

MONTGOMERY COUNTY STORMWATER PARTNERS NETWORK

www.stormwaterpartnersmoco.net

Marc Elrich, County Executive
Andrew Kleine, Chief Administrative Officer
Montgomery County
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Executive Elrich and Mr. Kleine,

December 17, 2018

The Transition Team's Greener County Group was tasked with developing strategies on three key issues: **Climate Change, Recycling, and Code Enforcement**. We write today on a fourth issue: **Clean Water**, which connects with all three of these priorities and is second only to solid waste in the DEP budget. The attached Clean Water Blueprint identifies important steps necessary to improve water quality in Montgomery County, and to provide multiple co-benefits while addressing the climate crisis. We hereby request your consideration and inclusion of this Blueprint as an additional element of your transition planning.

The Clean Water Blueprint was created by the Montgomery County Stormwater Partners Network (SWPN), a countywide coalition of 36 environmental, watershed, and civic groups formed in 2005. We work throughout Montgomery County and its municipalities, and at the state level, with stakeholders responsible for environmental management to advocate for clean water, restore our watersheds, and connect communities to their backyard creeks and streams. Learn more about the SWPN at www.stormwaterpartnersmoco.net.

Representatives of SWPN member groups participated in the Transition Team, serving on the Greener County, Growing Economy, and Thriving Youth and Families sub-teams. The sub-teams brainstormed strategies to achieve pre-set goals and indicators, and groups then ranked the impact and feasibility of each candidate strategy. We used the Transition Team's method to craft the attached Clean Water Blueprint, which includes five strategies:

1. Achieve the goals of the MS4 stormwater permit;
2. Protect clean drinking water;
3. Increase forest and tree canopy cover in areas targeted to provide benefits for water, climate, and equity;
4. Reduce pollution from road de-icing; and
5. Support deeper, broader interagency cooperation to more cost-effectively achieve the goals of the Clean Water Blueprint.

We look forward to discussing this Clean Water Blueprint with you, and to fruitful collaboration for clean water in the coming years.

Yours for healthy waterbodies,

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And the undersigned organizations and individuals:

Audubon Naturalist Society

Clean Water Action

Conservation Montgomery

Friends of Sligo Creek

Little Falls Watershed Alliance

Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake

Montgomery Countryside Alliance

Montgomery County Group of the Maryland Sierra Club

Muddy Branch Alliance

Neighbors of Northwest Branch

Potomac Conservancy

Rock Creek Conservancy

Safe Grow Montgomery

Watts Branch Watershed Alliance

Joseph Horgan

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Cc: A Greener County Outcome Transition Team members

Attachment: Clean Water Blueprint for Montgomery County

Clean Water Blueprint for Montgomery County

Submitted 12/17/18 To Executive Marc Elrich Transition Team By The Montgomery County Stormwater Partners Network

GOAL: Clean Water for All: Healthy Waterbodies and Clean, Safe Drinking Water

INDICATOR: Number of small streams/subwatersheds rated Good or Excellent in the Index of Biotic Integrity (Fish and Benthic macroinvertebrates)

STRATEGIES: Implement stormwater permit; Protect drinking water; Support tree, forest programs; Reduce road salt; Support interagency cooperation

<u>STRATEGY</u>	<u>METRICS</u>
<p>Achieve the goals of the MS4 stormwater permit <i>Key actions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully implement DEP commitment to 60% green infrastructure for stormwater retrofits • Fully staff DEP’s RainScapes, Tree Montgomery, Green Streets, other green infrastructure programs • Build on existing watershed plans to update them • Defend and implement Healthy Lawns Act – Organic Lawn Care; promote compost amendment to soil • Improve public communication about the benefits and justification for the Water Quality Protection Charge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percent of Impervious acres (IAs) served with green infrastructure retrofits compared with total IAs served with any retrofits (annually, more is better); • Acres of lawn, landscaping converted to organic care; • Public support for the Water Quality Protection Charge and green infrastructure projects.
<p>Protect clean drinking water <i>Key actions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-affirm support for Montgomery County General Plan – Agricultural Reserve and Residential Wedge; • Implement Regenerative Agriculture programs • Conduct watershed modeling to compare runoff and sediment loads in green vs gray scenarios for watersheds upstream from the WSSC water intake • Implement science-based imperviousness caps in Ag Reserve and rural zones served by Sole Source Aquifer • Conduct outreach and education to well and septic system owners in the Ag Reserve and other low-density areas • Adopt organic turf management protocols for all public playing fields; eliminate use of Artificial Turf fields 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and percentage of small streams and subwatersheds rated Good or Excellent on the IBI in the Ag Reserve and Residential Wedges; • Well water indicators; • Acres devoted to Regenerative Agriculture.

<u>STRATEGY</u>	<u>METRICS</u>
<p>Increase forest and canopy cover in areas targeted to provide benefits for water, climate, and equity <i>Key actions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Step up proactive tree and forest protection and reforestation on public and private lands (for lands not subject to development applications) • Support stronger tree and forest conservation and mitigation laws and incentives (state and local levels) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree Canopy and Forest cover levels (total acres and percentage of area) in each major watershed and countywide, and trend over time (annually, more is better); • Number of new trees planted.
<p>Reduce pollution from road de-icing <i>Key actions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement changes to reduce quantity of chloride/halide roadway de-icing chemicals • Shift to water-friendly de-icing • Monitor, report on stream and well water chloride levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chloride levels in local streams, wells.
<p>Support deeper, broader interagency cooperation to more cost-effectively achieve the goals of the Clean Water Blueprint <i>Key actions/examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MC-DOT to more-closely collaborate with DEP to integrate the Drainage Maintenance and Request programs into Green Streets • Ofc. of Agriculture to cooperate with DEP to implement compost amendment to soil/organic lawn care • DEP to enable Parks to contribute cost-effective green stormwater retrofits for MS4 permit • DEP to collaborate with WSSC for watershed sediment modeling and monitoring in watersheds that supply drinking water; reduce stormwater pollution loads to drinking water, and stormwater damage to water infrastructure. • DPS and Planning to collaborate to fulfill Environmental Site Design goals and requirements and environmental goals in Master and Sector Plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether staff performance plans include interagency cooperation outcomes, written agreements (e.g. interagency MOUs); • Coordination of agencies in conducting stream restoration and watershed restoration projects.