

PUBLIC POLICY POSITIONS

2023 – 2024

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD, INC.**

LWW[®]



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<p style="text-align: center;">2023-2024 LOCAL PROGRAM League of Women Voters of Montgomery County, MD, Inc.</p>
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Every winter Montgomery County League members meet to begin planning the League's program for the following fiscal year. Local resource committees are asked to submit their ideas about issues they would like to follow and topics they would like to study. Members may also suggest topics of interest for committees to monitor or study. The Program Coordinator prepares a report of the program planning meeting(s) to present to the Board. The Board determines which program studies to recommend to the general membership at the Annual Meeting held in the spring. At the Annual Meeting, members vote on the studies that they would like the League to conduct in the following year.

Studies result in Fact Sheets that are presented at Discussion Group meetings. These Fact Sheets may be for information only or they may contain questions about the topic in order to find out if League members have consensus on the answers to those questions. Answers to the questions are analyzed using a specific process (outlined in the Board Book) to determine if consensus has been reached. New positions are approved by the Board and reaffirmed by the membership at Annual Meeting. League positions are the basis for League advocacy on issues. Without a position on an issue, reached through consensus, the League may not testify, write letters, or formally participate in lobbying for or against the issue.

Once a study has been completed and positions have been adopted through the consensus process they become what is called the League "Program". Local program must be re-affirmed every year. Resource committees present an outlook for work as part of the adoption of current local program at Annual Meeting. This outlook for work often describes how the League plans to use its positions in the coming year. Resource committees may continue to study issues of interest to them even if formal studies on the topic were not adopted at Annual Meeting and they do not plan to produce a Fact Sheet.

PROGRAM STUDIES ADOPTED AT ANNUAL MEETING 2023

Readoption of the Agricultural Reserve Study

Readoption of the Economic Development in Montgomery County Study

Readoption of the Study of Montgomery County's Law Enforcement Services

Adoption of the Study of Maternal and Childcare in Montgomery County, with attention to Reproductive Choice

Adoption of the Study of Current Housing and Public Accommodations Positions

Adoption of the Study of Digital Equity and Possible Deleterious Effects of Wireless Technology

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AGRICULTURAL POLICY

We support the preservation of agricultural lands through various easement measures and other means. (edited 2012, 2013, 2016 and 2018) Support for:

1. Policies to ensure the viability of agriculture in Montgomery County including: (2004)
 - a) Agricultural and rural open space preservation programs: The Transferable Development Rights (TDR) and both the public and private Building Lot Termination (BLT) programs with their goals of conserving farmland, compensating rural land owners for down-zoning and consolidating growth through: (2002, 2016)
 - 1) easement restrictions on non-agricultural uses (2006) including restrictions on farm supply or machinery sales, storage and service (2013)
 - 2) intensive review in Master Plan development for determining potential receiving areas (2003)
 - 3) encouragement of TDR and BLT use in the CR and CRT zones (2003)
 - 4) requiring the use of TDRs for increased residential density in other mixed use zones (2006)
 - 5) adopting a planning goal of creating and maintaining TDR receiving areas adequate to utilize all existing and potential TDRs (2003, 2016)

Footnote: In 2016, the League considered whether a termination date should be set to end the creation of new TDRs, as well as how TDRs could be used in receiving areas, including whether TDRs not associated with an overlay zone should be treated as a mandatory or an optional use and whether some equivalency of TDRs and BLTs should be established for consideration as public benefits, but did not reach a consensus on these questions.
 - 6) a comprehensive system for tracking the TDR and BLT easement generating and utilization processes, but the private sale of a fraction of a BLT should not be permitted (2003, 2016)
 - 7) on-site afforestation for residential TDR receiving areas - opposing off-site alternatives in such areas. (2003)
 - 8) using public funds, such as the agricultural land transfer tax and the bag tax, to support the public BLT program. (2016)
 - b) Flexible payment options for conservation easements (2004)
 - c) Enhanced deer management practices (2004)
 - d) A tax policy for agricultural land including the agricultural assessment, the county agricultural land transfer tax (2002) and fuel and energy tax reductions. (2004)
2. A policy that considers preservation of productive farmland to be a primary design consideration for development in the AR zone by:
 - a) Emphasizing cluster development (2004)
 - b) Retaining the limitations on child lots to allow zoning density to be exceeded only by child lots and the five year holding period for child lot title transfer (2006)
 - c) Restricting the provision of water and sewer service beyond the established envelope and limiting service to private institutional facilities (PIFs) in the following ways: (2004)
 - 1) sizing Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) capital projects to serve only the PIF
 - 2) permitting only a PIF itself to apply for service
 - 3) denying all requests for service requiring a WSSC pump station
 - 4) denying all requests for service for new or expanded uses in the AR zone
 - 5) providing review by the County Council of requests to provide water and sewer service to properties that abut the sewer main beyond the service envelope.
 - d) Restricting the use of sand mound technology for sewerage disposal in the AR zone (2006)
 - e) Establishing a requirement in the county for purchasers to be notified of the presence of sand mound technology and of the need for scheduling maintenance of it. (2006)
3. Current restrictions on the uses permitted in the Agricultural Reserve (2002) and providing for:
 - a) Monitoring uses that require a special exception (2004)
 - b) Restricting activities and events in the Agricultural Reserve that stimulate a need for commercial or industrial development in that zone (2004)
 - c) Permitting agricultural tourism within the Agricultural Reserve provided that such use relates to agricultural activities. (2013)
4. The program of designated Rustic Roads. (2002)
5. The Promotion of soil conservation and water quality plans for all farms. (2013)

In order to meet water quality standards for the health of the Chesapeake Bay, we support:

- a) increasing staff of the extension service and soil conservation districts
 - b) using volunteers with organic farming expertise to teach farmers how to reduce pollutants
 - c) strongly encouraging good conservation practices from the non-farm community.
 - d) adoption by the County of measures to induce farmers to develop and implement Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plans. (2015)
6. Support a new farmer program with emphasis on: (2013)
- a) the use of sustainable agricultural practices
 - b) currently accepted soil and water conservation practices
 - c) producing and marketing specialty crops for local markets.
7. Food Security (2018)
- In addition to assistance in meeting food needs, we support county programs to address food insecurity by:
- a) facilitating enrollment in SNAP
 - b) enabling those with limited English proficiency to get needed information
 - c) ensuring that food sources are accessible via public transportation.
 - d) providing and encouraging participation in nutrition education programs.
8. Support the production of solar energy as an accessory use to agriculture that is in limited amounts and proportional to onsite use of electrical power. (2022)

BUDGET PROCESS

We support continued improvement of Montgomery County budget procedures and budget documents with emphasis on increasing citizen understanding and input.

Support for: (1977, retain and reaffirm 2013)

1. The county government looking into techniques and procedures for improving the budget process and making the budget document more understandable.
2. The county government involving citizens early in the budget process to help establish priorities.
3. The County government providing information on program cost measured against results.

Support for:

4. Communication among the Superintendent, the Board of Education, County Executive and County Council throughout the MCPS Budget Process. (Local Revenue, 1970, readopted 2014)
5. Continuation of provision for involvement of citizens in the MCPS budget-making process. (Fiscal Relationships, 1979, readopted 2014)
6. Awarding Grants and Contracts to Non-Profits: (2016)
 - a) The County's approach to funding services by grants to non-profits.
 - b) The County should have the option to award grants/contracts for longer than one year.
 - c) When appropriate, grants/contracts may be awarded on a competitive basis.
 - d) Certain grants/contracts should involve public participation in the review process.
 - e) All grants/contracts should be monitored by the County.

Opposition to:

7. Major changes in the fiscal relationships among the Board of Education, County Council, and County Executive. (1970)
8. County Council authority to increase the MCPS budget total beyond what the Board of Education has requested. (Fiscal Relationships, 1979)
9. County Council authority to make line item allocations to the MCPS budget. (Fiscal Relationships, 1979, readopted 2014)

CHARTER AND COUNTY GOVERNMENT

We support the continuation of the charter form of government for Montgomery County with improvements to ensure responsive and responsible government.

Support for:

Separation of Powers

1. Separation of powers in the county government with an elected executive heading the executive branch and the County Council forming the legislative branch. (1963, reaffirmed 1965, revised 1967)
2. Powers and responsibilities of the County Council and the County Executive to be balanced and defined with preference for the following:
 - a) the Executive should prepare and administer the budget, represent the county before other bodies; exercise the veto (with provision for overriding), and appoint an administrative head to supervise the departments and department heads to be confirmed by the Council and to serve at the pleasure of the Executive (1967)
 - b) the Council should pass laws and ordinances, adopt the budget, levy taxes, confirm appointments of administrative heads and department heads (1967), and stipulate by law how boards and commissions should be chosen unless provided by charter or state law. (1967)

County Council

3. Council size, Deleted as obsolete. (2022)
4. A County Council composed of a combination of members elected at-large and members elected from councilmanic districts. (No consensus on the division of at-large and district members.) (2006)
5. A local commission to continue to draw the councilmanic districts. (2006)
6. Equitable redistricting of councilmanic districts for Council members so that each district will be compact, contiguous, and of approximately equal population. (1965)(edit 2006)

Charter Review

7. A process for mandatory periodic review of the charter but no permanent or standing commission for that purpose. (1974)

Non-merit Positions

8. Establishment by charter amendment of a limited number of non-merit positions for aides to elected officials in addition to those specifically enumerated. (1974)

Opposed to:

9. An automatic increase of the size of the Council in response to population increase. (2006)

CHILD CARE

In order to ensure a range of high quality child care and early education programs accessible to all children of low and moderate-income families, we support:

Child Care Programs

Support for:

1. Regulating child care facilities and programs continuing to be the responsibility of state government. (1990)
2. Publicly funded incentives for child care **providers**, such as financial aid, tax and other retention incentives, training and technical assistance. (2005)
3. Adequate county subsidies for families, such as the Working Parents Assistance (WPA) program, and if necessary, supplements to the state Purchase of Care (POC) allowing parents to continue working and afford quality child care. (2005)
4. Child care quality enhancement and accreditation services, including early childhood mental health consultation. (2005)
5. A range of quality child care/early education programs, including home visiting, and emphasizing all day programs, transportation and parent involvement such as: Head Start, Community based pre-K models, MCPS pre-K and Judy Centers. (2005)

Opposition to:

6. The county government setting minimum salaries for private child care center staff or registered family care providers. (1990)

Family Leave

Support for:

7. The county government encouraging employers to have a family leave policy (e.g., by providing information about model programs, such as the government's own policy). (1990)

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

We support a comprehensive range of child-centered services to ensure all children a chance to grow toward stable productive adulthood. (1995) Support for:

1. Meeting the needs of children being a high priority of the Montgomery County government.
2. Effective support services for children, including:
 - a) collaboration across departmental and agency lines to provide seamless services for children
 - b) community-based points of entry where families at risk can apply for multiple services
 - c) consumer-oriented service centers sited in easily accessible neighborhood locations (such as schools) with hours convenient to families
 - d) a compatible computer system, with appropriate safeguards for confidentiality, connecting county agencies to allow more open collaboration and provide comprehensive resource listing
 - e) a non-categorized contingency fund, with rational limits and clear accountability, available to line workers dealing with crisis situations
 - f) early intervention to prevent later crisis
 - g) result-oriented, long-term evaluations of programs and services based on measured outcomes.

CORRECTIONS

We support a rehabilitative correctional system in Montgomery County for adults and juveniles.

Support for:

Guiding Principles

1. Rehabilitation as the primary role of the Montgomery County correctional system. (1970-1971, reviewed and reaffirmed 1983)
2. Protection of the rights and dignity of the individual in the correctional system. (1971 and 1972, revised 1984)

Adult Correctional System

3. The adult correctional system providing an initial diagnostic evaluation of the individual's problems and needs. (1971, reviewed and reaffirmed 1983)
4. Coordination of the entire range of community services with the adult correctional system. Individuals entering the system should be informed of the availability of alcohol and drug programs; medical, educational, recreational, and mental health services; family and individual counseling; job training and referral; and financial assistance. (1971)
5. Alternatives to incarceration which should include: (1971, revised 1983)
 - a) speed-up of trial and sentencing procedures
 - b) improvements in the bail and bond systems, including pre-trial supervision
 - c) halfway houses in the community for both sentenced and unsentenced individuals
 - d) improved parole and probation services
 - e) expanded work-release opportunities.
6. Corrective facilities for adults which are accessible, without need for cars, to visitors, workers, and inmates on work-release. (1971, reviewed and reaffirmed 1983)
7. Montgomery County Detention Center, which is limited in use. It should be used as a facility for serving short sentences and as a pre-trial diagnostic and holding center. Individuals should be detained there pre-trial only for their own protection or that of the community. (1971, revised 1983)
8. Individuals in the Detention Center housed according to classifications which promote their own safety. (1971, revised 1983)

Juvenile Correctional System

9. For the child entering the juvenile court process: (1971 and 1972, revised 1984)
 - a) written guidelines which permit flexibility
 - b) a juvenile counselor always available to help the child and parents
 - c) mandatory notification of available services and financial assistance
 - d) more options available in the county for individualized short-term care such as counseling programs, halfway houses, and foster and group homes (including homes for those with special problems).
10. Juvenile records accessible only to those dealing with the child in the social/legal process. They should be available to others only with waiver by the judge with mandatory notification of the child and parents. (1972, revised 1984)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

We support the development and implementation of an Economic Development strategy for Montgomery County. (2018, 2019)

Support for:

1. The county's economic development goals of:
 - a) Maintaining business vitality,
 - b) Developing a deep and diverse talent pool,
 - c) Creating an international hub for entrepreneurship and innovation, and
 - d) Providing quality infrastructure and amenities in the County.
2. Preparing non-college bound residents for self-sustaining employment in the County.
3. Increasing economic vitality in the Eastern portion of the County.
4. Identifying performance measures that align with the county's stated development goals and the collection and analysis of data on those performance measures to create a publicly available annual report. (2019)

EDUCATION

We support quality public education and equitable educational opportunity for all. (edited 2023)

Support for:

Board of Education and Staff

1. Members of the Board of Education chosen in non-partisan elections. (1966, 1971) Terms should be staggered so that approximately half the members are elected at one time. (1982)
2. Ensuring quality professional personnel by: (1982)
 - a) adequate financing to maintain salary schedules designed to attract and hold teachers
 - b) effective supervision and opportunities for further education
 - c) vigorous evaluation of professional personnel and appropriate follow-up action
 - d) implementation of the Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) process to evaluate and support MCPS instructional staff. (2000)
3. Protection of the personnel of the school system and of the Board of Education in the exercise of their exclusive responsibility for the selection of instructional materials and textbooks. (1954, 1971, 1978)

Budget

4. Adequate financing for:
 - a) art, music (including instrumental music), and physical education programs in elementary schools (1963, 1971)
 - b) textbooks, instructional materials, and school libraries (adequate school libraries within two years of opening) (1960, 1971)
 - c) plant facilities, with planning for dual-purpose schools (1961, 1971)
 - d) class size based on best pedagogy and best practices. (Reaffirmed 1963, 1971, reworded 2012)

Innovative Practices

5. School board policies which guide the use of innovative practices throughout the school system, with the following guidelines: (1971)
 - a) evaluation standards should be continuously applied to all innovative practices. These standards should be reviewed periodically
 - b) timely dissemination of information about new programs and their evaluation to all administrators, teachers, students, and parents is essential (reworded 2012)
 - c) teachers should be provided with the necessary training and support (including adequate resource and supervisory staff) to carry out innovative practices effectively
 - d) principals should be provided with exposure to new ideas and be able to initiate innovative practices in their schools
 - e) a choice of teaching approaches (instructional practices) should be available for students
 - f) necessary procedures which allow for flexibility should be established, and lines of responsibility should be clearly understood.

Counseling (1972)

6. Secondary school counselor maintaining confidentiality and being readily available to the student, parent, principal, and teacher as a liaison and consultant. Responsibilities should include:
 - a) orientation for students and parents new to the school
 - b) career planning — vocational and/or college
 - c) academic guidance — course selection, curriculum planning, scheduling
 - d) personal guidance — relationships with parents, teacher, and students within the school setting
 - e) referral — meeting specific problems through the use of school and community resources.
7. Counseling services in all elementary schools with emphasis on early identification of concerns. Counseling needs should be met with additional focus on the in-service training of staff. (reworded 2012)

Career Education (1974)

8. Career education as a combined responsibility of parent, school, and community with the schools serving as the focal point:
 - a) the career education program should offer all students a knowledge of the world of work and the widest possible awareness of career choice

- b) career education in the schools should begin in kindergarten
- c) students should have the opportunity to acquire a salable skill, but such a skill should not be required for graduation
- d) the vocational education aspect of career education should be expanded.

Programs for At-Risk Students (1990)

- 9. MCPS programs to reduce the incidence of underachievement and failure for those students who, without intervention, are likely to emerge from school unprepared for further education and unprepared for the demands of a changing workplace.
- 10. Programs which include:
 - a) prevention
 - b) early intervention
 - c) in-school services where possible (2000)
 - d) small, individualized programs as needed (2000)
 - e) collaboration with other public and private resources
 - f) access to core subjects taught by qualified teachers to meet requirements for graduation (2000)
 - g) access to a variety of services that address academic, social, mental health, and emotional needs. (2000)

Special Education (1975)

- 11. Special education programs incorporating the concept of “mainstreaming” with recognition that to be successful, mainstreaming requires special training for classroom teachers and sufficient supportive staff.
- 12. Emphasis on early identification, with cooperation between public and private sectors.
- 13. A full range of supplementary programs and services for all students with special needs, including the gifted and talented: (1976)
 - a) funding should be provided by the county and the state
 - b) services should be provided through a combination of public and private programs with the county continuing to contract with private agencies for services, including those not readily available through the county. (reworded 2012)

Programs for Limited-English-Proficient Students (1984) and Adults (2007)

- 14. A variety of programs (since no single instructional approach will meet the needs of all limited-English-proficient students) designed to assure that these students:
 - a) receive an educational opportunity, regardless of linguistic background
 - b) are offered instruction that helps them learn English as quickly as possible to allow for success in school and in future employment
 - c) are assessed and placed in appropriate programs.
- 15. Free or low cost basic English language instruction should be available for Montgomery County adult residents who are not proficient in English. (2007, edited 2012)
 - a) Local, state, and federal governments should provide safety net funding to ensure maintenance of services.
 - b) Local and state governments should work with non-profits, foundations and businesses to assure coordination of services, provide information and referral and assist in areas such as securing grants, training personnel and evaluating programs.
 - c) Local government should establish a non-profit that can deliver the services described in 15b.

Community College (1965, 1971)

- 16. A publicly supported comprehensive community college education in Montgomery County with an “open door” admission policy and a commitment to upholding standards of academic excellence.

Testing Criteria

- 17. The appropriate goal of testing in the schools is for the evaluation of student achievements.
- 18. Testing for the purpose of accountability is appropriate.
- 19. A broad range of tests is important: oral, essay, multiple choice, and true/false. (2002)
- 20. Standardized tests and alternative measures, such as portfolios should be used to assess student performance. (2012)
- 21. Testing preparation is worthwhile, as an organizational skill set that students need to function adequately in college, vocational programs and/or the general work force. (2012)
- 22. The overall impact of standardized tests should be further examined. (2012)

23. State-wide testing of all high school students prior to graduation.
24. The right of a student to retake the tests multiple times in order to pass the tests. (reworded 2012)
25. The tests' scores should be reported to the students in time to take advantage of remediation.
26. That remediation should be available at no cost to the students and should be funded by the government level that imposed the mandate for testing.
27. There was no agreement in the Montgomery County LWV that the High School Assessment tests should be required for a high school diploma.

Early Care and Education (2018)

28. Recognizing that the period from birth to five is a crucial one in a child's development, we support public funding for:
 - a) home visiting and other parent education and early intervention programs, and
 - b) quality child care and early education programs (such as Head Start, Judy Centers, MCPS Pre-K), with preference that they be full day and include transportation and parent involvement.
29. We support the goal of providing universal Pre-K in Montgomery County, and in moving toward that goal, giving priority to:
 - a) providing full day Pre-K for children from low-income families, and
 - b) expanding Pre-K programs to 3-year-olds from low income families.
30. To make quality care available to more families, we support:
 - a) full funding for the Working Parents Assistance program to eliminate the waiting list and help lower income families afford before/after program care, and
 - b) creating a sliding scale system to provide assistance to families above the cut-off for Working Parents Assistance who struggle to pay for quality care.

OLDER ADULT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES (formerly titled ELDERLY)

We support a comprehensive range of services and supports to ensure that all residents of Montgomery County are able to thrive as they age with safety, dignity, independence, and vitality (1975, updated 2022) Support for:

Role of County Government

1. The county government taking prime responsibility for planning for the needs of older adults and for coordinating the various services, as well as acting as a catalyst in providing programs
2. The Commission on Aging as the advocate for older adults in the county.
3. Expanded publicity and outreach pertaining to all programs for older adults.
4. Involvement of older adults in planning and operating programs in participation within the community.

Housing

5. Availability of a wide variety of housing providing options for older adults to ensure that all have access to affordable, accessible, and safe housing appropriate to their level of need.

Physical and Mental Health Services

6. Broad array of programs and services for all older adults, in all types of living arrangements, which include access to a coordinated and comprehensive range of services to support both physical and mental health, including, but not limited to, nutrition and meals, transportation, health care, home care, recreation, cultural and socialization, and support for activities of daily living.
7. Programs that help increase the training and education of paid and family caregivers for older adults.

Employment

8. Services and non-discriminatory employer practices for older adults who remain in the workforce either outside the home or in-home work situations.

Equity

9. Equitable access to all county services for older adults regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or citizenship status.

ELECTION PROCESS

We support election systems that produce results that reflect community sentiment, increase voter participation and are easy to understand and implement. (2009) Support for:

Election Criteria

1. We believe it is important that election systems:
 - a) produce representation that reflects community sentiment,
 - b) help increase voter participation by encouraging a broader range of candidates and more civil campaigns and
 - c) are feasible to implement.
2. We also prefer election systems that:
 - a) are easy for the voter to understand, both in terms of how to vote and how their vote is counted,
 - b) help ensure minority views and interests have some influence in selecting elected officials,
 - c) help raise the level of political campaigns by encouraging a focus on the issues and discouraging negative campaigning,
 - d) maximize the power of each voter's vote and
 - e) help promote more openness and responsiveness between candidates and constituents.

Election Systems (revised 2019)

3. We support elections being decided by a majority of participating voters using a system in which voters rank the candidates (Ranked Choice Voting/Instant Runoff):
 - a) for both primary and general elections;
 - b) for filling a vacancy using a single special election, instead of conducting both a special primary and a special general election; and
 - c) for electing the nonpartisan Board of Education members in the general election, instead of using the primary election to select two candidates for the general election.
4. We do not support Limited Voting as an alternative voting method.

Election Equipment

6. We believe all newly acquired voting equipment (hardware and software) for use in Montgomery County should allow alternative ways of casting and counting ballots and be usable for all county and municipal elections. (edited 2021)

Campaign Finance Practices (2010)

7. We support the use of public funds for political campaigns to provide services to the voters, such as a Voters' Guide, candidate forums (whether in public schools, broadcast on radio or television or available through the Internet) or other services that are available for free to large numbers of voters. This would permit each candidate for an office an opportunity to appeal for votes that is equal to all other candidates for that office. (edited 2020)
8. We support public funding for candidates for Montgomery County offices in the form of voluntary public financing of campaigns where candidates choose to participate and abide by its limits. (2020)

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES

We support fire and rescue services that protect the health and safety of Montgomery County residents. (1992, 1997, 2010) Support for:

1. Services delivered by both career and volunteer personnel.
2. Retention of Emergency Medical Services within the Department of Fire and Rescue Services.
3. An emergency transport fee providing it contains at least the following components (2010):
 - a) an extensive public education program
 - b) provisions for tracking and evaluation of the program
 - c) clear description of the fee structure and distribution of monies
 - d) care and transportation without regard to income or insurance
 - e) waivers for those unable to pay fees.
4. Changes in the fire and rescue services system: (1996)
 - a) the administrative power of the county over the independent fire and rescue corporations should be strengthened (1997)
 - b) the Fire and Rescue Commission should be the policy-making body and a Fire Administrator should be charged with carrying out its policies (1997)
 - c) the Fire and Rescue Commission should include two members representing the career service, two the volunteer service, and three the community (1997)
 - d) the Fire Administrator's assistants (such as career and volunteer chiefs) should be specified in the law. (1997)

Opposition to:

5. Mandatory installation of sprinkler systems in existing residences.
6. Changes in the fire and rescue services system by charter amendment. (1996)

HEALTH CARE

We support the improvement of public health services and facilities and access to care for all Montgomery County residents. Support for:

Public Health Services

1. The prevention of physical and psychological disorders as a major role of the Department of Health and Human Services. (1974, revised 2000).
2. In the area of preventive care, health education as the most cost-effective method of improving basic health care. Of special concern are the areas of immunizations and nutrition. (1977)
3. In the area of curative care, increased access to 24-hour medical services. (1977, revised 2000).
4. Expansion of the services of the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services to include access to treatment and well-child care. (1974, revised 2000).

Making Services Accessible

5. Information about services available from the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services fully disseminated to the public. (1974, reworded 2000)
6. Better coordination of services within the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services and with other county agencies. (1974, reworded 2000).
7. Better utilization of existing facilities such as schools and shopping centers for provision of health services (Ex., School-Based Health Centers). (1974, revised 2000).
8. Transportation upgraded to provide easy access to all county health services. (1974)
9. County extension of financial assistance eligibility parameters to include those with incomes above the cutoff to qualify for Medicaid other government programs but too low to afford private medical care. (1974, revised 2000)

Prenatal Care

10. Efforts to ensure that prenatal care be a high priority of the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (1991, reworded 2000)
11. Supplemental nutrition programs with county funding as necessary for pregnant women, infants, and children up to five years. (1991)
12. A variety of outreach programs to improve prenatal care for the needy. (1991)

Mental Health Services for Children and Adolescents

13. Provision of the following public and mental health services for children and adolescents: (2000)
 - a) prevention and early intervention
 - b) culturally sensitive and bi-lingual providers
 - c) comprehensive range of treatment services
 - d) respite care.
14. Appropriate and timely compensation for providers, particularly reimbursement for case management. (2000)
15. Montgomery County ensuring that adequate mental health services are available and accessible to children in all parts of the county: (2000)
 - a) seeking additional funds from the state as needed
 - b) supplementing state funding with county funds, if necessary
 - c) maintaining a safety net for underserved children and those with the most complex problems

Mental Health Services for Adults

16. The League supports provision of the following public mental health services for adults: (2004)
 - a) a range of treatment services including in-patient, out-patient, residential, home and community-based crisis intervention, and pharmacy.
 - b) culturally sensitive, diverse, multi-lingual providers
 - c) case management with coordination and continuity among agencies including in-patient institutions, shelters and the correctional system.
17. Montgomery County should do the following to ensure an accountable and reliable system for mental health services: (2004)
 - a) develop a comprehensive mental health plan
 - b) define professional standards and best practices for all providers to observe
 - c) provide oversight of contracted services

- d) develop an information technology system that will collect data and define standards for inter-agency sharing and collaboration, while safeguarding patient privacy
 - e) work collaboratively with the state to ensure appropriate and timely payment of providers and streamlined administrative systems.
18. Montgomery County should do the following to ensure that adequate mental health services are available and accessible to adults in all parts of the county: (2004)
- a) seek more realistic funding from the state to provide comprehensive care
 - b) supplement state funding with county funding when needed
 - c) identify and pursue additional funding such as federal or private grants
 - d) maintain a safety net of public mental health services
 - e) increase availability of housing for the mentally ill homeless through a range of housing possibilities, including group homes, "safe havens," and personal living quarters.

Health Care for the Homeless (2009)

19. The League supports an integrated system of health care for the homeless including:
- a) primary medical care
 - b) behavioral health services
 - c) nurse case management in response to the complex health needs of this population.

Drug Treatment (2019)

20. Access for those undergoing detoxification and/or treatment for drug use to comprehensive services that include medical care and non-medical wrap-around services, such as job assistance, housing or education, according to the individual's need.
21. Minimum standards for adult drug use treatment programs to include both medical and non-medical wrap-around services.

Note: These positions result from a study that covered only drug abuse treatment, so they do not apply to alcohol or marijuana.

HOUSING AND PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS

We support Montgomery County policies and programs to increase the supply of affordable housing, to prevent discrimination in housing and public accommodations and to meet the needs of the homeless. (1989, 2005, 2008, 2009, edited 2012)

Support for:

1. **Affordable housing:** Comprehensive efforts by Montgomery County to maintain and increase the supply of affordable housing including: (1967, 1968, 1970, 1978, 1985, 1989, 2005, 2008)
 - a) flexible and comprehensive approaches using private, county, and federal funds
 - b) continued reliance on the Montgomery County Housing Opportunities Commission
 - c) changes in zoning ordinances and related regulations to require provision for low – and moderate income housing in all residential and mixed – use zones [see Land Use Planning 3.a]
 - d) use of scattered sites and application of the principles of economic diversity in residential zoning categories
 - e) use of inclusionary zoning, such as Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDU)
 - f) preservation of existing communities where feasible and/or desired
 - g) strict enforcement of housing codes with shift to civil penalties and any other measures to assure habitability (revised 2021)
 - h) use of tax structure and policies such as tax abatement to maintain and increase the supply of affordable housing
 - i) measures that will increase the supply of workforce housing, defined as from the MPDU maximum to 120% of the median income, including: (2005)
 - i) a combination of incentives, employer assisted housing and mandatory requirements
 - ii) increased density consistent with smart growth
 - j) supportive community services
 - k) encouragement of increase in the stock of single room occupancy (SRO) housing such as personal living quarters by appropriate means
 - l) permitting use of mobile homes on scattered sites and encouragement of well designed mobile parks
2. **Accessory Apartments/Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)** (edited 2021):
 - a) permitting accessory apartments with adequate controls to prevent neighborhood deterioration
 - b) The regulations governing approval of accessory apartments should be changed: [see Land Use Planning 3.d]
 - i) delete time restrictions on age of home or length of ownership (2005)
 - ii) include a maximum neighborhood percentage (2005)
 - iii) permit an accessory apartment in a townhouse (2005)
 - iv) allow the Board of Appeals to use discretion in granting waivers in exceptional cases
 - v) adoption of a streamlined regulatory process, by the County (2005)
3. **Fair Housing, Public Accommodations, Human Relations**
 - a) Comprehensive fair housing legislation in Montgomery County covering real estate and lending practices (1966, 1989)
 - b) Continuation of the office of Landlord/Tenant Affairs with quasi-judicial powers (1972, 1989)
 - c) A model lease, defined as a mutual contract, which includes a warranty of habitability and protection against retaliatory eviction (1972, 1989)
 - d) Comprehensive legislation to outlaw discrimination in Montgomery County with respect to public accommodations
 - e) Adequate financing for the Human Relations Commission so that it can perform the functions authorized in the law (1964, 1989)
3. **Special Needs**

Montgomery County policies and programs to provide shelter and services to all individuals with special needs, including individuals with special needs due to mental illness, homelessness, physical disability, developmental disability and age (2005):

- a) Policies and programs include emergency shelters, transitional housing, detoxification centers, halfway houses and permanent housing and support personnel for people with special needs (1989, 2008)
 - i) Support for programs, designed to address homelessness, incorporating the “Housing First” model (2009)
 - ii) Establish a formal coordinating mechanism for all County public, private and non-profit programs and services for the homeless (2009)
- b) Support residential supportive services for individuals with special needs due to mental illness and for other individuals with special needs requiring residential supportive services (2005)
- c) Support production of barrier free or accessible housing as a voluntary effort on the part of the home-building industry, encouraged by a combination of incentives such as an award program and some mandatory measures. (2005)

LAND USE PLANNING

We support comprehensive long-range planning for Montgomery County and the Washington Metropolitan Area. Support for: (edited 2009, 2012 & 2016)

1. Growth Management

- a) A General Plan for Montgomery County providing for structured growth and including areas of concentrated development, separated by clearly defined areas of open space. (1962, reaffirmed 1973)
- b) Growth in Montgomery County controlled by:
 - i) zoning, which should be strictly enforced
 - ii) making services (such as schools, water supply, sewers, fire and police protection, transportation and roads) available as development proceeds. (1973, 1982, reaffirmed 1985)
 - iii) the concept that when building and rebuilding communities, designs should include incentives for using non-motorized forms of travel, particularly bicycling and walking. (2008)[For details, see Transportation Position # 5.]

2. Planning Process

- a) The bi-county structure of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission under the Regional District Act. (1991)
- b) The County Council appointing all members of the Montgomery County Planning Board. (1989)
- c) The County Council setting planning priorities through approval of the Planning Board budget and annual work program. (1976, 1985, 1989, revised 2009)
- d) The Planning Board preparing master plans and sector plans and amendments with the County Executive participating fully from the beginning of the process. The County Executive should not be able to modify the Planning Board's final draft before submitting it to the County Council. (1989 1991)
- e) The Planning Board approving preliminary plans of subdivision, based on criteria for administering the Subdivision Staging Policy approved by the County Council. (1986, 1989, reworded 2016)

3. Zoning

- a) Zoning ordinances and related regulations requiring provisions for low- and moderate-income housing in all residential and mixed-use zones. (1970, reworded Annual Meeting 1989)
[see Housing 1.c]
- b) Zoning ordinances that:
 - i) have special exception uses that are specifically defined and appropriate to the zone in which they are allowed. (2007)
 - ii) are written clearly and avoid conflicts and contradictions. (2007)
 - iii) have sufficient land available for the uses permitted by right in each zone. (2007)
 - iv) provide for the Board of Appeals to make decisions on special exceptions (1989), but allow decisions on appropriate special exception uses by the Hearing Examiner. (2007)
 - v) address issues related to infill and redevelopment in large and/or individual sites. (2007)
- c) Zoning Text amendments should:
 - i) not conflict with Master Plans. (2007)
 - ii) be relevant to more than a specific property. (2007)
- d) Use of standards and licensing in lieu of special exceptions for some uses, such as accessory apartments. (2007)
 - i) Standards should be clear, specific, understandable and enforceable. (2007)
 - ii) Adequate inspection and enforcement is essential. (2007)
- e) The Planning Board preparing zoning map amendments for approval by the Council. The County Executive should not be able to veto them. (1989)

4. Green Infrastructure (2003)

- a) The use and consideration of the concept of Green Infrastructure as a criterion in the planning and zoning processes.
- b) The inclusion of the concept of Green Infrastructure as a criterion in park acquisition and management plans.
- c) Continued funding by Montgomery County of the Legacy Open Space (LOS) program.

- d) Purchase of Open Space land for biodiversity hubs and corridors, using flexible funding.
- e) Consideration of passageways for animal migration in the construction of new roads or intersection improvement. (edit 2005)

5. Historic Preservation Practices in Montgomery County (2012)

- a) Historic preservation as a county government activity of benefit to the public good, as a means of preserving our heritage and providing a sense of place.
- b) The county government's obligation to:
 - i) inform individuals whose property has been designated historic of available financial assistance for maintenance.
 - ii) designate property as historic over the owner's objections only if more than one criterion is satisfied.
 - iii) provide the opportunity for a historic district to develop its own set of criteria or guidelines as part of the historic designation process.

LIBRARY SERVICES

We support county libraries as a basic community service that should be publicly funded. (2013)
Support for:

1. Montgomery County Public Library is a basic community service. It should provide a variety of materials and resources to all residents of Montgomery County through public funding.
2. Libraries should provide access to print and electronic media, and a full line of services for children and those with special needs.
3. Information about library services and programs should be available at each library as well as electronically. There should be a variety of means for public input. Every branch library should be encouraged to have a Library Advisory Committee.
4. Services should largely be free. Fees that are acceptable include room rentals and longer term parking.
5. The library system should look into various sources of revenue in addition to county funding such as foundations and retention of fees by the library system.

LIQUOR CONTROL

We support fully or partially privatizing Montgomery County's direct role in the wholesale and retail sale of beer, wine, and liquor and improving the efficiency of those operations. (2016)

Support for:

1. The private wholesale distribution of special order beer and wine
2. Increasing the efficiency of Montgomery County's liquor control operations

Note: We considered, but did not reach consensus on additional steps toward privatization, including full privatization of wholesale and retail liquor sales, private wholesale distribution of beer, wine and liquor, and private wholesale distribution of beer and wine.

LOCAL REVENUE

We support policies to strengthen the fiscal structure of Montgomery County.

Taxing Authority

Support for:

1. The county government having the exclusive right to change the property tax rate. Property tax rates should not be subject to state limitations or public referendum. (1976)

Opposition to:

2. Charter amendments which:
 - a) require the submission of county bond issues to referendum (1974, revised 1976)
 - b) limit the tax rate (1981)
 - c) place an absolute dollar ceiling on the levy (1981)
3. Major changes in the Board of Education/County Council/County Executive fiscal relations. (1970)

Taxes

Support for:

4. Local revenue sources which are equitable, convenient, certain, adequate, and diverse. (1991, reaffirmed 2022)
5. A local income tax (which should be more progressive than the existing state and local income tax) as the preferred source of revenue, followed by taxes on property, vehicles, and development, in that order. (1982, 1991)
6. Continuation of preferential farm assessment, with a deferred tax which recognizes market values when the land is developed. (1982)
7. Making the recordation tax more progressive by increasing the exemption level and/or increasing the tax rate on high value property. (2023)

Opposition to:

8. A local sales tax as a potential source of revenue. (1991)

POLICE SERVICES

We support pro-active/preventive community policing in Montgomery County and county law enforcement that treats all residents fairly under the law and a mechanism for civilian oversight with the resources and authority to be effective. (1994, edited 2020, 2023)

Support for:

Pro-active/Preventive Community Policing

1. Pro-active/preventive community policing in Montgomery County.
2. Increased funding in technical areas to implement pro-active/preventive community policing.
3. Increased funding in personnel to implement pro-active/preventive community policing.

Police Accountability and Civilian Oversight

4. County law enforcement that is accountable to the public, wherein accountability is defined as holding both law enforcement officers and their agencies responsible for protecting public safety, for treating individuals fairly under the law and for being answerable to the public.
5. Requiring the county to inform the public about police accountability measures, including but not limited to making police misconduct and disciplinary records publicly available.
6. A mechanism for civilian oversight of law enforcement that includes all of the following elements:
 - a) Independence
 - b) Community involvement with protection from retaliation and retribution
 - c) Adequate funding and operational resources
 - d) Clearly defined and adequate jurisdiction and authority
 - e) Access to law enforcement facilities, records, and staff
 - f) Full cooperation from law enforcement personnel
 - g) Procedural justice and legitimacy*
 - h) Policy patterns in practice analysis**

*g. Procedural justice and legitimacy: Procedural justice can be viewed as how authority is exercised. Successful civilian oversight leverages the principles of procedural justice to bolster legitimacy with all members of the community, including complainants and law enforcement.

**h. Policy patterns in practice analysis: Data-driven and evidence-based analyses can address systemic problems of law enforcement agencies and formulate recommendations that can improve relations with communities.

TRANSPORTATION

We support a balanced system of transportation, transportation services, transportation information and solutions to current and future county transportation needs. Support for:

1. A balanced system of transportation which includes a rapid transit system. (1962, affirmed 1973)
2. Transportation services which are made convenient and accessible by minimizing the time required for a trip, providing frequent and reliable service and adequate parking and charging reasonable fares. (1988)
3. Transportation information which is readily available by methods that include efficient telephone information, information on buses and at bus stops, wide distribution of maps and schedules, and electronic services. (1988, updated 2018)
4. Solutions to current and future county transportation needs that include the following: (2000, edited 2013 & 2021)
 - a) completing a transit line, the light rail Purple Line, on a right-of-way generally south of the Beltway - funding priority;
 - b) building an outer transit line at some future time
 - c) building the Corridor Cities Transitway from the Shady Grove Metro Station to Clarksburg
 - d) opposition to the widening of the Capital Beltway.
5. The concept that when building and rebuilding communities, designs should include incentives for using non-motorized forms of travel, particularly bicycling and walking. To support this concept, the following elements should be in place: (2008)
 - a) Sufficient budget to initiate and sustain education, engineering, and enforcement elements to encourage more people to walk and ride bikes.
 - b) Education and outreach to residents in multiple languages through multiple means.
 - c) Promotion of continuing driver education after passing the initial licensing exam.
 - d) Promotion of bicycle safety education for all age groups.
 - e) Increased enforcement through ticketing of dangerous behavior by drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists.
 - f) Better marked cross walks.
 - g) Coordination between municipal, county and state agencies and among county departments to support increasing availability of safe pedestrian and bicycle options to vehicular trips.
 - h) Consideration by the Planning Board for pedestrian and bicyclist safety in every step of the site plan approval process.
 - i) Ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of measures to increase both the numbers of people who are walking and biking for transportation and the safety of these activities.