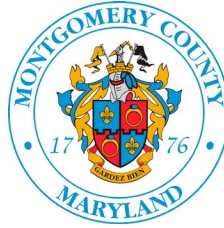


NATALI FANI-GONZÁLEZ
COUNCILMEMBER, DISTRICT 6

100 Maryland Ave
Rockville, MD 20850

CHAIR
Economic Development Committee (ECON)

MEMBER
Planning, Housing and Parks Committee (PHP)



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL

ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

May 3, 2024

To: Councilmembers
From: Councilmember Natali Fani-González
Re: Update on Overnight Farm Stays ZTA 23-09

Last November, I introduced Zoning Text Amendment 23-09 that allows interested farmers to host overnight farm stays as part of their agritourism activities. For years, some local farmers have expressed serious interest in expanding their agritourism business. As you know, prior to serving on the Council, I served on the Montgomery County Planning Board and worked on the [2019 Agritourism Study](#). A main goal of that report was to “support agritourism activities with a direct relationship to agriculture, to facilitate preservation of farming, farmland and rural open space.”

This ZTA is in response to requests from local farmers to allow overnight stays. You can find letters of support at the end of this memo.

The legislation - with the amendments I am putting forward after months of work with local farmers - provides important guardrails to ensure that farming is still the primary use of the property and that the agritourism and overnight stays are secondary. The legislation sets reasonable limits on the size and scope of the activities to keep it compatible with the rural nature of the area.

Any proposed changes to the zoning of the Agricultural Reserve merit robust scrutiny to ensure that we are benefiting this amazing resource, without unintended negative consequences. That’s why, following the public hearing in January 2024, I requested that

the Planning, Housing, and Parks (PHP) Committee not schedule a worksession on ZTA 23-09 until the summer, to allow the time and space for meaningful dialogue on the proposal.

To that end, I have listened to and met with those who have expressed concern. I have carefully reviewed the public hearing record, the Planning Board's recommendations, and the recent Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) recommendation. The result is a series of amendments (below) with the goal of addressing concerns with overnight farm stays and providing appropriate guardrails on the use while still ensuring the use is commercially viable.

AMENDMENTS:

1. Create a new conditional use "Overnight Farm Stays" under "Lodging"(3.5.6), where the Bed and Breakfast use lives
 1. Remove all changes to the Farming (3.2.6) definition
2. Require that any structure used for overnight stays must be easily removable without permanent foundations (ie. tents, yurts, tiny homes on wheels, RVs, etc..)
3. Set the maximum square footage of each structure to 400 sq. ft. (just as we have in Montgomery County park land at Little Bennett Regional Park).
4. Establish a tiering system for the minimum site size and number of structures allowed
 1. 0 - 2.9 acres: Not allowed
 2. 3 - 4.9 acres : 2 structures allowed
 3. 5 - 25 acres: 5 structures allowed
 4. 25+ acres: 10 structures allowed
5. Set a maximum lot coverage for the overnight farm stays to 10%
6. Require 100ft setbacks from adjacent properties not part of the farm.

The use would retain the following key provisions:

1. Retain the requirement that the use have "accessory agricultural education and tourism activities" and satisfy the requirements of Section 3.2.6.F.
2. Allow for the provision of sanitation and shower facilities, subject to DPS approval

A clean version of the amended legislation is appended, followed by the letters of support from local farmers and tourism data.

For background: In 2022, the Maryland General Assembly passed [SB296](#) that amended the state definition of agritourism to now include "incidental outdoor stays" and "camping." Like the Maryland Farm Bureau and other agricultural groups across the state that testified in strong support of SB296, I believe we must lean forward on agritourism and value-added agriculture to increase the financial sustainability of our rural communities.

Indeed, overnight farm stays are a big win for the rural economy *and* the Agricultural Reserve:

- As the price of land, materials, and labor continues to increase, overnight farm stays allow Montgomery County Farmers to adopt a new and diverse revenue stream to maintain profitability and viability.
- Overnight farm stays as part of agritourism directly support other nearby small businesses and farms. In testimony before the General Assembly, HipCamp noted, “each camper who travels through Hipcamp spends \$300 at local restaurants, cafes, gear shops, farm stands, and more, providing sustainable revenue for small businesses and stimulating the local economy with tourism dollars.”
- Agritourism and overnight farm stays expose families, and especially children, to the County’s agricultural bounty and heritage. This not only helps maintain the political consensus around the Ag Reserve itself, but it also helps build a pipeline to the County’s next generation of farmers.

Attachments

- Legislative text with proposed amendments
- Testimony in support
- Tourism Data

Councilmember Fani-Gonzalez's Proposed Amendments to ZTA 23-09

1 **Sec. 1. DIVISION 59-3.1 is amended as follows:**

2 **Division 3.1. Use Table**

3 * * *

4 **Section 3.1.6. Use Table**

5 The following Use Table identifies uses allowed in each zone. Uses may be
6 modified in Overlay zones under Division 4.9.

DRAFT

Councilmember Fani-Gonzalez's Proposed Amendments to ZTA 23-09

7

USE OR USE GROUP	Definition s and Standards	Ag	Rural Residential		Residential													Commercial / Residential			Employment				Industrial		
					Residential Detached								Residential Townhouse			Residential Multi-Unit											
					AR	R	RC	RNC	RE- 2	RE- 2C	RE-1	R- 200	R-90	R-60	R- 40	TLD	TMD	THD	R-30	R-20	R-10	CRN	CRT	CR	GR	NR	LSC
AGRICULTURAL																											
* * *																											
Farming	3.2.6	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P															
* * *																											
COMMERCIAL																											
* * *																											
LODGING	3.3.3																										
* * *																											
<u>Overnight Farm Stay</u>	<u>3.2.10.D.</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>C</u>																
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Councilmember Fani-Gonzalez's Proposed Amendments to ZTA 23-09

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Sec. 2. DIVISION 59-3.2 is amended as follows:

Division 3.2. Agricultural Uses

* * *

Section 3.2.6. Farming

Defined

Farming means the practice of agriculture on a property, and any associated buildings. Agriculture means the business, science, and art of cultivating and managing the soil; composting, growing, harvesting, and selling crops, and the products of forestry, horticulture, and hydroponics; breeding, raising, managing, or selling livestock, including horses, poultry, fish, game, and fur-bearing animals; dairying, beekeeping, and similar activities; and equestrian events and activities. Agriculture includes processing on the farm of an agricultural product to prepare the product for market and may cause a change in the natural form or state of the product. Farming includes the following accessory uses:

* * *

F. Accessory agricultural education and tourism activities conducted as a part of a farm's regular operations, with emphasis on hands-on experiences and events that foster increased knowledge of agriculture, including cultivation methods, animal care, water conservation, Maryland's farming history, the importance of eating healthy, and locally grown foods. Allowed activities include corn mazes, hay rides, [[incidental outdoor stays,]] and educational tours, classes, and workshops. [The maximum footprint for any structure and the total footprint of all structures primarily used for education or tourism is limited to 10% of the total footprint square footage of all structures on the site used for agriculture.] The maximum footprint for any structure and the total footprint of all structures primarily used for education or tourism is

35 limited to 10% of the total footprint square footage of all structures on the
36 site used for agriculture, not including any structure used for Overnight
37 Farm Stay under Section 3.2.10.D. The property must have DPS approved
38 sanitation facilities for this accessory use.

39 **[[G. Incidental outdoor stays accessory to Farming are not a Short-Term**
40 **Residential Rental under Section 3.3.3.I. Incidental outdoor stays must**
41 **satisfy the following standards:**

- 42 1. Accessory agricultural education and tourism activities are conducted
43 as part of the farm’s regular operations and satisfy the requirements of
44 Section 3.2.6.F.
- 45 2. Incidental outdoor stays must be in separate structures from the
46 primary residence.
- 47 3. No cooking facilities are permitted within the same structure as the
48 sleeping quarters.
- 49 4. The maximum number of structures permitted for incidental outdoor
50 stays is 10 structures.
- 51 5. The maximum number of occupants per structure who are 18 years or
52 older is 2 persons.
- 53 6. Incidental outdoor stays are permitted a maximum of 4 days per
54 week.]]

55 * * *

56 **Section 3.5.6. Lodging**

57 **A. Defined, In General**

58 Lodging means a building, dwelling unit, or a portion of a dwelling unit used
59 for the short-term overnight accommodation of paying guests.

60 * * *

61 **D. Overnight Farm Stay**

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1. Defined

Overnight Farm Stay means a moveable structure intended for overnight accommodation by paying guests. A moveable structure includes a recreational vehicle, building on wheels, or membrane structure such as a tent or yurt.

2. Use Standards

a. Where Overnight Farm Stay is allowed as a limited use, it may be permitted by the Hearing Examiner under all applicable limited use standards and under Section 7.3.1, Conditional Use, and must satisfy the following standards:

i. Accessory agricultural education and tourism activities must be conducted as part of the property's regular operations and satisfy the requirements of Section 3.2.6.F.

ii. The minimum size of the property where the Overnight Farm Stay is located is 3 acres. The maximum site area for all Overnight Farm Stays on a site is 10% of the property.

iii. The minimum setback from any lot or parcel that is not part of the property is 100 feet.

iv. The maximum size of each Overnight Farm Stay is a gross floor area of 400 square feet.

v. No cooking facilities are permitted within an Overnight Farm Stay, unless it is a recreational vehicle.

vi. The maximum number of Overnight Farm Stays per site, including any separate structures used for sanitation, is as follows:

From: [Andrew Baker](#)
To: [Andrew Baker](#)
Subject: Support for ZTA 23-09 WITH REVISIONS
Date: Saturday, April 27, 2024 1:11:26 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Dear Councilmember,

I am Drew Baker from Burnt Hill Farm in Clarksburg. Since acquiring 117 acres in 2016, my sisters and I have developed a multifaceted farming operation that stands as a beacon of agricultural innovation and sustainability in Maryland. Our farm includes 50,000 grapevines, woodland pigs, heritage grains, log-grown mushrooms, and an apiary. We're deeply committed to regenerative practices and farmland preservation.

In 2018, I presented a vision for immersive farm experiences to the County Council, proposing the establishment of eco-friendly A-Frame cabins on our property. This initiative aligns with the goals of ZTA 23-09, aimed at enhancing agritourism, increasing lodging accessibility, boosting the local economy, reducing nighttime driving, and creating new revenue streams for farms like ours.

The recently proposed amendments to ZTA 23-09 have adequately addressed the initial concerns raised by the agricultural community, laying a solid foundation for future growth. As a first-generation farm that has already invested tremendously and created numerous jobs, we are poised to expand further. With the Council's continued support for agritourism, we anticipate creating an additional 15-20 full-time jobs.

I urge the Council to weigh the critiques of ZTA 23-09 critically. Often, the voices of a few can overshadow the broader interests and needs of the community.

Thank you for considering my perspective. I am available for further discussion and eager to contribute to our community's prosperity.

Many blessings,

Drew Baker

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Ashli Johnson](#)
Subject: Support of ZTA 23-09 Amendments
Date: Monday, April 29, 2024 1:14:54 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Dear Councilmember,

I am Ashli Johnson, one of the co-owners of Burnt Hill Farm in Clarksburg. Our family is deeply committed to sustainable farming practices, caring for our land, and raising our children on this property to leave a lasting generational impact in our community.

Our journey at Burnt Hill Farm has highlighted the transformative power of diversified agribusiness in Maryland. The proposal of ZTA 23-09 aligns with our goals to enhance agritourism opportunities, increase lodging accessibility in the Ag Reserve, boost the local economy, reduce nighttime driving, and create new revenue streams for farms like ours.

We believe the recent amendments to ZTA 23-09 have responded thoughtfully to initial feedback and emphasize the broader benefits it offers our community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Warmly,
Ashli Johnson

--

ashli johnson
co-founder + creator
oldwestminster.com

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Friedson's Office, Councilmember](#); [Katz's Office, Councilmember](#); [Sayles's Office, Councilmember](#); [Balcombe's Office, Councilmember](#); [Glass's Office, Councilmember](#); [Fani-Gonzalez's Office, Councilmember](#); [Luedtke's Office, Councilmember](#); [Jawando's Office, Councilmember](#); [Stewart's Office, Councilmember](#); [Mink's Office, Councilmember](#); [Albornoz's Office, Councilmember](#)
Subject: ZTA 23-09 Revisions - LETTER OF SUPPORT
Date: Thursday, April 25, 2024 3:03:20 PM
Attachments: [NFG One Pager on Draft Amendments 4-24-24 v2.pdf](#)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Greetings Councilmembers,

I have been a part of the ZTA 23-09 conversation even before it was drafted when our small organic farm's Hipcamp was shut down two summers ago.

Since that time, I have spoken with many of the opposers (trying to convince me to withdraw my support) and supporters of this ZTA and can objectively conclude that the predominant reasons for groups who are opposing this ZTA are aesthetic ones; preventing semi-permanent structures on estate-esque farms in the Ag Reserve.

I am convinced through in-person meetings and email communications, that Councilmember Fani-Gonzalez and her staff have done their due diligence to draft the language and stipulations in her revision below to make it sufficiently inclusive yet regulatory enough to prevent infractions from occurring. The revisions address each of the objections I have heard over the past 6 months by setting a sq ft maximum, requiring permits from DPS, establishing a 100' boundary setback and reducing the number of structures allowed based on the size of the farm. Most importantly, the draft revision allows MoCo's small organic farmers like myself to supplement a portion of our meager income while offering much needed fun and educational nature/farm immersions to the general public. My son and I were earning \$40 a tour and having a blast entertaining families and friend groups on their weekend getaways to our farm!

Thank you for continuing to push past groups that are essentially trying to filibuster this much needed and long-awaited ZTA.

Regards,
Bridgette and Jesse Downer



[REDACTED]
[website](#) | [email](#)

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Friedson's Office,](#) [Glass's Office, Councilmember;](#) [Fani-Gonzalez's Office, Councilmember;](#) [Luedtke's Office, Councilmember;](#) [Jawando's Office, Councilmember;](#) [Stewart's Office, Councilmember;](#) [Mink's Office, Councilmember;](#) [Albornoz's Office, Councilmember](#)
Cc: [Heyboer, Tommy](#)
Subject: Notes on ZTA 23-09
Date: Wednesday, May 1, 2024 4:37:52 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Dear Councilmembers,

My name is Suriya Kandaswamy - my family has a farm in Dickerson on the agricultural reserve, and I've been following the discussions on ZTA 23-09 closely. I'll start by saying that my primary loyalty is to the preservation of the agricultural reserve as a bastion of local agriculture and environmental stewardship in Montgomery County and the DMV. Farming is a difficult and hardly lucrative occupation, and I think it's important to give our local farmers additional avenues of income through agritourism that is strictly tied to and conditional on agricultural activity. This also provides our local population the means of experiencing and understanding the hard work that goes into being good farmers and stewards of the land - something they don't get from weekly visits to the grocery store.

I think the proposal and amendments on this ZTA are a welcome step forward, but I urge that caution is exercised in the implementation and language of the amendment. I'd love to see a more developed understanding of what the majority of farmers want and need out of this amendment. A report with examples of implementations proposed by actual farmers who would take advantage of this amendment would be a step in the right direction. I, for example, have reservations about disallowing all permanent structures for agritourism stay purposes, and also believe that 10% land usage of a property is far too high for non-agricultural purposes on agriculturally-zoned land.

All this to say that I advocate for the further workshopping and discussion of this amendment with the people it's meant to benefit. I'm a numbers person, and I'd love to see the data that supports individual provisions in the amendment. I would discourage a complete withdrawal because there has already been progress made in discussing and modifying this ZTA, and it would be a shame to see that undone. What I would like is to see more work done ensuring safeguards against abuse, protection for agriculture and farmers in Montgomery County, and a better understanding of the economic needs and goals of those who could take advantage of such a provision.

Thank you for considering,
Suriya Kandaswamy

Heyboer, Tommy

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, May 3, 2024 1:54 PM
To: Friedson's Office, Councilmember; Katz's Office, Councilmember; Sayles's Office, Councilmember; Balcombe's Office, Councilmember; Glass's Office, Councilmember; Fani-Gonzalez's Office, Councilmember; Luedtke's Office, Councilmember; Jawando's Office, Councilmember; Stewart's Office, Councilmember; Mink's Office, Councilmember; Albornoz's Office, Councilmember
Subject: Overnight Farm Stays
Follow Up Flag: Flag for follow up
Flag Status: Completed

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Dear Councilmembers,

As a landowner and businessowner in the County's Agricultural Reserve, I am writing to lend my support to ZTA 23-09 with the new amendments proposed by Councilmember Fani-González.

My family owns and operates Aix La Chapelle Farm and Landmade Brewery in Poolesville, MD. These businesses have been met with strong support from the local community and have contributed to what makes Poolesville and the Agricultural Reserve great. Our success demonstrates that agritourism and value-added agriculture have a bright future in the County. But, I also believe that we cannot rest on our laurels and that we need to lay the groundwork for the next chapter.

That is why I was excited to participate in early discussions about prospect of allowing overnight farm stays. I believe that a carefully calibrated approach to overnight farm stays with sufficient guardrails would be a welcome addition to the agritourism landscape and something that I would strongly consider incorporating into our business. I have worked closely with Councilmember Fani-González and other interested farmers on crafting amendments that both respond to the legitimate concerns about size, scale, and impact but also provide a pathway to a business model that makes sense.

I urge the Council the continue moving ZTA 23-09 forward.

Sincerely,

P. Joy Siegel and Jon M. Siegel

Aix La Chapelle Farm
Mid Atlantic Antiques Festival
Old Line Market
Landmade Brewery

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Friedson's Office, Councilmember](#); [Katz's Office, Councilmember](#); [Sayles's Office, Councilmember](#); [Balcombe's Office, Councilmember](#); [Glass's Office, Councilmember](#); [Fani-Gonzalez's Office, Councilmember](#); [Luedtke's Office, Councilmember](#); [Jawando's Office, Councilmember](#); [Stewart's Office, Councilmember](#); [Mink's Office, Councilmember](#); [Albornoz's Office, Councilmember](#)
Subject: Support our Family Farm
Date: Saturday, April 27, 2024 7:04:40 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Greetings FRIENDS,

I or someone I know has benefitted in some way from the Chicken of the Woods Permaculture Farm, the reclaimed derelict Higgins' farmstead in the heart of Darnestown, now loved and worked by the Downer Family for over a decade.

I or someone I know have/will benefit from an overnight farm stay in support of MoCo's thriving fresh and local food or other agritourism-worthy endeavor.

Therefore, I fully support the draft revisions submitted by Councilmember Natali Fani-Gonzalez. She and her staff have gone above and beyond the call of duty.

I strongly encourage you to proceed with voting in the Revised ZTA 23-09, allowing overnight stays with farm activities with the promised and now proposed regulatory revisions such as a foundation-free structural sq ft maximum, permit requirements from DPS, boundary setbacks and reducing the number of structures allowed based on the size of the farm.

Sincerely,

Tes Baltazar

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Friedson's Office, Councilmember](#); [Katz's Office, Councilmember](#); [Sayles's Office, Councilmember](#); [Balcombe's Office, Councilmember](#); [Glass's Office, Councilmember](#); [Fani-Gonzalez's Office, Councilmember](#); [Luedtke's Office, Councilmember](#); [Jawando's Office, Councilmember](#); [Stewart's Office, Councilmember](#); [Mink's Office, Councilmember](#); [Albornoz's Office, Councilmember](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Chicken of the Woods Farm Needs Your Support
Date: Friday, April 26, 2024 3:40:25 PM

I am a big fan of my friend Bridgette Downer and the work she does at Chicken of the Woods Permaculture Farm, the reclaimed derelict Higgins' farmstead in the heart of Darnestown, now loved and worked by the Downer Family for over a decade.

Someone I know will benefit from an overnight farm stay in support of MoCo's thriving fresh and local food or other agritourism-worthy endeavor.

Therefore, I fully support the draft revisions submitted by Councilmember Natali Fani-Gonzalez. She and her staff have gone above and beyond the call of duty.

I strongly encourage you to proceed with voting in the Revised ZTA 23-09, allowing overnight stays with farm activities with the promised and now proposed regulatory revisions such as a foundation-free structural sq ft maximum, permit requirements from DPS, boundary setbacks and reducing the number of structures allowed based on the size of the farm.

Kindest regards,

Simone Fary
Nerds Make Media, LLC
[REDACTED]



April 25, 2024

Councilmember Natalie Fani-Gonzalez
Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Re: ZTA 23-09

Dear Councilmember Fani-Gonzalez:

I have been a resident in Montgomery County for over forty years where I live, own a business and invest in the community. In that time, I have observed and appreciated the county's efforts to preserve and regulate agricultural uses. I am familiar with the organic farming activities of some of the residents and fully support your proposed amendments to ZTA 23-09. The Montgomery County community will benefit from the enactment of this text as it will: (i) assist these farmers in sustaining their important contribution to the health of the community under challenging circumstances, (ii) provide food security for disadvantaged citizens and (iii) by providing interesting and healthy recreational resources for the entire community.

I have seen one of these small organic farms first hand, and it is a favorite experience for our children and grandchildren who are also Montgomery County residents. I agree that your proposed amendments balance the interests of the stake holders thoughtfully and I urge you to pass this important legislation. Thank you for your efforts for the citizens of Montgomery County, MD.

Respectfully,

Martin Schnider

From: MCCouncil@App.MontgomeryCountyMD.gov
To: [Fani-Gonzalez's Office, Councilmember](#)
Subject: Revised ZTA 23-09 - Submitted By: Sally Zimmermann - (Council Webform)
Date: Saturday, April 27, 2024 5:35:16 PM

Constituent Information:

Name: Sally Zimmermann
[REDACTED]

Offices Contacted: Council President, Councilmember Alborno, Councilmember Balcombe, Councilmember Fani-Gonzalez, Councilmember Friedson, Councilmember Glass, Councilmember Jawando, Councilmember Katz, Councilmember Luedtke, Councilmember Mink, Councilmember Sayles, Councilmember Stewart

Topic: General

Issue:

I have toured and attended work parties at Chicken of the Woods Permaculture Farm in Gaithersburg, MD. Bridgette has taken best practices from the permaculture world and is applying them. Permaculture is a philosophy of working with, rather than against nature. It involves earth care, people care and fair shares.

It's amazing what Bridgette has accomplished. To have a local, resilient food system and be truly sustainable, we need more farms like Bridgette's. We also need to allow farms like Bridgette's to be learning centers for others. Regulations are needed that support small sustainable farmers.

I fully support the draft revisions submitted by Council member Natali Fani-Gonzalez. She and her staff have gone beyond their due diligence. I ask that you please proceed with voting in the Revised ZTA 23-09, allowing overnight stays with farm activities with the promised regulatory revisions such as a foundation-free structural sq ft maximum, permit requirements from DPS, boundary setbacks and reducing the number of structures allowed based on the size of the farm.

Thank you for your time and attention to the matter,

Sally Zimmermann
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Friedson's Office, Councilmember](#); [Katz's Office, Councilmember](#); [Sayles's Office, Councilmember](#); [Balcombe's Office, Councilmember](#); [Glass's Office, Councilmember](#); [Fani-Gonzalez's Office, Councilmember](#); [Luedtke's Office, Councilmember](#); [Jawando's Office, Councilmember](#); [Stewart's Office, Councilmember](#); [Mink's Office, Councilmember](#); [Albornoz's Office, Councilmember](#)
Subject: Revised ZTA 23-09
Date: Monday, April 29, 2024 12:34:53 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Dear Councilmember,

My family has greatly benefitted from the Chicken of the Woods Permaculture Farm, the reclaimed derelict Higgins' farmstead in the heart of Darnestown, now loved and worked by the Downer Family for over a decade. My children, husband, and I have learned many skills that we are implementing in starting our own farm. We have had experiences under the leadership of the Downer family that are truly one-of-a-kind.

My family and many friends of mine would benefit from an overnight farm stay in support of MoCo's thriving fresh and local food or other agritourism-worthy endeavor.

Therefore, I fully support the draft revisions submitted by Councilmember Natali Fani-Gonzalez. She and her staff have gone above and beyond the call of duty.

I strongly encourage you to proceed with voting in the Revised ZTA 23-09, allowing overnight stays with farm activities with the promised and now proposed regulatory revisions such as a foundation-free structural sq ft maximum, permit requirements from DPS, boundary setbacks and reducing the number of structures allowed based on the size of the farm.

Sincerely,

Jessica Lynn Dixon
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Friedson's Office, Councilmember](#); [Katz's Office, Councilmember](#); [Sayles's Office, Councilmember](#); [Balcombe's Office, Councilmember](#); [Glass's Office, Councilmember](#); [Fani-Gonzalez's Office, Councilmember](#); [Luedtke's Office, Councilmember](#); [Jawando's Office, Councilmember](#); [Stewart's Office, Councilmember](#); [Mink's Office, Councilmember](#); [Albornoz's Office, Councilmember](#)
Subject: Revised ZTA 23-09
Date: Thursday, April 25, 2024 5:49:11 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

I have benefitted from the Chicken of the Woods Permaculture Farm [the reclaimed derelict Higgins' farmstead in the heart of Darnestown, now loved and worked by the Downer Family for over a decade] and knowing their love of sustainable agriculture, I support the direction they are taking the farm. I am certain that others will benefit from an overnight farm stay there and their stay will aid in sustaining and expanding Montgomery County's fresh and local food industry, as well as other agratourism-worthy endeavors.

Therefore, I fully support the draft revisions submitted by Councilmember Natali Fani-Gonzalez. I strongly encourage you to proceed with voting in the Revised ZTA 23-09, allowing overnight stays with farm activities with the promised - and now proposed - regulatory revisions such as a foundation-free structural sq ft maximum, permit requirements from DPS, boundary setbacks, and reducing the number of structures allowed based on the size of the farm.

Sincerely,

Parrie Henderson-O'Keefe

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Friedson's Office, Councilmember](#); [Katz's Office, Councilmember](#); [Sayles's Office, Councilmember](#); [Balcombe's Office, Councilmember](#); [Glass's Office, Councilmember](#); [Fani-Gonzalez's Office, Councilmember](#); [Luedtke's Office, Councilmember](#); [Jawando's Office, Councilmember](#); [Stewart's Office, Councilmember](#); [Mink's Office, Councilmember](#); [Albornoz's Office, Councilmember](#)
Subject: Revised ZTA 23-09: Supporting A Family Farm
Date: Thursday, April 25, 2024 7:56:15 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

I or someone I know has benefitted in some way from the Chicken of the Woods Permaculture Farm, the reclaimed derelict Higgins' farmstead in the heart of Darnestown, now loved and worked by the Downer Family for over a decade.

I or someone I know have/will benefit from an overnight farm stay in support of MoCo's thriving fresh and local food or other agritourism-worthy endeavor.

Therefore, I fully support the draft revisions submitted by Councilmember Natali Fani-Gonzalez. She and her staff have gone above and beyond the call of duty.

I strongly encourage you to proceed with voting in the Revised ZTA 23-09, allowing overnight stays with farm activities with the promised and now proposed regulatory revisions such as a foundation-free structural sq ft maximum, permit requirements from DPS, boundary setbacks and reducing the number of structures allowed based on the size of the farm.

Sincerely,

Alexandra Goffin

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Friedson's Office, Councilmember](#); [Katz's Office, Councilmember](#); [Sayles's Office, Councilmember](#); [Balcombe's Office, Councilmember](#); [Glass's Office, Councilmember](#); [Fani-Gonzalez's Office, Councilmember](#); [Luedtke's Office, Councilmember](#); [Jawando's Office, Councilmember](#); [Stewart's Office, Councilmember](#); [Mink's Office, Councilmember](#); [Albornoz's Office, Councilmember](#)
Subject: Support for Chicken of the Woods Permaculture Farm and Revised ZTA 23-09
Date: Saturday, April 27, 2024 7:09:37 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Thank you all for your work, and we write today in support of both Chicken of the Woods Permaculture Farm in Gaithersburg, MD, and the subject Zoning Text Amendment. As a sustainable packaging and personal care products company focused on providing Maryland farmers with additional on-farm revenues, we have enjoyed working with COWPF, and with other family farms in Montgomery County. We are thus in full support of the development of overnight farm stays, as a way to provide additional revenues for Montgomery County's fresh and local food producers.

Therefore, we fully support the draft revisions submitted by Councilmember Natali Fani-Gonzalez, and we ask that you please proceed with voting in the Revised ZTA 23-09, allowing overnight stays with farm activities. And with the promised regulatory revisions, such as a foundation-free structural square foot maximum, permit requirements from DPS, boundary setbacks, and reducing the number of structures allowed based on the size of the farm. We would be happy to provide additional information in support.

Thank you and regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Friedson's Office, Councilmember](#); [Katz's Office, Councilmember](#); [Sayles's Office, Councilmember](#); [Balcombe's Office, Councilmember](#); [Glass's Office, Councilmember](#); [Fani-Gonzalez's Office, Councilmember](#); [Luedtke's Office, Councilmember](#); [Jawando's Office, Councilmember](#); [Stewart's Office, Councilmember](#); [Mink's Office, Councilmember](#); [Albornoz's Office, Councilmember](#)
Subject: Support for Revised ZTA 23-09
Date: Thursday, April 25, 2024 5:04:25 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Hello,

I have directly benefited from the Chicken of the Woods Permaculture Farm, the reclaimed derelict Higgins' farmstead in the heart of Darnestown, now loved and worked by the Downer Family for over a decade. My family has benefitted from agriculture and outdoor education on this property.

Many will benefit from an overnight farm stay in support of MoCo's thriving fresh and local food or other agritourism-worthy endeavor.

Therefore, I fully support the draft revisions submitted by Councilmember Natali Fani-Gonzalez. She and her staff have gone above and beyond the call of duty.

I strongly encourage you to proceed with voting in the Revised ZTA 23-09, allowing overnight stays with farm activities with the promised and now proposed regulatory revisions such as a foundation-free structural sq ft maximum, permit requirements from DPS, boundary setbacks and reducing the number of structures allowed based on the size of the farm.

Sincerely,
Dara Ballow-Giffen

From:

To:

[Friedson's Office, Councilmember](#); [Katz's Office, Councilmember](#); [Sayles's Office, Councilmember](#); [Balcombe's Office, Councilmember](#); [Glass's Office, Councilmember](#); [Fani-Gonzalez's Office, Councilmember](#); [Luedtke's Office, Councilmember](#); [Jawando's Office, Councilmember](#); [Stewart's Office, Councilmember](#); [Mink's Office, Councilmember](#); [Albornoz's Office, Councilmember](#)

Subject:

Support for Revised ZTA 23-09: Overnight Farm Stays in Montgomery County

Date:

Thursday, April 25, 2024 9:40:04 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

I or someone I know has benefitted in some way from the Chicken of the Woods Permaculture Farm, the reclaimed derelict Higgins' farmstead in the heart of Darnestown, now loved and worked by the Downer Family for over a decade.

I or someone I know have/will benefit from an overnight farm stay in support of MoCo's thriving fresh and local food or other agritourism-worthy endeavor.

Therefore, I fully support the draft revisions submitted by Councilmember Natali Fani-Gonzalez. She and her staff have gone above and beyond the call of duty.

I strongly encourage you to proceed with voting in the Revised ZTA 23-09, allowing overnight stays with farm activities with the promised and now proposed regulatory revisions such as a foundation-free structural sq ft maximum, permit requirements from DPS, boundary setbacks and reducing the number of structures allowed based on the size of the farm.

Sincerely,

Juan Fuentes

From: [REDACTED]

To:

[Friedson's Office, Councilmember](#); [Katz's Office, Councilmember](#); [Sayles's Office, Councilmember](#); [Balcombe's Office, Councilmember](#); [Glass's Office, Councilmember](#); [Fani-Gonzalez's Office, Councilmember](#); [Luedtke's Office, Councilmember](#); [Jawando's Office, Councilmember](#); [Stewart's Office, Councilmember](#); [Mink's Office, Councilmember](#); [Albornoz's Office, Councilmember](#)

Subject:

The Revised ZTA 23-09,

Date:

Sunday, April 28, 2024 8:56:04 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

I, Abraham Radbod or someone I know has benefitted in some way from the Chicken of the Woods Permaculture Farm, the reclaimed derelict Higgins' farmstead in the heart of Darnestown, now loved and worked by the Downer Family for over a decade.

I or someone I know have/will benefit from an overnight farm stay in support of MoCo's thriving fresh and local food or other agritourism-worthy endeavor.

Therefore, I fully support the draft revisions submitted by Councilmember Natali Fani-Gonzalez. She and her staff have gone above and beyond the call of duty.

I strongly encourage you to proceed with voting in the Revised ZTA 23-09, allowing overnight stays with farm activities with the promised and now proposed regulatory revisions such as a foundation-free structural sq ft maximum, permit requirements from DPS, boundary setbacks and reducing the number of structures allowed based on the size of the farm.

Sincerely,
Abraham Radbod

From: [Finlay Sandberg](#)
To: [Friedson's Office, Councilmember](#); [Katz's Office, Councilmember](#); [Sayles's Office, Councilmember](#); [Balcombe's Office, Councilmember](#); [Glass's Office, Councilmember](#); [Fani-Gonzalez's Office, Councilmember](#); [Luedtke's Office, Councilmember](#); [Jawando's Office, Councilmember](#); [Stewart's Office, Councilmember](#); [Mink's Office, Councilmember](#); [Albornoz's Office, Councilmember](#)
Subject: ZTA 23-09 WITH REVISIONS
Date: Sunday, April 28, 2024 6:52:54 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

I or someone I know has benefitted in some way from the Chicken of the Woods Permaculture Farm in Gaithersburg, MD and/or has/will benefit from an overnight farm stay in support of MoCo's supported and thriving fresh and local food producers.

Therefore, I fully support the draft revisions submitted by Councilmember Natali Fani-Gonzalez. She and her staff have gone beyond their due diligence. I ask that you please proceed with voting in the Revised ZTA 23-09, allowing overnight stays with farm activities with the promised regulatory revisions such as a foundation-free structural sq ft maximum, permit requirements from DPS, boundary setbacks and reducing the number of structures allowed based on the size of the farm.

Regards,

Fin Sandberg

POI Analysis

Agricultural Reserve



Start Date
January 01, 2023

End Date
December 31, 2023

Point of Interest
Agricultural Reserve

Dwell Filter
0

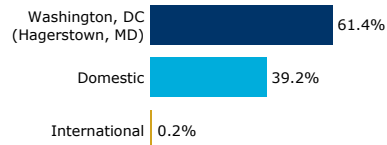
Sample Size 2,469,000

80.6%
Overnight

60.1%
New Visitors

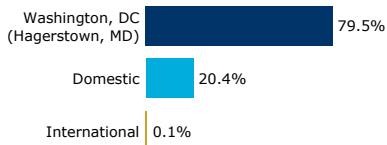
Visitor Breakdown

Unique Visitors

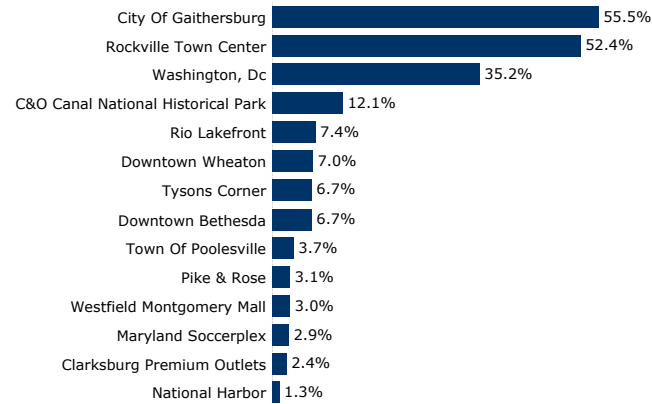


Visits Breakdown

Total Visits



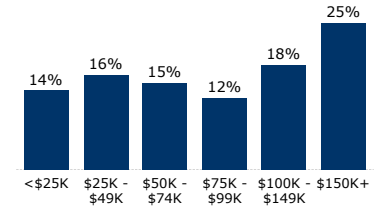
Top Cross-Visited Points of Interest



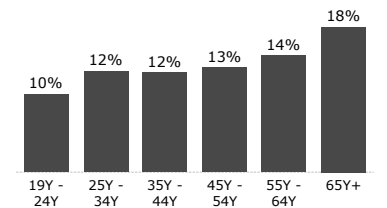
Demographics

Domestic Only

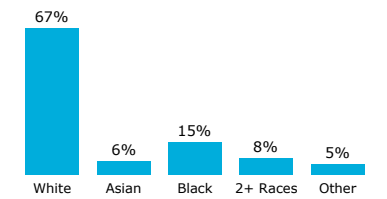
Household Income (in USD)
Median: \$97.7K



Age

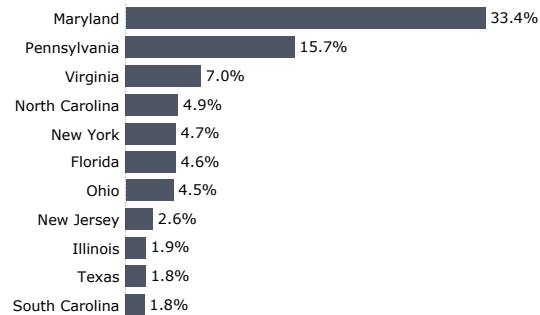


Race



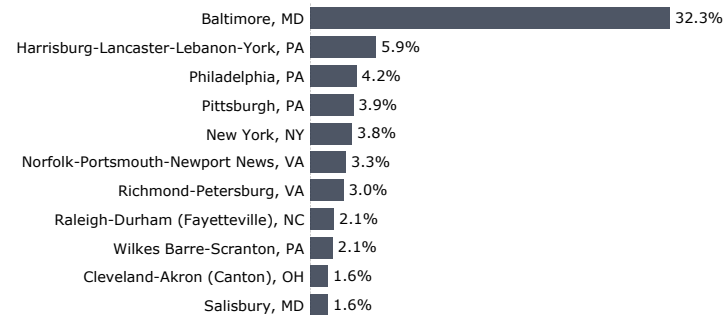
Top Origin Market by State

Unique Visitors, Excluding Washington, DC (Hagerstown, MD)



Top Origin Market by DMA

Unique Visitors, Excluding Washington, DC (Hagerstown, MD)



Source: Near and US Census Bureau

POI Analysis

Town Of Poolesville



Start Date
January 01, 2023

End Date
December 31, 2023

Point of Interest
Town Of Poolesville

Dwell Filter
0

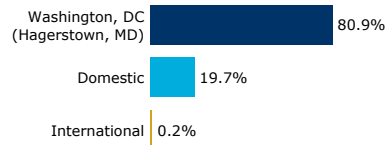
Sample Size: 84,466

84.2%
Overnight

51.7%
New Visitors

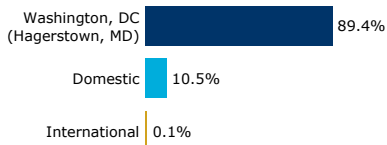
Visitor Breakdown

Unique Visitors

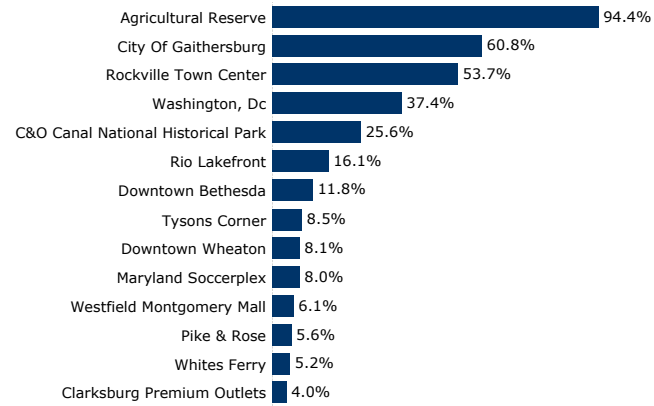


Visits Breakdown

Total Visits



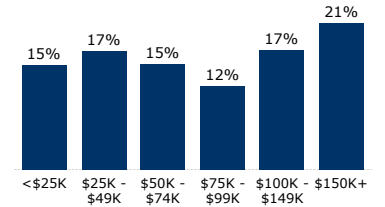
Top Cross-Visited Points of Interest



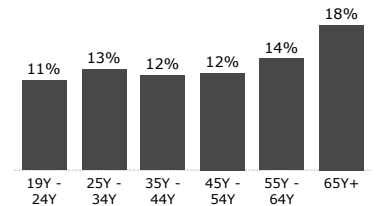
Demographics

Domestic Only

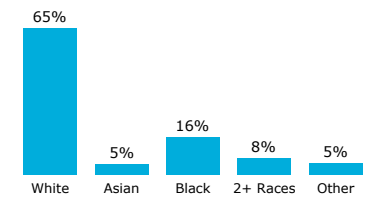
Household Income (in USD)
Median: \$88.4K



Age

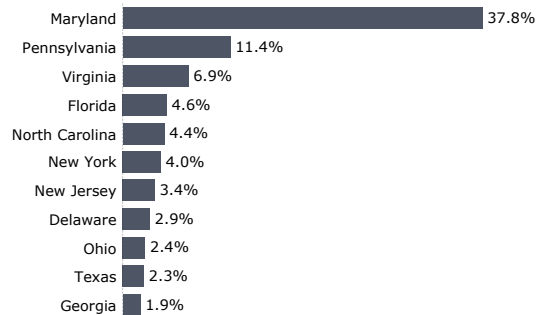


Race



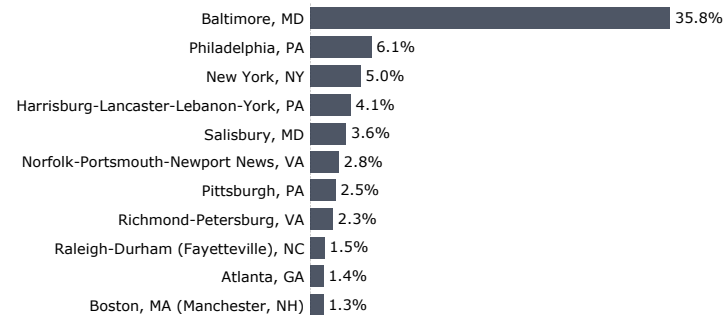
Top Origin Market by State

Unique Visitors, Excluding Washington, DC (Hagerstown, MD)



Top Origin Market by DMA

Unique Visitors, Excluding Washington, DC (Hagerstown, MD)



Source: Near and US Census Bureau

POI Analysis

The Crossvines

Start Date: January 01, 2023 | End Date: December 31, 2023 | Point of Interest: The Crossvines | Dwell Filter: 0

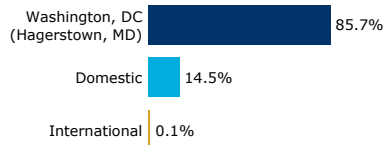
Sample Size: 1,160

81.3%
Overnight

53.1%
New Visitors

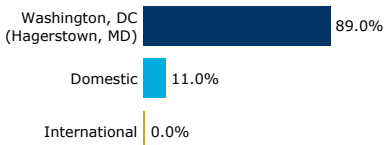
Visitor Breakdown

Unique Visitors

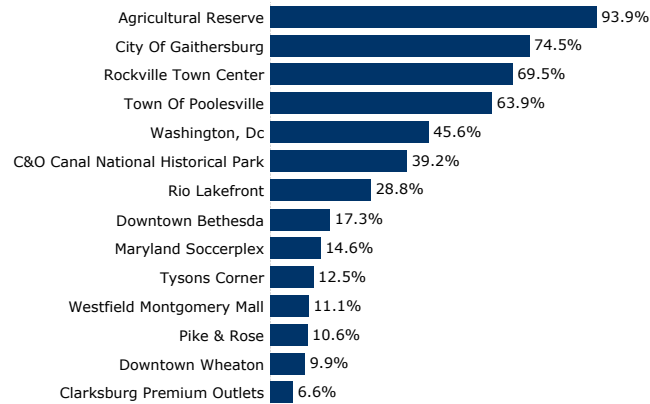


Visits Breakdown

Total Visits



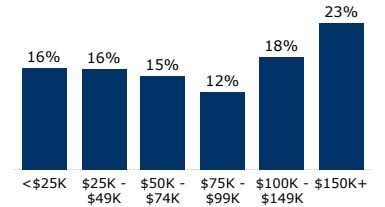
Top Cross-Visited Points of Interest



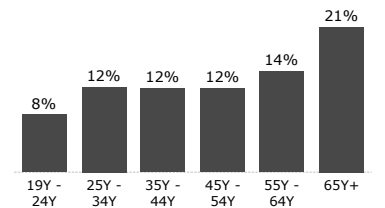
Demographics

Domestic Only

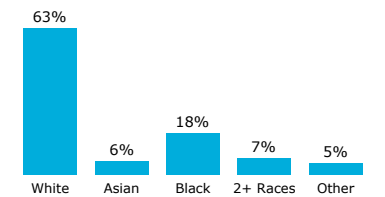
Household Income (in USD)
Median: \$92.7K



Age

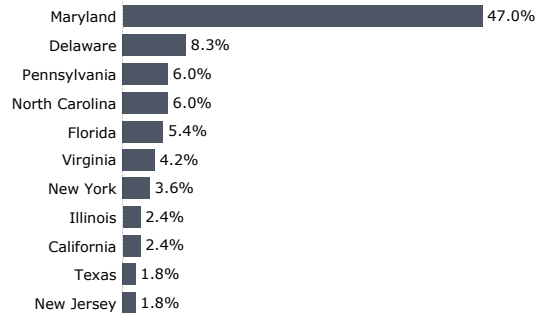


Race



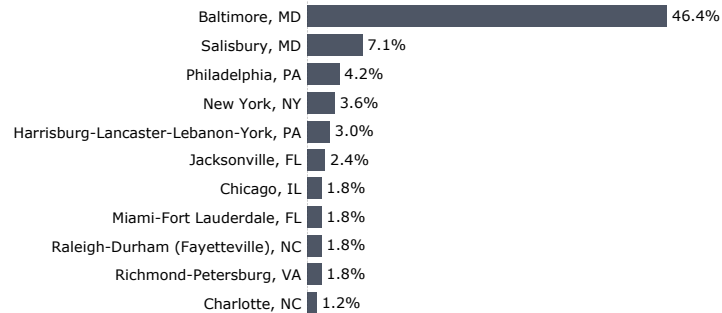
Top Origin Market by State

Unique Visitors, Excluding Washington, DC (Hagerstown, MD)



Top Origin Market by DMA

Unique Visitors, Excluding Washington, DC (Hagerstown, MD)

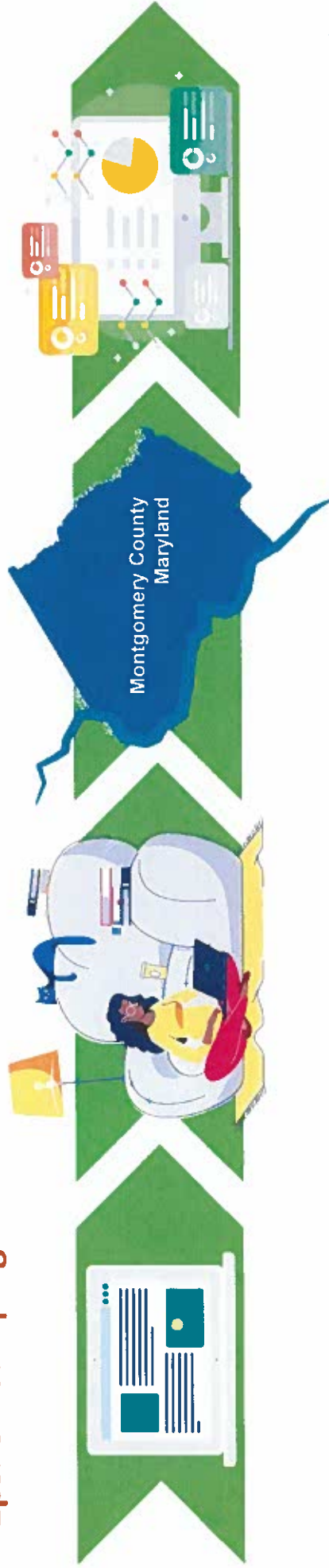


Source: Near and US Census Bureau

Robin's Journey to Montgomery County

Epsilon Campaign

Robin is a 35-year-old teacher from New York who loves traveling with her family. As an educator, she values enriching experiences and seeks out destinations that offer a mix of education, adventure, and relaxation. She enjoys exploring new cultures, trying local cuisines, and creating lasting memories with her little ones.



Receives Targeted Ad

Robin is scrolling through her device when she comes across a Visit Montgomery display ad. Epsilon targeted this ad based on Robin's internet habits. The ad catches her eye because it highlights family-friendly activities and attractions in Montgomery County, which align with her interests.

Explores VisitMontgomery.com

Intrigued by the ad, Robin clicks on it and is directed to the Visit Montgomery website. Here, she finds detailed information about various attractions, accommodations, and dining options in the county. Epsilon knows she clicked on the ad and will keep tabs if she visits Montgomery County within 90 days.

Travels to the County

After thorough research, Robin books accommodations and plans an itinerary based on the information she gathered from the website. She packs her family's bags and heads to Montgomery County, which is geofenced to trigger additional data collection on her arrival by Epsilon.

Data Directly Attributed to Ad

Utilizing location-based GPS tracking and credit card data, Epsilon monitors Robin's movements throughout the county. Epsilon collects data on Robin's origin destination, the zip codes where she visits, how much she is spending by category, and the duration of her stay.

EPSILON CAMPAIGN PERFORMANCE

March- December 2023



\$21.1M

total messaged
visitor spend
Spend in destination zips from
visitors who received an ad

\$115K

investment
Campaign spend

\$183:1

ROAS
Return on ad spend. Every dollar
of investment resulted in X dollars
of visitor spend



665K

unique individuals
reached
Number of individual people messaged
with an Epsilon campaign ad

47K

total visitors
Number of people messaged with
a campaign ad who went to the
destination zips

7.0%

message traveler
rate
Total visitors/unique individuals
reached



264K

total transactions
Number of captured non-cash
transactions in destination zips
from visitors who received an ad

5.6

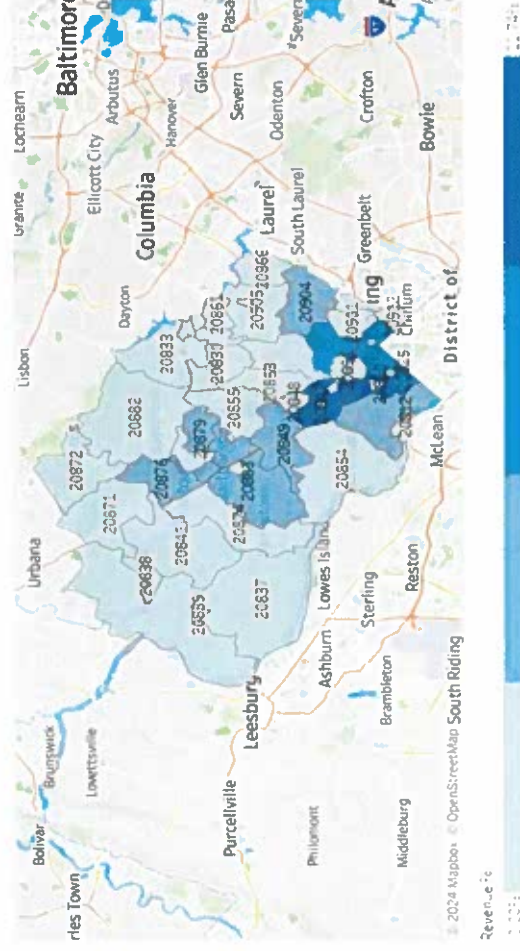
average purchases
per visitor
Total transactions/total visitors

\$449

average messaged
yield per visitor
Total messaged visitor spend/total
visitors

Visitation and spend by zip code

ZIP	Features	Visitor		Visitors	% Total	
		Spend	Yield Per Visitor		Visitor Spend	Yield Per Visitor
20852	Rockville, North Bethesda	\$5,158,241	\$685.57	7,524	24.45%	\$685.57
20814	Bethesda	\$2,211,389	\$564.56	3,917	10.48%	\$564.56
20815	Chevy Chase, Bethesda, Chevy Chase Village, Martins Additions, North Chevy Chase	\$2,484,564	\$627.26	3,961	11.78%	\$627.26
20910	Silver Spring	\$2,117,441	\$539.20	3,927	10.04%	\$539.20
20902	Silver Spring, Wheaton	\$1,520,407	\$657.90	2,311	7.21%	\$657.90
20850	Rockville	\$1,525,349	\$663.77	2,298	7.23%	\$663.77
20817	Bethesda, Westlake	\$1,309,032	\$481.44	2,719	6.20%	\$481.44
20878	Gaithersburg, Darnestown, North Potomac	\$1,239,811	\$390.86	3,172	5.88%	\$390.86
20816	Bethesda	\$923,494	\$651.72	1,417	4.38%	\$651.72
20879	Gaithersburg, Laytonsville, Montgomery Village	\$754,273	\$461.33	1,635	3.57%	\$461.33



- **24%** of measured visitor spend in Montgomery County came from the 20852 zip code; Additionally, that measured visitor spend was driven by **7,524** visitors spending within the 20852 zip code
- The **Rockville, North Bethesda 20852** zip code had the highest yield per visitor at \$658

