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CIVIC FEDERATION NEWS

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY CIVIC FEDERATION, INC.

OCTOBER • 2026

October Program: Housing Legislation | The Starter and Silver Homes bill, among others

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TO PRINT, USE PRINT VERSION

of note

Next MCCF Meeting #978

Monday, October 12, 2026 (Columbus Day), 7:00 p.m. *online via Zoom.*
Topic: "Housing Legislation."

Join the Zoom Meeting Here
[See further instructions on page 2. No password is required.]

AGENDA, P. 2

September Meeting Minutes

General Meeting #977 P. 11
Executive Committee Meeting P. 13

Membership Application

JOIN ONLINE | MAIL-IN FORM

Federation Meeting #978

Monday, October 12, 2026
7:00 p.m.
Online Zoom Meeting

AGENDA

1. Call to Order/Introductions
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes: September General Meeting P.11
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Announcements
6. October Program: Housing Legislation
7. Committee Reports
8. Old Business
9. New Business
10. Adjournment

About MCCF Meetings

All monthly MCCF meetings are open to the public. They are held on the second Monday of each month, September through June.

The October meeting will be held online via Zoom (see page 3 for program) at 7:00 p.m.:

- To be part of the video conference, first visit the Zoom website to download the program for your phone or computer.
- Date and Time: Monday, October 12, 2026 (Columbus Day), 7:00 p.m. Eastern Time.
- To join the Zoom meeting from your browser, use this link.
- To participate by phone (audio only), call 301.715.8592. The meeting ID is **823 5342 4717**. No password is required.

We hope you will join us! ▮

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The **Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc.,** is a county-wide nonprofit educational and advocacy organization founded in 1925 to serve the public interest. Monthly MCCF meetings are open to the public (agenda and details at left).

The *Civic Federation News* is published monthly except August. It is emailed to delegates, associate members, news media, and local, state, and federal officials. **Recipients are encouraged to forward the *Civic Federation News* to all association members, friends, and neighbors**. Permission is granted to reproduce any article, provided that proper credit is given to the "*Civic Federation News* of the Montgomery County (Md.) Civic Federation."

Civic Federation News
civicfednews AT montgomerycivic.org

TO SUBMIT AN ARTICLE, SEE PAGE 14

President's Letter: Continuing MCCF's Role as a Countywide Civic Resource

By Linda Nemec, President

Dear Delegates and Members,

This month's newsletter reflects exactly the kind of role MCCF can play for community associations across Montgomery County: helping residents understand complicated policy issues early, before decisions are already made.

Several of this month's articles focus on issues that may seem technical at first glance—accessory dwelling units, data centers, sector and corridor plans, and state housing legislation. But each of these issues has real implications for neighborhoods, infrastructure, public process, and the ability of residents to understand and respond to proposed changes.

Cheryl's article on accessory dwelling units highlights one of the concerns MCCF will need to watch closely: whether changes intended to expand housing options could also open the door to more investor-owned rental properties in single-family neighborhoods if owner-occupancy requirements are removed. This is a good example of why MCCF's role is not simply to react after legislation is introduced, but to help member associations understand what proposed changes may mean on the ground.

The update on state data center legislation is another example. MCCF has already hosted speakers, shared information, and begun helping members understand the state and county roles in an issue that involves land use, utilities, environmental impacts, infrastructure, public costs, and the risk that residents and taxpayers could be left paying for infrastructure or energy costs driven by very large private users. Our goal is to provide clear, practical information that

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UPDATE YOUR DATA!

Montgomery County civic associations and home owners associations are asked to updated their information on the County Planning Department's website. Notify MCCF of any changes, too, at info@montgomerycivic.org. Let's keep in touch!

TOP

President's Letter, cont.

local associations can adapt and share with their own members.

The articles on sector and corridor plans, including lessons from the University Boulevard Corridor experience, also point to an important MCCF priority: strengthening public notice, community engagement, and meaningful participation before plans move too far along. Residents and civic associations should not have to struggle to understand major planning changes only after key decisions have already been shaped.

I am also pleased to welcome the Darnestown Civic Association as a new MCCF member. Expanding and strengthening our membership is one of our highest priorities this year. MCCF is strongest when it reflects the full range of communities across the county—urban, suburban, rural, incorporated, unincorporated, long-time members, and newly engaged associations.

As we move into the fall, our work will continue to focus on three linked goals: expanding MCCF's membership, providing timely and usable information to community associations, and helping residents have a stronger voice in county and state decisions. Thank you to everyone who is contributing articles, attending meetings, sharing information with neighbors, and helping MCCF become a more useful and effective civic resource. ▮

CIVIC FED TONIGHT!

SEEKING POSSIBLE SPEAKERS FOR YOUR CIVIC ASSOCIATION MEETINGS?

Members of the MCCF Executive Committee have extensive experience in issues such as transportation, land use and zoning, schools, parks, environmental concerns, taxes, and public spending. Plus, they have a community-oriented perspective on these matters. If you would like an executive committee member to speak at a meeting, contact President Linda Nemec at *president at montgomerycivic dot org*. Include topics/possible dates.

Maryland Issues New Data Center Framework: What MCCF Members Should Know

By Linda Nemec, President

Governor Wes Moore issued an Executive Order on September 23 establishing a new statewide framework for large data-center development in Maryland. The Order applies to data centers with projected or actual peak electricity demand of at least 25 megawatts, with specified exceptions for certain higher-education, health-care, State, and Federal facilities.

The framework focuses on five areas: **ratepayer and grid protection, economic benefit for Marylanders, community voice, environmental protection**, and **transparency and accountability**. It is intended to guide state involvement with large data-center projects, including permits, incentives, financing, and other discretionary support.

Among other things, the Order directs the State to consider whether developers are paying the full costs associated with serving their projects, whether projects provide a net economic benefit after incentives and public costs are considered, whether water and environmental impacts are addressed, and whether communities are engaged early in the process. It also calls for consideration of cumulative impacts from backup generators and other environmental effects.

A new **Maryland Data Center Dashboard** is intended to make more information publicly available about proposed projects, including location, developer, projected electricity demand, water use, State approvals, developer commitments, and opportunities for public comment. The Order also bars Executive Department agencies from entering into new nondisclosure agreements with data-center developers concerning proposed or existing projects.

WHAT THE ORDER DOES NOT DO

The Executive Order is **not a statewide moratorium**, and it does not replace local zoning authority. Montgomery County will still determine whether and where large data centers may be permitted and what local zoning, environmental, public-safety, and review requirements should apply. The

MORE

Framework, cont.

County's 18-month moratorium remains in place while it develops permanent policies.

The Order also cannot by itself change regional electricity-market or transmission-cost rules overseen by the Maryland Public Service Commission, PJM Interconnection (the regional electric-grid operator), and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. It does, however, direct State officials to advocate for policies intended to keep data-center-related costs from being shifted to other ratepayers.

WHAT COMES NEXT

Several important pieces are still developing. Maryland's separate **Data Center Impact Analysis and Report** was required by law to be submitted by September 1 but has not yet been completed. The study brings together environmental analysis by the Maryland Department of the Environment, energy analysis by the Maryland Energy Administration, and economic analysis by the University of Maryland School of Business, with the Department of Legislative Services responsible for coordinating the final report.

That report, implementation of the Governor's new framework, and possible data-center legislation during the 2027 General Assembly session could all affect Montgomery County's work during the moratorium.

For MCCF members, the key things to watch are the release of the State impact report, creation of the Data Center Dashboard and Task Force guidance, State legislative proposals, and, especially, Montgomery County's development of permanent zoning and permitting standards.

MCCF will continue to follow both the State and County processes and share opportunities for residents and community associations to participate before permanent policies are adopted. ▮

Planning Ahead: Early Opportunities to Shape Montgomery County Land-Use Plans

Montgomery County is developing or implementing several major sector plans and land-use proposals that will shape future decisions about development density, infrastructure capacity, transportation, school enrollment, parks, environmental protection, and capital facilities. Many of these efforts reflect the corridor-focused growth strategy in Thrive Montgomery 2050, the county's overarching General Plan. Unlike plans centered on an established community area, a corridor plan will likely cross or affect parts of numerous subdivisions and civic-association areas, each with different conditions and concerns.

Although each plan applies to a defined geographic area, the issues often have countywide implications. Consider the University Boulevard Corridor (UBC) Plan, the first corridor plan approved under Thrive Montgomery 2050. The County Council approved the plan on December 9, 2025, and the full Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission adopted it on January 21, 2026, following extensive community involvement. The Approved and Adopted Plan is now available on the Planning website. Residents and civic associations secured important changes to the UBC Plan, but some substantial critiques from residents were never addressed, and several significant concerns identified by County agencies remained when the Council approved it:

- The Office of Legislative Oversight's October 22, 2025, racial equity and social justice analysis of the proposed overlay-zone amendment anticipated that it "could have a negative impact on racial equity and social justice (RESJ) in the County" and that the proposed rezoning "could disproportionately displace existing Black and Latinx homeowners for the development of market-rate housing units."
- The Department of Environmental Protection warned that increasing allowed density and intensity of development along the corridor "will almost certainly result in a decrease in tree canopy, an increase in impervious surfaces," contributing to a greater heat-island effect and other environmental impacts.
- Montgomery County's Deputy Director for Transportation Policy stated in an August 8, 2025, memo,

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Land-Use Plans, cont.

"we are concerned that this plan's zoning updates may allow this increased density to proceed before the corridor has the infrastructure to fully support it. The University Boulevard BRT has not entered facility planning, nor has it any committed funding in the current Capital Improvement Program (CIP)." The memo recommended that zoning changes proceed concurrently with funding for additional corridor investments.

The UBC experience demonstrates that community associations are most effective when they become involved early in the process, during the scope, emerging-ideas, and preliminary-recommendations stages—before the plan, accompanying zoning text and proposed zoning map are nearly final. Associations should join plan mailing lists, identify affected properties and neighborhoods, examine both the recommended zones and any special development standards, and submit comments to become part of the public record and potentially influence the plan.

WHAT COMES AFTER A PLAN IS APPROVED?

A plan's zoning recommendations are not self-executing. After the County Council approves a plan, the full M-NCPPC Commission adopts it. Depending on the plan's recommendations, implementation may require one or both of two additional Council actions. A Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) changes the written zoning rules—for example, by creating an overlay zone with special uses or development standards. A Sectional Map Amendment (SMA) applies approved zoning classifications to specific properties within the plan area, changing the zoning map after a separate Council hearing and vote. The timing can overlap: in the UBC Plan process, the overlay-zone ZTA was introduced and considered while the plan was still under Council review; the SMA hearing was held September 15, and Council action is scheduled for September 29. Communities, therefore, need to examine proposed zoning language and maps throughout the planning process rather than waiting for the final SMA stage.

Here are several plans MCCF members should know about (as of September 28, 2026):

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PLAN | *AREA OR CORRIDOR* | CURRENT STAGE AND ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITY

University Boulevard Corridor (UBC) Plan
University Boulevard from Wheaton to I-495
Plan approved December 9, 2025, and adopted January 21, 2026. The Council held its public hearing on Sectional Map Amendment H-163 September 15. Council action is scheduled for September 29; check the final decision.

Friendship Heights Sector Plan
Downtown Friendship Heights, Wisconsin Avenue, and River Road
Planning Board public hearings were held September 10 and 14. Board work sessions will review testimony and refine the draft before it is sent to the County Council. Associations can continue to submit comments and follow the Board schedule.

Germantown Sector Plan Amendment
Germantown employment area and portions of the I-270 and MARC corridors
Preliminary recommendations have been released. Associations can review and comment on them now while staff prepares the Working Draft, expected this fall. A Planning Board hearing and work sessions are projected for winter/spring 2026–2027.

Eastern Silver Spring Communities Plan
Communities east of Sligo Creek to the PG County line, and south of the Beltway, including areas near University Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue
The Working Draft is available. The Planning Board is scheduled to consider it October 1 and may accept it as the Public Hearing Draft and set a hearing. Associations should review the draft and follow the hearing notice.

MORE

Land-Use Plans, cont.

PLAN | *AREA OR CORRIDOR* | CURRENT STAGE AND ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Wheaton Plan: A Georgia Avenue Community Plan
Downtown Wheaton and the Georgia Avenue corridor
Community engagement and analysis are underway. The September 22 walkshop was rescheduled to October 6, 5:30–7:30 p.m., beginning at the west entrance to Wheaton Metro. Draft recommendations are expected in 2027.

Kensington Sector Plan Amendment
Kensington Town Center and surrounding area
A new planning effort examining housing, transportation safety, stormwater, parking, open space, and historic resources. A scope of work is expected in winter 2026–2027.

Damascus Main Street Sector Plan Amendment
Damascus Main Street and the surrounding community
Planning staff has begun meeting with residents and preparing a scope of work. Associations can share their priorities while the Main Street amendment takes shape.

Burtonsville Employment Area Minor Master Plan Amendment
Burtonsville and the US 29 corridor
Included in the FY27 work program. It will examine housing, jobs, transportation, urban design, and public benefits along the US 29 corridor. Watch for the scope of work and engagement schedule. ▮

How to Report a Problem on State Highways

By Jerry Garson, MCCF Transportation Chair

For a problem on a Maryland state maintained road, submit a service request to the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA). These roads include interstates such as I-270 and I-495 and Maryland routes such as Georgia Avenue (MD 97).

REPORTING A ROAD PROBLEM

Visit the MDOT SHA website and select "Report a problem."

Use the service request form for nonemergency concerns such as potholes, damaged signs, animals on the road, litter, or other maintenance issues. After submitting your request, you should receive an acknowledgment with a service request ticket number. Keep that number for follow-up.

A traffic signal outage or another highway hazard that needs prompt attention should be reported to the SHA Statewide Operations Center at 1-800-543-2515. For a life-threatening emergency, call 911.

REPORTING A STREETLIGHT OUTAGE

For a streetlight on a wooden utility pole, including one along a state road or local street in Pepco's service area, use Pepco's streetlight outage page.
You can also go directly to Pepco's outage map here.

Find the location on the map, select the streetlight that is out, and submit the report. ▮

MCCF General Meeting September 14, 2026, Minutes

By Alan Bowser, Secretary
[View meeting video here.]

1. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by President Linda Nemec.

2. Approval of the Agenda. The agenda was approved.

3. Approval of the Minutes. The minutes of the June 1, 2026, Annual Meeting were approved.

4. Treasurer's Report. Treasurer Jerry Garson reported a bank balance of $5,759.

5. Board Appointment. The nomination of Ken Markison (West

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Sept. Mtg. Minutes, cont.

Chevy Chase Civic Association) as an At-Large member of the MCCF Board of Directors was approved.

6. Update: Planning, Zoning, and Policy Matters. President Linda Nemec reported on several issues of interest to the membership. She highlighted upcoming testimony regarding Sectional Map Amendment H-163, emphasizing concerns about displacement, traffic, infrastructure, environmental impacts and inadequate public notice.

With regard to the Friendship Heights Sector Plan, she noted ongoing Planning Board public hearings addressing traffic and density concerns. With regard to the State's data center analysis, she said that the State report was evaluating the environmental, energy, and economic impacts of data centers across Maryland.

7. Community Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Concerns. Delegates discussed community pedestrian and traffic safety concerns. Nemec noted that securing approval and installation of traffic-calming measures often takes more than a year. MCCF will be gathering local examples to draft a white paper for local County leadership.

Concerns were raised about high-speed cut-through traffic bypassing the American Legion Bridge and pedestrian danger in the Cabin John and McArthur Blvd. area.

Members also shared difficulties understanding MC DOT evaluation metrics, two-tiered safety prioritization models, community consensus requirements, and understaffed police enforcement.

8. Guest Speaker: Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich. CE Marc Elrich provided an in-depth policy breakdown focusing on state housing initiatives, land planning, economic competitiveness, and county-state relations. His remarks focused on housing affordability vs. income tiers, out-migration factors, State mandates (Starter and Silver Homes Act), zoning, parking and permitting reforms, large lot and rural protection,and proposed overhaul of the M-NCPPC planning framework.

He recommended merging the Planning Department into the County Executive permitting operations to streamline approvals and to lower overall project costs. He also discussed economic competitiveness and regional comparisons. He advocated for enabling state legislation

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Sept. Mtg. Minutes, cont.

allowing higher commercial property tax rates to fund capital infrastructure without further burdening residential property owners. He criticized recent County Council tax breaks for office-to-residential conversions and long-term tax abatements on WMATA transit-oriented properties, calling them unnecessary tax revenue giveaways.

9. Delegate Questions and Concerns. The County Executive responded to Delegate questions and concerns.

10. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m. ❙

MCCF Executive Committee September 24, 2026, Minutes

By Alan Bowser, Secretary

1. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order by President Linda Nemec at 7:05 p.m.

2. Members Present: Linda Nemec, Cheryl Gannon, Jerry Garson, Alan Bowser, Jacquie Bokow, Liz Joyce, Brenda Freeman, Dan Meijer, Ken Markison, Joe Harkins.

3. Treasurer's Report. Treasurer Jerry Garson reported a bank balance of $5,252.69. Upon motion, the Committee voted to approve $300 for the Federation's annual dues to the Committee for Montgomery, Inc.

4. Housing and Land Use Legislation

❙ *ADU Owner-Occupancy Bill (Hearing Oct. 5):* Consensus to oppose proposed removal of owner-occupancy requirement due to investor risk and rising single-family home prices. Member recruiting local ADU owners to testify.

❙ *Jawando Anti-Price-Fixing Bill (Work Session Oct. 6):* Board supports banning algorithmic rent-pricing software (e.g., RealPage).

❙ *Advocacy Strategy:* Urgent need for grassroots mobilization beyond single organizational letters; targeting 5 letters per member.

5. Membership Update

❙ *Renewals & Growth:* 18 organizations and 2–3 individuals renewed over the summer, including Darnestown (1,000+ households).

MORE

Sept. ExCom Minutes, cont.

❙ *Outreach:* Postcard campaign in progress. Direct coffee chats and direct contact follow-ups underway with neighboring civic, upcounty, and environmental groups.

6. Branding and Communications

❙ *Identity:* Preliminary logo draft shared; business cards incorporating Montgomery County colors in development.

❙ *Media Outreach:* Meeting scheduled with Washington Sun reporter. Board noted the arrival of new local media and advocated for more hyperlocal coverage via Montgomery Community Media.

7. Upcoming Programs & Social Event

❙ *October Meeting:* Topic focus on Starter and Silver Homes bill (coordinating with potential speakers including Sen. Feldman).

❙ *November Meeting:* Focus on Pedestrian Safety with potential speakers to include Vision Zero staff and/or Councilmember Evan Glass to shape a formal legislative agenda. Fall Happy Hour: Planning a buy-your-own-drink social event; evaluating venues (Locavino, Zinnia, Silver Branch).

8. Newsletter: Submit stories within one week.

9. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 8 p.m. ❙

Montgomery County Civic Federation
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Submit contributions for the next issue by the 26th of the current month. Send to CFN at *civicfednews AT montgomerycivic.org*.

Send all address corrections to *membership AT montgomerycivic.org*.

VIEW PAST ISSUES ONLINE HERE