



THE GREATER BETHESDA
CHAMBER *of* COMMERCE



2022 ADVOCACY AGENDA

2022 ADVOCACY AGENDA - GUIDING PRINCIPLES

For over 95 years, The Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce has helped businesses thrive. Our Agenda is driven by our mission to build an environment that encourages business and the community to grow and prosper.

COVID-19

Continue to support reasonable measures that assist businesses and the general community in overcoming the negative impacts of the pandemic as well as protecting public health.

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 and the County's regional competitiveness; (ii) support responsible fiscal policies with initiative-taking planning and innovation; (iii) grow our tax and employment base; and (iv) recognize the importance of arts organizations and non-profits as economic engines.

TRANSPORTATION, LAND USE AND ENVIRONMENT

- ◆ Support all facets of our transportation infrastructure including roads, transit, bikeways, and pedestrian safety. Increase growth and development around existing and planned transit, 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.
- ◆ Support reasonable policies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance sustainability

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.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/ LABOR & EMPLOYMENT

- ◆ **Life Sciences, Biohealth, Quantum Computing:** Support efforts to sustain and attract employers to Montgomery County and the State.
- ◆ **Unemployment Insurance:** Support efforts to reform the unemployment insurance system by improving processes for employers and workers, as well as reduce the incidents of fraud. Oppose any efforts to place undue unemployment insurance burdens on employers, including burdens resulting from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ◆ **Child Care:** Support legislation that incentivizes the expansion of affordable, quality childcare options
- ◆ **Medical/Family Leave:** Oppose efforts to impose unreasonable, costly paid family and medical leave requirements on employers.
- ◆ **Preemption:** Ensure that Montgomery County employers 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.
- ◆ **State Budget:** Oppose any unnecessary expenditures that threaten the State's economic welfare. Increase focus on Montgomery County getting its fair share of the State budget.
- ◆ **Cannabis:** Track legislation regarding preserving and expanding the cannabis industry, including legalizing cannabis for adult use.
- ◆ **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 increase unfair competition with local businesses.



ENVIRONMENT

- ◆ Support actions to effectively reduce greenhouse gas emissions and preserve natural resources, without negatively impacting economic develop efforts.



TRANSPORTATION

- ◆ **WMATA:** Continue watchdog support for dedicated state funding for WMATA.
- ◆ **I-495/I-270 P3 Program:** Support the widening of I-495 up to I-270 and I-70, including re-design of the American Legion Bridge.
- ◆ **Purple Line:** Press for completion of the Purple Line light rail and trail.
- ◆ **Montrose Parkway:** Accelerate construction of the State portion of Montrose Parkway east of Rockville Pike to Veirs Mill Road.
- ◆ **SHA:** Continue to make the State Highway Administration more accountable and responsive to needs throughout the County including funding to realize the White Flint Sector Plan vision.
- ◆ **Maryland Transportation Trust Fund:** Ensure the integrity of the Transportation Trust Fund and support Montgomery County receiving its fair share of funding.
- ◆ **FLASH BRT:** Support State funding for Montgomery County FLASH BRT program.



EDUCATION

- ◆ **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.
- ◆ **School Construction-Increased Funding:** Promote fair share funding for Montgomery County School construction.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/ LABOR & EMPLOYMENT

- ◆ **County Budget:** Support a responsible County budget that recognizes the changing fiscal environment due to COVID and addresses structural deficit, systemic pension reform, and general spending restraints.
- ◆ **Employment related legislation:** Ensure that County laws and regulations are not more burdensome on County employers than comparable Maryland statewide requirements.
- ◆ **Economic Development:**
 - Support efforts to sustain and attract Life Sciences, Biohealth and Quantum Computing employers to Montgomery County.
 - Support policies and expenditures that attract new businesses, protect existing businesses, and encourage them to expand.
 - Support policies that support small businesses and non-profits, including assistance with COVID related economic challenges.
 - Oppose legislation that has an adverse fiscal impact on County businesses and puts them at a competitive disadvantage.
 - Establish a provisional Pike District pre-BID Public/Private entity to oversee branding, programming, maintenance and energizing public spaces.
 - Support reinvestment of fees and taxes generated in the Bethesda Urban District, including the Bethesda PLD, to improve facilities and services including street lighting, streetscape, and pedestrian facilities.
 - Support privatization of the wholesale and retail alcoholic beverage system and Liquor Licensing Process: (i.e., distribution and sale of beer, wine, and liquor to on- premise and off-premise licensees). Through privatization, reform the liquor licensing process to provide flexibility and better opportunities for licensees.



LAND USE

- ◆ Support land use policies that energize our economic base and attracts young workers to the County.
- ◆ Support efforts to sustain and attract employers such as the life science, biohealth and quantum computing industries to Montgomery County.
- ◆ Support the vision of Thrive 2050 and actively participate in its implementation.
- ◆ Advocate for policies that increase the supply and preserve existing housing affordable to a range of incomes including expedited approval processes, reduction of fees, property tax credits or abatements, use of public land for mixed income housing and greater commitment of County funds for those who need rental assistance.
- ◆ Oppose efforts to impose rent control. Adopt reasonable policies that balance the needs of property owners and tenants.
- ◆ Monitor legislation to implement the Climate Action Plan and oppose provisions placing an undue burden on business.



HEALTH & SAFETY

- ◆ Enact policies and programs that encourage businesses impacted by COVID-19 to remain viable and thriving while maintaining public safety.
- ◆ Improve 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.



TRANSPORTATION

- ◆ Advocate for County efforts to include Montrose Parkway (east of Rockville Pike to Veirs Mill Road) in the State priority list.
- ◆ Support the widening of I-495, including re-design of the American Legion Bridge.
- ◆ Collaborate with the County to reduce vehicle trips by promoting initiatives such as bikeshare, telecommuting, transit ridership incentives.
- ◆ **Transit:**
 - Promote improvements to greater Bethesda Metro stations, including a new northern entrance at North Bethesda station.
 - Protect and expand the Bethesda Circulator service and Ride-On bus routes to transit nodes, connections, and employment centers.
 - Support efforts to establish the Route 355 FLASH rapid transit within a dedicated lane.



ENVIRONMENT

- ◆ Closely follow efforts to implement the Climate Action Plan to avoid harmful impacts on the business community.
- ◆ Partner with Bethesda Green to promote sustainable business and living practices.



ARTS & CULTURE

- ◆ Continue to advocate for sustainable funding for arts and cultural organizations.