

PLANNING DEPARTMENT FY27 OPERATING BUDGET DISCUSSION WORK SESSION #2

Description

Planning Department's FY27 Operating Budget – Work Session #2.

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MCPB
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Montgomery County Planning Board
2425 Reedie Drive, Floor 14
Wheaton, MD 20902

JKS	Jason K. Sartori , Planning Director Jason.Sartori@montgomeryplanning.org
BB	Bridget Broullire , Deputy Planning Director Bridget.Broullire@montgomeryplanning.org
RK	Robert Kronenberg , Deputy Planning Director Robert.Kronenberg@montgomeryplanning.org
KW	Karen Warnick , Management Services Division Chief Karen.Warnick@montgomeryplanning.org



Summary:

- The Planning Department is following up on the Planning Board's request to reduce the number of new positions included in the department's FY27 budget request. The Planning Department is seeking approval to prepare its FY27 operating budget at the Base Budget plus New Initiatives level.
- With this reduction in requested positions, the Preliminary FY27 Operating Budget request is \$30,216,087 which is an increase of \$2,384,995, or 8.6%, over the FY26 Adjusted Adopted budget.

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND

BACKGROUND

The Planning Department presented its FY27 budget and work program requests to the Planning Board on October 23. At that session, the Planning Department included 10 new positions as part of the FY27 Proposed Budget request. The Board expressed appreciation for the work that the Planning Department put into its request but asked the department to re-evaluate the 10 positions and to narrow the request down to five positions.

After careful review, the Planning Department has identified five positions to include in this request, along with one alternative for the Board's consideration. For the Planning Board's reference, carried forward in the [Appendix](#) are the full descriptions of each of these positions that were included in the Planning Department's memo for the October 23 agenda. The Department is scheduled to be back in front of the Planning Board on November 20 for the final FY27 Budget work session.

REVISED POSITIONS REQUESTED

At the Board's direction, the Planning Department has prepared a FY27 Proposed Budget request that includes five new full-time positions to support high-priority initiatives aligned with the county's strategic goals. The Department has also identified an additional sixth new position as a potential alternative for the Board to consider. Department leadership continues to believe that additional staffing is necessary to effectively carry out the department's mission and support existing staff. These six positions are critical to advancing climate resilience, cybersecurity, community engagement, historic preservation, and master planning across Montgomery County.

FY27 Work Program Initiatives – 5 New Positions + 1 Additional/Alternate			
1. Climate Initiatives – Planner IV Full-time Position <i>Environmental & Climate Division</i>	1 pos	1.0 WY	\$160,583
2. Cybersecurity – IT/Telecom Specialist III Full-time Position <i>Information Technology & Innovation Division</i>	1 pos	1.0 WY	\$137,833
3. Engagement Specialist – Public Affairs and Marketing Spec III Full-time Position <i>Communications & Engagement Division</i>	1 pos	1.0 WY	\$137,833
4. Master Planning – Cultural Resources Planner I Full-time Position <i>Historic Preservation Division</i>	1 pos	1.0 WY	\$110,268

5. Master Planning and Regulatory – Planner II Full-time Position <i>Upcounty Planning Division</i>	1 pos	1.0 WY	\$121,781
			\$668,298
Alt. Master Planning – Planner II Full-time Position <i>East County Planning Division</i>	1 pos	1.0 WY	\$121,781

The Planning Department prepared an FY27 budget request that includes new initiatives and critical new positions it believes are essential to planning for the future of Montgomery County, and that reflects the department's new strategic plan. The chart detailing the full budget request is on the next page. With this reduction in requested positions, the Planning Department's Preliminary FY27 Operating Budget request is \$30,216,087 which is an increase of \$2,384,995, or 8.6%, over the FY26 Adjusted Adopted budget.

These five new positions are not additive for convenience; they are essential to delivering on the county's most urgent planning priorities. Without them, Montgomery Planning risks delays in plan implementation, reduced regulatory oversight, and diminished public engagement. Investing in staff now ensures the department can continue to lead with innovation, responsiveness, and impact.

Preliminary FY27 Operating Budget Request

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT PRELIMINARY FY27 OPERATING BUDGET REQUEST			
FY26 ADOPTED ADJUSTED BUDGET *		\$ 27,831,092	
FY27 BASE BUDGET CHANGES			
	Salaries and Benefits **	\$721,245	
	Increase for Supplies and Contractual Obligations	101,600	
Adjustment – Risk Management, Long Term Disability, Unemployment, and Legal Chargeback		4,497	
	Major Known Commitments	717,000	
Adjustments in Departmental Chargebacks to CIO and Commission Wide IT		(22,645)	
Subtotal – Base Budget Changes		\$ 1,521,697	+5.5%
ONGOING INITIATIVES – NEW			
FY27 Ongoing New Initiatives		200,000	
	Ongoing Master Plan Support	\$200,000	
FY27 Ongoing New Positions		668,298	
	Climate Initiatives Planner IV	\$160,583	
	Cybersecurity - IT/Telecom Specialist III	\$137,833	
Engagement Specialist - Public Affairs and Marketing Specialist III		\$137,833	
Master Planning - Cultural Resources Planner I		\$110,268	
Master Planning and Regulatory Planner II		\$121,781	
Subtotal – New Ongoing Initiatives		\$ 868,298	+3.1%
ONE-TIME WORK PROGRAM INITIATIVES – NET CHANGE			
Less: FY26 One-Time Work Program Initiatives		(280,000)	
FY27 One-Time Work Program Initiatives/New Funding Requests		275,000	
	Climate Resilience Functional Plan	150,000	
Diversifying the Economy: Assessing the Future Needs for Industrial Land		125,000	
Subtotal – One-Time Work Program Initiatives		\$ (5,000)	-0.0%
NET CHANGE FROM FY26 ADOPTED TO FY27 PROPOSED BUDGET		\$ 2,384,995	+8.6%
FY27 PROPOSED BUDGET		\$ 30,216,087	
TRANSFER INCREASE FROM ADMINISTRATION FUND TO DRSRF***		TBD	
Notes: * The FY26 Adopted Adjusted Budget does not include \$150,000 in Grants as they are accounted for separately. ** Salary and Benefits total does not include compensation marker or OPEB. They are budgeted in the Administration Fund's non-departmental account. *** Increase transfer from Admin Fund to DRSRF of TBD for base budget increase bringing the total transfer request to \$1.5M+TBD.			

APPENDIX: DESCRIPTIONS FOR PROPOSED NEW POSITIONS

FY27 ONGOING NEW POSITIONS

1. CLIMATE INITIATIVES PLANNER IV Environment & Climate Division	
Budget Request	\$160,583 (Grade 30, 1.0 WY) (mid-point + 10% plus benefits – based on specialized expertise required for this position and department hiring trends at this level)
Description	Climate change is an existential threat to the planet but efforts to address and adapt must occur at all community levels, including the local level. As the department tasked with planning the future growth and development of the county, it is imperative that Montgomery Planning employ an expert on the planning industry's response to climate change to ensure staff are incorporating the best viable solutions in the department's plans and policy recommendations. This climate specialist position would ensure climate-related initiatives and recommendations are integrated throughout the department's work program, including the development of climate policies and master plans. It would also be responsible for conducting the climate assessments as required under Section 2-81D of County Code for all zoning text amendments and master plans. As an expert in the field of climate change and how planning efforts can respond to it, this position would also lead the Planning Department's climate change resiliency and vulnerability efforts in support of <i>Thrive</i> and the county's Climate Action Plan. The position would serve as a liaison to other county agencies and their related efforts and be an integral part of the Department's Environment and Climate Division, which has a high level of workload. Specific work products and responsibilities would include: • Conducting the climate assessments as required under Section 2-81D of county Code for all zoning text amendments and master plans. • Leading the creation and execution of the Department's climate tools such as heat mapping and tree inventories. • Preparing a Climate Resilience Functional Master Plan. • Conducting an Area Climate Change Vulnerability Study. • Coordinating with county agencies on Climate Action Plan efforts. • Managing the update to the Climate Assessment Quantitative Tool.
Objectives Achieved	This position will lead the department's climate initiatives, including the development of climate policies and studies, implementing the department's climate assessment responsibilities under county code to ensure they are completed in a consistent and thorough manner, and ensuring climate recommendations are integrated throughout each master plan and through the development review process. Climate change affects everyone, but disproportionately affects people of color, vulnerable populations, and low-income households. This position will have a focus on delivering climate policies and programs that achieve equitable outcomes.

Measures of Success	- Climate discussions consistently integrated throughout master planning efforts and the review of development applications, with community resilience as a central focus of the department's planning efforts. - This position request is in alignment with the Planning Department's strategic plan, specifically, the strategy, "Serve as independent advisor on land use decisions and policies to implement <i>Thrive</i>." One of the main outcomes of <i>Thrive</i> is environmental resilience. Dedicating one position to lead the department's coordination on climate initiatives and policy efforts will advancing the department's work to reach the climate goals of the county.
Strategic Plan Priority(ies) and Action(s)	Priority 1: Employees - Strategy 1.3: Create and promote pathways for professional growth Priority 2: Communities and Partners - Strategy 2.5: Strengthen collaboration with partner agencies Priority 4: Innovation - Strategy 4.3: Share and exchange information and best practices within the agency, regionally, and nationally Priority 5: Leadership - Strategy 5.2: Serve as an independent advisor on land use decisions and policies to implement <i>Thrive Montgomery 2050</i> - Action 5.2.10: Prepare a comprehensive resilience functional master plan - Strategy 5.4: Advance the recommendations of the county's Climate Action Plan and environmental recommendations in <i>Thrive</i> - Action 5.4.1: Fund a new FTE focused on climate initiatives - Action 5.4.5: Develop environmental design guidelines to incorporate nature-based design solutions that will mitigate climate impacts, increase climate-resiliency and adaptation, and support biodiversity - Action 5.4.8: Incorporate sustainable development standards into planning efforts - Action 5.4.9: Study the impacts of climate change on farming and the environmental resources in the Ag Reserve; develop recommendations and identify best practices to address these impacts

2. CYBERSECURITY – IT/TELECOM SPECIALIST III

Information Technology & Innovation Division

Budget Request	\$137,833 (Grade 28, 1.0 WY) (mid-point plus benefits)
Description	Montgomery Planning requests funding for a Cybersecurity Specialist III position to safeguard the department’s growing digital infrastructure and ensure secure, equitable access to planning services for all residents. At its core, the measure of cybersecurity success lies in the organization’s ability to protect assets, maintain operational continuity, and nurture user trust, all while adapting to new threats and business models. It is Montgomery Planning Department’s best interest to invest in a cybersecurity team to leverage cybersecurity tools and resources to safeguard the integrity, availability, and reliability of the systems and data that underpin every interaction. As the department’s reliance on digital infrastructure grows, so does the urgency to strengthen its cybersecurity posture. This investment is not just technical, it’s foundational to achieving the goals outlined in <i>Thrive Montgomery 2050</i>, the Climate Action Plan, Vision Zero, and the County Technology Strategic Plan. <i>Why this role is critical</i> Montgomery Planning’s websites and portals are essential tools for public engagement, transparency, and service delivery. They host: • Sector and master plans • Housing data and policy updates • Planning Board schedules and public hearings • Development application forms and fee schedules • GIS maps, ePlans, and interactive tools • Virtual town halls, surveys, and equity-focused planning resources As digital engagement expands, so do the risks. A Cybersecurity Specialist III would: • Monitor and respond to threats across planning systems and platforms • Ensure compliance with county and state cybersecurity frameworks • Protect sensitive data from breaches, manipulation, or unauthorized access • Safeguard public trust in digital engagement tools, especially for marginalized communities • Support secure inter-agency communication during emergencies or traffic incidents This position is not a luxury, it’s a necessity. It ensures that Montgomery Planning can continue to deliver secure, inclusive, and resilient services in an increasingly digital and data-driven environment. Given the growing complexity and frequency of cybersecurity threats, it is essential that we establish a dedicated cybersecurity position within the ITI division, not CAS. The nature of our operations, systems, and data flows are distinct from enterprise-wide concerns and require specialized, embedded oversight.

	<i>Unique threat landscape in ITI</i> ITI manages a suite of systems and platforms that are tailored to our department’s mission-critical functions. These include: • Custom-built planning and permitting applications • GIS platforms and spatial data services • Public engagement tools and portals • Legacy systems with specialized integrations • Sensitive datasets tied to land use, development, and infrastructure These systems are not only unique, they are also high-value targets. Recently we have experienced: • Phishing attempts targeting planning staff credentials • Bot-driven scraping of public-facing datasets • Unauthorized API access attempts on mapping platforms • Malware probes on legacy systems with limited vendor support • Denial-of-service attempts during public comment periods These are not generic threats, they are tailored to the systems and workflows we manage. A centralized cybersecurity role in CAS would not have the operational proximity or domain-specific insight to respond effectively or proactively.
Objectives Achieved	The community and county rely upon robust access to Montgomery Planning websites and portals for communications on Planning initiatives and updates, sector and master plans, housing data and policy updates, Planning Board meeting schedules and agendas, public hearings, the Development Applications Guide and application forms and fee schedules, GIS maps, ePlans, and more. Strengthening Montgomery County’s cybersecurity posture directly supports the goals and metrics outlined in several strategic plans, including <i>Thrive Montgomery 2050</i>, the Climate Action Plan, and the Vision Zero Action Plan. Specifically, <i>Thrive Montgomery 2050</i> emphasizes modernizing infrastructure and services to support a vibrant economy. Cybersecurity ensures the reliability and safety of digital systems that underpin housing, transit, and economic development initiatives. Secure digital access is essential for equitable service delivery, especially in underserved communities. Cybersecurity helps protect sensitive data and ensures trust in online services. <i>Thrive</i> relies on data to guide land use and development. Cybersecurity safeguards the integrity of planning data and systems. The Climate Action Plan includes strategies like Building Energy Performance Standards and electric vehicle infrastructure. These rely on secure digital systems to monitor and manage energy use. Cybersecurity protects critical infrastructure (e.g., water, energy, transportation) from cyber threats that could disrupt climate resilience efforts. Secure systems ensure safe and trustworthy communication with residents about climate initiatives and emergency alerts. Vision Zero relies on crash data, predictive analytics, and smart traffic systems. Cybersecurity ensures this data is accurate and protected from tampering. As the county deploys smart signals, bike lane sensors, and pedestrian safety tech, cybersecurity is essential to prevent system failures or malicious interference. Cybersecurity supports secure communication between agencies during

	traffic incidents and public safety emergencies. The County Technology Strategic Plan calls for upgrading legacy systems to reduce vulnerabilities and improve efficiency and to provide all residents safe, equitable access to secure platforms. Cybersecurity frameworks support transparency, accountability, and alignment with county-wide strategic goals. Montgomery Planning is committed to engaging diverse communities through digital platforms—such as virtual town halls, online surveys, and interactive maps. Cybersecurity ensures these tools are secure from breaches, protecting user data and participation, especially in marginalized communities who may rely more heavily on mobile or public internet access. Cybersecurity helps to prevent unauthorized access or manipulation of data in tools including the Community Equity Index, Equity Focus Areas, and historical segregation maps which inform planning decisions. Strong cybersecurity also prevents disruptions or misinformation in public engagement and reinforces confidence in Montgomery Planning Department’s commitment to fair and inclusive planning.
Measures of Success	• System outages or data breaches that could delay development reviews, permit processing, or public engagement are prevented. • Costly recovery efforts, legal issues, and reputational damage are avoided, freeing up resources for planning priorities.
Strategic Plan Priority(ies) and Action(s)	Priority 4: Innovation • Strategy 4.1: Advance use of cutting-edge technology to push and stay ahead of the industry • Action 4.1.1: Enhance cyber security posture and improve cyber resilience • Action 4.1.2: Invest in technologies that improve efficiency and resilience, and allow the Department to employ cutting-edge approaches to our work

3. ENGAGEMENT SPECIALIST – PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND MARKETING SPEC III Communications & Engagement Division	
Budget Request	\$137,833 (Grade 28, 1.0 WY) (mid-point plus benefits)
Description	Montgomery Planning is requesting funding for a new Engagement Specialist position to support the department’s expanding public engagement efforts and ensure equitable, consistent, and impactful community involvement across all planning initiatives. This role is essential to: • Coordinate engagement activities across planning teams to ensure alignment with the department’s Equitable Engagement Guide and strategic goals. • Support and sustain the Community Planning Academy (CPA), a flagship initiative designed to educate and empower residents to participate meaningfully in the planning process. • Develop communications content that raises awareness of engagement opportunities and highlights community voices and planning outcomes. • Strengthen inclusive outreach by identifying and removing barriers to participation, especially for historically underrepresented communities. Why this role is critical: <i>Growing Demand for Engagement</i> As planning projects increasingly emphasize community-driven outcomes, the volume and complexity of engagement activities have grown. A dedicated specialist ensures these efforts are well-coordinated, culturally responsive, and accessible. <i>Equity in Action</i> Understanding the planning process is a key barrier to participation. The Engagement Specialist will help bridge that gap by managing the CPA and developing tools that foster transparency and trust. <i>Strategic Communications</i> This role will create targeted messaging and outreach strategies that reflect the diversity of Montgomery County’s communities and ensure residents are informed and invited to participate. <i>Sustaining the Community Planning Academy</i> The Community Planning Academy cannot be maintained or expanded without dedicated staff. This position ensures continuity, quality, and growth of the program.
Objectives Achieved	A position to assist with community engagement and the Community Planning Academy. Understanding the planning process is essential to removing the barriers that prevent residents from participating in the planning process. In addition to maintaining the Community Planning Academy, which fosters understanding of the planning and development review process, this position would coordinate the engagement happening across the department and develop communications to raise awareness about the department’s engagement efforts.

Measures of Success	Once hired, it will be part of this position's work program to track key performance data on department communications and coordinate with planning teams to determine whether engagement efforts are successful.
Strategic Plan Priority(ies) and Action(s)	Priority 2: Communities and Partners • Action 2.1.2: Dedicate a point person within each applicable division to focus on community building and resident engagement • Action 2.1.3: Collect baseline data through a survey on perception of county residents about planning, development and engagement preferences. • Action 2.1.6: Leverage and maintain Planning staff relationships built through master plan efforts • Action 2.1.7: Prioritize strategic communications planning for each plan, project and policy initiative • Action 2.1.8: Remove barriers to participation by non-English speakers • Action 2.2.1: Support and strengthen resident participation in planning efforts • Action 2.2.4: Employ and enhance the Equitable Engagement Guide to integrate social equity and cultural diversity through master planning and placemaking practices • Action 2.6.1: Develop and launch customer relationship management tool to document staff relationships with community-based organizations • Action 2.6.2: Crowdsource ideas/conduct competitions for community members to submit ideas • Action 2.6.4: Launch and sustain the Planning Academy Priority 4: Innovation • Action 4.1.5: Develop internal communications and training protocols for dissemination of new technology and tools • Action 4.2.1: Improve communications across the Department to promote innovation topic areas that different Divisions are focused on Priority 5: Leadership • Action 5.8.1: Launch education campaign to raise awareness for the Department's role and branding • Action 5.8.3: Strengthen relationships with the media, bloggers, and influencers focused on the work of the Department

4. MASTER PLANNING – CULTURAL RESOURCES PLANNER I

Historic Preservation Division

Budget Request	\$110,268 (Grade 20, 1.0 WY) (mid-point plus benefits)
Description	Montgomery Planning is requesting funding for a new Cultural Resource Planner position to expand the capacity of the Historic Preservation (HP) Division and meet growing public demand for inclusive, timely, and equitable preservation services. <i>Current staffing limitations</i> The HP Division is currently staffed with only two Cultural Resource Planners who serve as historians supporting three area master plan teams in addition to sole responsibility for the Master Plan for Historic Preservation and the Locational Atlas & Index of Historic Sites. At this staffing level: • Properties have remained on the Locational Atlas for over 50 years without a final determination on historic designation. • Public requests for designation to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation (MPHP) often face multi-year delays due to limited staff capacity. • Staff are unable to conduct new research or prepare standalone MPHP amendments in a timely manner while simultaneously supporting area master plans. <i>Growing demand for inclusive preservation</i> Recent community requests have focused on recognizing sites tied to: • Women’s history • African American heritage • Midcentury modern architecture However, the current team lacks the capacity to proactively address additional underrepresented narratives, including: • LGBTQ+ history • Asian American and Pacific Islander heritage • Hispanic heritage • Other culturally significant sites currently absent from the MPHP <i>Purpose and impact of the new position</i> This new Cultural Resource Planner would: • Accelerate public designation requests, reducing wait times and improving responsiveness to community interest. • Advance equity in preservation by researching and preparing MPHP amendments that reflect the full diversity of Montgomery County’s history. • Support area master plans with timely and thorough historic resource analysis. • Complete and expand special projects including the Mapping Segregation Project Phase 2 and other initiatives. • Ensure compliance with preservation policies and strengthen the county’s ability to protect its cultural assets. This position is essential to modernizing Montgomery County’s preservation program, honoring the stories of all communities, and ensuring that the county’s built environment reflects the richness of its shared history.

Objectives Achieved	Currently, the HP Division is staffed with two Cultural Resource Planners dedicated as historians to support three area teams for new master plan initiatives. At this level of staffing, properties have remained on the Locational Atlas for 50 years without a final determination on historic designation. Additionally, staff are not able to support members of the public who wish to list their properties to the MPHP in a timely manner as they do not have the capacity to undertake new research and prepare these standalone master plan amendments while concurrently assisting the area teams. New requests from the public for designation typically must wait several years before the HP staff are able to fit these requests into the work program. Recent requests have focused on listing sites related to women's history, African American history, and midcentury modern architecture. Staff would also then be available to work on new MPHP amendments focusing on LGBTQ+ history, Asian American/Pacific Islander history, Hispanic Heritage, and other listings for cultural heritage that are currently absent from the MPHP. With an additional planner, it would be the goal for the Division to have new equity portions of master planning chapters and other new histories produced entirely in-house instead of relying on any additional consultant funds. This would allow the master planning teams to use funds saved on public outreach or other plan-specific budget items.
Measures of Success	The Locational Atlas resurvey and Mapping Segregation will be entirely completed within three to four years. Additionally, the HP Division will be fully staffed and will be able to research and write new histories focused on racial equity and diversity for all area master plans, in addition to new and inclusive stand-alone MPHP amendments.
Strategic Plan Priority(ies) and Action(s)	Priority 1: Employees • Strategy 1.3: Create and promote pathways for professional growth, career advancement, and succession planning Priority 2: Communities & Partners • Strategy 2.4: Focus on historically underinvested regions and vulnerable communities • Action 2.4.6: Complete Mapping Segregation Phase 2 Priority 3: Efficiency

5. MASTER PLANNING AND REGULATORY – PLANNER II

Upcounty Planning Division

Budget Request	\$121,781 (Grade 24, 1.0 WY) (mid-point plus benefits)
Description	Upcounty is requesting a new Planner II position to help lead anticipated master planning efforts on the horizon, to help better implement master plans after approval and adoption, and to help review the anticipated influx of regulatory applications from Germantown and Clarksburg. To better support master planning efforts and implementation while processing the anticipated surge in development applications from Germantown and Clarksburg over the next 5–10 years, the division urgently needs additional staff capacity to: • Lead and support new master planning efforts • Implement adopted plans more effectively • Keep pace with regulatory review demands This Planner II position will serve as a “second chair” on master plans—an essential role that allows newer staff to build experience while relieving pressure on senior planners: • Prevents burnout among experienced staff by distributing workload more sustainably • Builds a pipeline of planning leadership by allowing junior staff to grow into lead roles • Improves plan quality and continuity by ensuring consistent staffing from visioning through implementation The Department does an excellent job at producing plans, but limited resources and increasing master plan demands make it difficult to sustain current efforts while also focusing on plan implementation efforts. Implementation often takes a backseat to as staff turns its attention to the next plans in the department’s work program. Implementation of complex master plans requires sustained and deliberate effort if the plans are to come to fruition and deliver on the vision and expectations that were cultivated through the master plan process by the public and decision makers. With the anticipated influx of development plans in Germantown and Clarksburg over the next five to 10 years, the Upcounty Planning division will need additional staff to process the anticipated applications and keep up with the current trend of regulatory applications. This is a critical investment in the future of Upcounty. With this Planner II position, Montgomery Planning will be better equipped to manage growth, implement community visions, and deliver on the promise of inclusive and responsive planning.
Objectives Achieved	To allow staff to be more responsive, more accessible, and more embedded within the communities they serve. Staff will be more efficient at conducting master plans in a timely manner, while allowing more public participation and engagement throughout the master planning, implementation, and regulatory processes. Additional staff will allow us to better deliver on the vision of community plans, rather than solely relying on market conditions and other forces and trends to determine a plan's outcome and allow the Department to continue to address equity and diversity of staff.

Measures of Success	• Stronger presence in Upcounty communities, with staff more embedded and responsive to local needs • Improved public trust and satisfaction, reflected in feedback and participation metrics • More equitable outcomes in plan implementation, especially in historically underserved areas • Reduced turnaround time for master plan deliverables and regulatory reviews • Increased public engagement in Upcounty master plans (e.g., number of participants, feedback submissions, outreach events) • Higher percentage of master plan recommendations implemented within 2-3 years of adoption • Improved regulatory throughput: ability to process more applications without delays, especially in Germantown and Clarksburg • Shortened wait time for community-requested planning initiatives or amendments
Strategic Plan Priority(ies) and Action(s)	Priority 2: Communities and Partners • Action 2.1.6: Leverage and maintain Planning staff relationships built through master plan efforts • Action 2.2.1: Support and strengthen resident participation in planning efforts • Action 2.2.5: Advance and fund the Department's Placemaking Strategic Plan • Action 2.6.3: Identify neighborhood liaisons within each planning division to serve as a point of contact with local civic associations and other neighborhood organizations Priority 3: Efficiency • Action 3.3.7: Update and enforce the Lead Agency MOU to facilitate review of development applications • Action 3.3.8: Enforce the Planning Process MOU with MCPS to ensure early coordination on each agency's planning efforts

Alt. MASTER PLANNING – PLANNER II

East County Planning Division

Budget Request	\$121,781 (Grade 24, 1.0 WY) (mid-point plus benefits)
Description	Montgomery Planning is requesting funding for a new Community Engagement Planner position to support four major master plan efforts in East County scheduled for FY 2026. This position is essential to ensuring more robust, inclusive, and effective resident participation in the planning process - especially in communities that have historically been underrepresented. This position is not just about outreach; it's about impact. It ensures that East County residents are not only heard, but actively shaping the future of their communities. With this investment, Montgomery Planning can deliver on its promise of equitable, community-driven planning. Further, this Planner II position will serve as a “second chair” on master plans—an essential role that allows newer staff to build experience while relieving pressure on senior planners: • Prevents burnout among experienced staff by distributing workload more sustainably • Builds a pipeline of planning leadership by allowing junior staff to grow into lead roles • Improves plan quality and continuity by ensuring consistent staffing from visioning through implementation
Objectives Achieved	• More comprehensive engagement across all four East County master plans, with tailored outreach strategies that reflect the diversity of each community. • Improved equity outcomes by embedding inclusive engagement practices that align with Montgomery Planning’s Equity Agenda and the Equitable Engagement Guide. • Stronger public trust and transparency through consistent, accessible communication and opportunities for meaningful input. • Better alignment between community vision and plan outcomes, ensuring that master plans reflect lived experiences and local priorities.
Measures of Success	• Increased number and diversity of residents participating in master plan engagement activities. • Higher satisfaction and trust in the planning process, measured through post-engagement surveys and feedback. • More equitable representation in plan recommendations and implementation strategies. • Timely delivery of engagement milestones across all four master plans.
Strategic Plan Priority(ies) and Action(s)	Priority 2: Communities and Partners • Action 2.1.6: Leverage and maintain Planning staff relationships built through master plan efforts • Action 2.2.1: Support and strengthen resident participation in planning efforts • Action 2.6.3: Identify neighborhood liaisons within each planning division to serve as a point of contact with local civic associations and other neighborhood organizations