

AIM Issue Agenda for 2018-2022, Rationale

AFFORDABLE HOUSING:

- Increase funding for affordable housing from \$59M to \$100M/year over four years in the Housing Initiative Fund. This would increase affordable housing production and preservation by thousands of units a year.

The HIF is the primary source of funding for the development and preservation of affordable housing in Montgomery County. AIM fought to win the first significant funding in the HIF in 2002, and has been key to pushing to \$600 M in the HIF total over those 15 years. [Montgomery County's Rental Housing](#) study recommended increasing the HIF to \$100M/year to address the affordable housing crisis in Montgomery County. This increased funding could increase the number of affordable units produced and preserved by thousands every year.

- Commit to put in the pipeline 200 units a year of affordable housing on public land.

The Rental Housing Study also recommended using public land to develop more affordable housing. Currently affordable housing production on public land is uneven, approximately 100 units every 2 years. We are pushing for an increase and to fully utilize more opportunities to co-locate affordable housing with fire stations, parking garages, etc.

IMMIGRATION:

- **Through public-private partnership funding, provide \$800,000 a year in legal defense for immigrants in detention facing deportation, and help other immigrant families remain united with the families. We are starting with an ask of \$375,000 in the FY19 budget.**

Approximately one-third of all Montgomery County residents were born outside the U.S. Many are now living in fear of being deported and separated from their children and families, and face dangerous and life-threatening situations if they return to their country of origin. Immigrants facing deportation are not provided with defense attorneys. Baltimore, PG County, and New York all now provide funding to provide defense lawyers in these situations, and have found that people are 4-11 times more likely to remain in the U.S. when provided with these services. We are asking for Montgomery County to do that, and also increase funding for family preparedness workshops to help protect children and keep them safe if their parents are deported.

- **Provide 20 units of housing a year for refugees to live in Montgomery County starting in 2018 and expanding in the future.**

Right now only a handful of refugees are housed in Montgomery County each year. AIM is working with apartment building owners, congregations, and refugee resettlement agencies to provide housing to refugees in Montgomery County where they can be close to good job opportunities as well as the congregations that are providing them with vital support in their transition into the U.S.

- **Work with the Attorney General to provide protections for TPS holders or immigrant parents to prevent them from being deported.**

Attorney General of Maryland, Brian Frosh, could work with other AGs to sue the government and help protect the tens of thousands of TPS holders in the Montgomery County and Maryland, or to protect immigrant parents from being separated from their children, who are often U.S. Citizens.

EDUCATION:

- **Expand Excel Beyond the Bell Elementary program to 20 schools, serving 2400 students, by 2022.**

The Excel Beyond the Bell program is currently available to 480 students total in 4 high-poverty elementary schools. It provides an hour of academic instructions from teachers in the school, an hour of enrichment activities like arts, STEM and sports, as well as a hot dinner each night. The need for the program far exceeds the demand, with over 20 Title I elementary schools in Montgomery County with poverty rates above 70%. We want Excel Beyond the Bell Elementary to expand to 20 schools by 2022, serving 2400 students.

- Prioritize and start renovations on schools that have been left behind in the renovation process: South Lake, Harmony Hills, JoAnn LeLeck and Burnt Mills Elementary schools by 2022.

School crowding is a problem throughout the county, but several of the high poverty schools have been bumped down the priority list over and over. We want to see real dollars spent so students do not lose instructional time by walking long distances from their portables to inadequate numbers of bathrooms or are hungry during instructional time because lunch starts at 10:45am or 1:45pm.

- Work with the Superintendent and School Board to support full access to prayer and Friday afternoon prayers for Muslim students and to better address bullying in the schools.

Muslim students and parents we talked to reported disturbing bullying incidents in the schools, and that depending on the time of year, students are not given enough time to get to Friday afternoon prayers, the most important prayer time of the week for Muslims.

TRANSPORTATION:

- Protect our public transportation system from privatization and protect bus service from being cut.

The Washington Metro system is facing cuts across the board, and bus service is generally one of the first items to be cut, despite the number of low-income residents who are wholly reliant on these services to get to work, school, medical appointments and to do basic chores. We also stand with workers to prevent Metro from being privatized, as it has led to lower wages and worse service.