are consistent with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Government's (MWCOG) Regional Housing Targets for Montgomery County, including: (a) the emphasis on creation of new housing that is located in Activity Centers or near high-capacity transit; and (b) creation of new housing that is affordable to households across a range of income levels.

### **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 Bethesda region can remain on the cutting edge of cultural enrichment and environmental awareness through novel and innovative partnerships and approaches.

## **2019-2020 ADVOCACY AGENDA FOR THE STATE OF MARYLAND**

### **Economic Development/Labor and Employment**

- Preemption: Montgomery County employers must come first and be put on a level playing field with all other businesses in the State by including preemption on all employment-related bills. This must be retroactive to previously passed local employment-related local laws.
- Employment related legislation enacted in Montgomery County should not be more burdensome on Montgomery County employers than any comparable Maryland statewide employment related legislation.
- State budget: Address our share of the structural deficit, systemic pension reform, and spending restraints. Increased focus on Montgomery County getting its fair share of the State budget.
- Montgomery County ABS: Remove Montgomery County's authority as the single wholesaler and predominant retailer of alcoholic beverages. Oppose any band aid efforts to enhance the ABS or increased unfair competition with local businesses.

### **Transportation**

- WMATA: Continued watchdog support for dedicated state funding for WMATA.
- I-270: Widening of I-270 including widening and re-design of the American Legion Bridge and explore alternatives
- Purple Line: Completion of the Purple Line light rail and trail
- Montrose Parkway: Accelerated construction of the State portion of Montrose Parkway east of Rockville Pike to Veirs Mill Road.
- SHA: Continue to make the State Highway Administration to be more accountable and responsive to needs throughout the County.
- Maryland Transportation Trust Fund: Oversight and vigilance of the Trust Fund to ensure that funds are directed, as appropriate, to the greater Bethesda community and Montgomery County.
- BRT: Support State funding for Montgomery County Bus Rapid Transit program.

### **Health, Education, and Safety**

- Maintenance of Effort: Reform the state's maintenance of effort (MOE) law to give Montgomery County more flexibility to address its fiscal situation and ensure that each county agency and department receives its necessary share of the annual budget.
- Kirwan Commission: Monitor the implementation of recommendations from the Kirwan Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education.
- School Construction-Increased Funding: The fair share for Montgomery County Schools construction must be emphasized, recognized and implemented.

## **2019-2020 ADVOCACY AGENDA FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY**

### **Economic Development/Labor and Employment**

- **County Budget**: Support a responsible County budget that address the structural deficit, systemic pension reform, and general spending restraints.
- **Employment related legislation** enacted in Montgomery County should not be more burdensome on Montgomery County employers than any comparable Maryland statewide employment related legislation.
- **Privatization of the wholesale and retail alcoholic beverage system** (*i.e.*, distribution and sale of beer, wine, and liquor to on- premise and off-premise licensees).
- **Liquor Licensing process**: Through privatization, reform the liquor licensing process to provide flexibility and better opportunities for licensees.
- **Enact Legislation**: Review and subsequently repeal legislation that directly or indirectly has an adverse fiscal impact on businesses in the County and puts them at a competitive disadvantage.
- **Economic Development**: Implement policies that encourage businesses to expand. 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 Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation and Worksource Montgomery).
- **Education/School Capacity**: A comprehensive longer-range school capacity solution that ensures sufficient and realistic resources to fund capacity-increasing school space in a timely fashion within the County's Capital Improvements Program, and eliminates the potential for subdivision approval moratoriums in neighborhoods impacted by aging out of population.
- **Marriott Headquarters**: Foster the imminent relocation of Marriott headquarters into Downtown Bethesda and identify their needs; help all to understand the positive impact and benefits this will have for the community.
- **Small Business Assistance**: Legislation and programs that support small businesses and non-profits, such as procurement reserves, redevelopment impact funds, and education.
- **Diversity of Business**: 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.
- **Rent Control**: Oppose any efforts to impose rent control in Montgomery County.

### **Land Use, Transportation and Housing**

- **Master/Minor Plans**: Approval and ongoing support for master and minor sector plan amendments and redevelopment/infill proposals that foster transit-oriented development, bring new tax revenue to the County, and promote sustainability and smart growth principles. Continue to identify and support immediate economic opportunities that could be the subject of minor masterplans in the work plan for the Planning Board. Closely follow the development of the new General Plan which is being updated after numerous years, replacing the 1964 Wedges and Corridor Plan.
- **Metro stations**: Short-and long-term improvements to Metro stations in the Greater Bethesda area including the Bethesda Metro Station through the Bethesda Metro Improvement Task Force in partnership with WMATA and other parties. Support efforts to fund and develop northern entrance at Pike District Metro Station.
- **Urban Districts/TMD's**: Support for our area urban district services (*i.e.* Bethesda Urban Partnership) and the creation of potential new Business Improvement Districts in growing districts (*i.e.*, Pike District, White Flint II, Friendship Heights, etc.). Support continued independence of the County's TMD's, specifically Bethesda Transportation Solutions and the North Bethesda TMD, in recognition of the key roles they play in "branding" the areas that they serve.
- **Bus Transit**: Protect and expand the Bethesda Circulator service and Ride-On bus routes to transit nodes and connections, and employment centers within the greater Bethesda region to maximize ridership.
- **BRT/RTV**: Work to implement and support a Rapid Transit Vehicle (RTV) system countywide within a dedicated lane, 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.
- **Montrose Parkway**: Accelerated construction of the State portion of Montrose Parkway (east of Rockville Pike to Veirs Mill Road).
- **PLD**: Improvements to technology and services for Parking Lot District (PLD) users and protection of the fiscal integrity of the Bethesda PLD.
- **TMDs**: 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.
- **BUP**: 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.
- **Housing**: Advocate for and support adoption of policies to increase production and preservation of all types of housing - including housing that is affordable to a range of incomes. Examples of policies to address our housing affordability crisis would be expedited approval processes, reduction of fees, property tax credits or abatements, use of public land for mixed income housing, greater commitment of County funds for those who need rental assistance.

### **Health, Education & Safety**

- **Suburban**: Support the Suburban Hospital campus enhancement project to its completion, to ensure continuation of quality health care in the region.
- **First Responders**: 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**

- **Arts Organizations**: Legislative awareness of the fiscal challenges facing cultural arts organizations, including the need for sustained annual State and County government funding for them.
- **Bethesda Green**: Partnerships with Bethesda Green to promote sustainable business and living practices by providing education about eco-friendly programs, best practices, and business incentives.
- **Green Business Certification**: Support for public-private partnerships that encourage innovation in cultural arts and environmental practices such as Montgomery County Green Certified Business program to enhance the quality of life in Greater Bethesda.