



2023 STATE & COUNTY ADVOCACY AGENDA

OUR 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.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Advance systemic change at all levels of government to:

- Foster a political and regulatory culture that recognizes the relationships between local business successes and the County's regional competitiveness.
- Support responsible fiscal policies with initiative-taking planning and innovation
- Grow our tax and employment base.
- Recognize the importance of arts organizations and non-profits as economic engines, acknowledging their need for ongoing pandemic recovery assistance.

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 Regional Housing Targets for Montgomery County. This includes the creation of new housing located in Activity Centers or near high-capacity transit and 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, retaining existing ones and maintaining the stature and quality of life for which the County and region have become well known.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

One of Montgomery County's strongest assets is our rich diversity. We are proud to welcome all to our community, regardless of age, race, gender, religion, ability, ethnicity and sexual orientation. It is vital that our residents, businesses and leaders embrace inclusion by respecting the rights and dignity of all people.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, LABOR & EMPLOYMENT

- **Life Sciences, Biohealth, Quantum Computing, Hospitality:** Support efforts to sustain and attract employers to Montgomery County and the State.
- **Child Care:** Ensure that the State oversees the successful implementation of laws that incentivize the expansion of affordable, quality childcare options.
- **Medical/Family Leave:** Advocate for an equitable approach to family and medical leave requirements that balance the needs and resources of employers and workers.
- **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 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 that establishes a regulatory and tax framework for an adult-use recreational cannabis use program.
- **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.

TRANSPORTATION

- **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.
- **Josiah Henson Parkway & Montrose Road:** Accelerate construction of the State portion of Josiah Henson Parkway east of Rockville Pike to Veirs Mill Road. Monitor plans to put Montrose Road on a "road diet."
- **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.
- **Transportation Trust Fund:** Ensure the integrity of the Transportation Trust Fund and support Montgomery County receiving its fair share of funding.
- **FLASH Rapid Transit:** Support State funding for Montgomery County's FLASH rapid transit system.

ENVIRONMENT

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

EDUCATION

- **Maintenance of Effort:** Support efforts to reform the State's MOE law to give Montgomery County more flexibility to address its fiscal situation.
- **School Construction - Increased Funding:** Promote fair share funding for Montgomery County School construction.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

- Support policies that promote and respect diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility.
- Support policies that protect people from hostility or discrimination.

ARTS & CULTURE

- Advocate for continued support from the County to aid in pandemic recovery. The arts are lagging significantly behind restaurants, hotels, sports, and other industries in audience recovery.
- Continue to advocate for sustainable funding for arts and cultural organizations.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, LABOR & EMPLOYMENT

County Budget

Support a responsible County budget that addresses structural deficit, systemic pension reform and general spending restraints.

Employment

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, hospitality and quantum computing employers to Montgomery County.
- Support policies and expenditures that attract new businesses, protect existing businesses and encourage them to expand.
- Support speed-to-market initiatives and zoning changes.
- Support policies that support small businesses and non-profits.
- Oppose legislation that has an adverse fiscal impact on County businesses and puts them at a competitive disadvantage.
- Establish and support the Pike District Partnership with continued funding.
- 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.
- Oppose efforts to approve Decarbonization legislation while the Public Service Commission is conducting its study on the statewide impact, including impact on the electric power grid.
- Support efforts to make 5G technology accessible to all residents and businesses.
- 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, attract young workers to the County and enhance speed-to-market.
- Support efforts to sustain and attract employers such as the life science, biohealth, hospitality and quantum computing industries to Montgomery County.
- Support the passage of Thrive 2050 in 2022 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.
- Monitor the County's use of housing assistance funds to ensure distribution to those in need.
- Adopt reasonable affordable housing initiatives that balance the needs of property owners and residents.

TRANSPORTATION

- Advocate for the inclusion of Montrose Parkway (east of Rockville Pike to Veirs Mill Road) in the State priorities.
- Support the widening of I-495, including re-design of the American Legion Bridge.
- Work with the County to promote initiatives such as bikeshare, telecommuting and transit ridership incentives.
- Promote improvements to Bethesda area Metro stations, including a new northern entrance at North Bethesda station.
- 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 system within a dedicated lane.

ENVIRONMENT

- Support reasonable policies that mitigate the impact of climate change on our County's economy.
- Support clean energy-related economic development opportunities and reasonable policies to diversify our economic base.
- Monitor legislation to implement the Climate Action Plan and oppose provisions placing an undue burden on business.
- Oppose efforts to approve Decarbonization legislation while the Public Service Commission is conducting its study on the statewide impact, including impact on the electric power grid.
- Partner with Bethesda Green to promote sustainable business and living practices.

HEALTH & SAFETY

- Restore and maintain budgetary resources allocated to our first responders, and preserve the significant contribution of volunteers in providing first-class fire, rescue and EMS services.
- Work with District Commanders and partners to discuss crime prevention and share best practices with our community, including making suggestions to meet the needs of the business community.
- Advocate for new technology (cameras or other deterrents) as an added public safety investigative tool at no cost, benefitting all businesses and residents.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

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ARTS & CULTURE

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