

**MEMORANDUM**

March 1, 2012

TO: Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee  
Health and Human Services Committee

FROM: Vivian Yao, Legislative Analyst *vy*

SUBJECT: **Worksession – Wheaton Library and Community Recreation Center**

The Planning, Housing and Economic Development (PHED) and Health and Human Services (HHS) Committees are scheduled to review the County Executive's recommendation for the Wheaton Library and Community Recreation Center in the FY13-18 Capital Improvements Program (CIP). The project was added as an amendment to the FY11-16 CIP. The recommended project description form (PDF) is attached to the packet at ©1-2.

Representatives from the Departments of Public Libraries, Recreation, and General Services, and the Office of Management and Budget will be available to discuss this project.

**BACKGROUND**

***Wheaton Library***

The library was opened in 1960 and was renovated in 1985. Problems with building conditions has continued for a number of years, and a project providing for the complete renovation of the Wheaton Library was approved initially as part of the FY05-10 CIP. However, the Council deleted the project from the FY09-14 CIP because of uncertainty regarding the scope of the project and the possibility of relocation to a site in the Central Business District. The current Wheaton Library site is located on County property.

***Wheaton Community Center***

The Wheaton Community Center was opened in 1963 by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) and is located on park land. The Recreation Department programs the facility. The Recreation Strategic Facility Plan 1997-2010 called for replacing the existing facility with a larger full service center to serve the Wheaton/Kemp Mill communities. The Wheaton Community Center-Rafferty project was proposed in the FY09-14 CIP to renovate and expand a portion of the former Good Counsel High School, which was

designated for a public purpose as a part of a site development rezoning decision. The Rafferty Center, along with a renovated Wheaton Recreation Center, was intended to provide the equivalent of a full service community recreation center. Space limitations and other challenges with the site made the project undesirable, and it was eliminated from the CIP when this project was adopted.

**WHEATON LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTER (PDF AT ©1)**

In \$000	Total	Total 6 years	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18
<b>Recommend</b>	<b>35,983</b>	<b>35,792</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,430</b>	<b>3,062</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>30,300</b>

*Recommended funding source: \$35.683 million in GO Bonds and \$300,000 in current revenue. No appropriations are requested or estimated for FY13 and FY14.*

**Project Description:** The project provides for the development of a combined facility to include a new library and community recreation center. The scope of the project includes the development of a Program of Requirements (POR), feasibility study, design, and construction.

**Project Highlights:** Executive staff reports that the feasibility study, informed by a draft POR<sup>1</sup>, is under way and is expected to be completed in late Spring or early Summer 2012. The estimated cost to complete the feasibility study and finalize the POR is approximately \$191,000. Design has been programmed to start in FY15 because of fiscal constraints. Executive Branch staff reports that design work could theoretically start after approval of the feasibility study which is scheduled to be completed in late Spring/early Summer 2012.

Issues that still need be resolved include to what extent efficiencies can be realized by co-locating the two facilities; the transfer of the Wheaton Recreation Center property from M-NCPPC to the County; relocating existing roads and access; addressing storm water management issues; and preparing concept layouts for the building and parking on the combined site. The PDF also notes that the Library Department is working on new strategic plans for facilities and technology that may impact programmatic and design planning documents.

The County Executive programmed construction costs for the project starting in FY18 "to demonstrate his commitment to the community." In the absence of completed planning and design work, the construction estimate for construction is based on "the most recent completed or under construction library and recreation projects of similar size; such as the White Oak Community Recreation Center (\$17 million) and the Germantown Library (\$11.5 million)." Council staff notes that construction on the Germantown Library began in FY04.

The PDF indicates that there are "serious moisture problems" and outdated building systems associated with the Wheaton Library. Council staff requested information on anticipated costs to remediate these problems before the new facility is built; however, this information was not available at the time of packet publication.

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<sup>1</sup> The draft POR was not made available for review by the Council.

**Testimony and Correspondence:** The Council has received testimony from the Wheaton Library Advisory Committee with support from the Wheaton-Kensington Chamber of Commerce, the Montgomery County Library Board, and the Friends of the Library, Montgomery County (see ©5-10) and correspondence requesting that the project be expedited. The Planning Board has also indicated its support for including construction funds for the project in the FY13-18 CIP.

## **Discussion Issues**

**Project Schedule:** The Committees may want to consider whether this project is of a higher priority than others in the CIP, and should be expedited if funding can be made available. Council staff understands that the project is a top priority for both the Recreation Department and the Department of Public Libraries. Moving the schedule up could potentially save funding needed to adequately maintain the building during the time that design and construction is delayed.<sup>2</sup> Advocates of the project suggest that the project would positively impact efforts to revitalize the area. Council staff notes that the project will have less operating budget impact than new recreation centers and libraries because the facilities that will be replaced have existing staff.

**Construction Funding:** Council staff understands that construction funding is typically programmed after completing a feasibility study, a program of requirements, and conceptual and schematic design work. Waiting to program construction costs until some design work has occurred provides more information about project scope and costs and any potentially complicating factors for the Council's review. The recommended CIP explains at page 4-2: "Following this process, projects will be in a more effective position to use available resources." Council staff believes that there is great potential that actual construction costs will diverge significantly from those included in the recommended PDF, given that the scope and size of the building is uncertain and the current cost estimate for the library component is approximately 14 years older than the recommended construction start date.

**Source of Funding:** Council staff believes that completing the feasibility study and finalizing the POR are activities that are not debt-eligible activities and, as such, should not be appropriately funded by G.O. Bonds. The Council had approved current revenue in the approved PDF based on reported estimates for completing these tasks. The recommended PDF, however, shows only current revenue expenditures in FY18, presumably for the library collection.

### **Council staff recommendation:**

- **Remove funding for construction until the feasibility study, the finalization of the POR, and conceptual and schematic design has been completed.**
- **Program \$191,000 in current revenue to support completion of the feasibility study and POR development.**

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<sup>2</sup> Council staff requested information on maintenance and other measures needed to keep the Wheaton Library operational until the new project begins and the capital or operating costs associated with these measures; however, responsive information was not available at the time of packet publication.

# Wheaton Library and Community Recreation Center -- No. 361202

Category **Culture and Recreation**  
 Subcategory **Libraries**  
 Administering Agency **General Services**  
 Planning Area **Kensington-Wheaton**

Date Last Modified **January 08, 2012**  
 Required Adequate Public Facility **No**  
 Relocation Impact **None**  
 Status **Planning Stage**

### EXPENDITURE SCHEDULE (\$000)

Cost Element	Total	Thru FY11	Est. FY12	Total 6 Years	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	Beyond 6 Years
Planning, Design, and Supervision	8,011	0	191	7,820	0	0	2,430	3,000	0	2,390	0
Land	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Site Improvements and Utilities	2,170	0	0	2,170	0	0	0	0	0	2,170	0
Construction	23,070	0	0	23,070	0	0	0	0	0	23,070	0
Other	2,732	0	0	2,732	0	0	0	62	0	2,670	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>35,983</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>35,792</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,430</b>	<b>3,062</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>30,300</b>	<b>0</b>

### FUNDING SCHEDULE (\$000)

Current Revenue: General	300	0	0	300	0	0	0	0	0	300	0
G.O. Bonds	35,683	0	191	35,492	0	0	2,430	3,062	0	30,000	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>35,983</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>35,792</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,430</b>	<b>3,062</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>30,300</b>	<b>0</b>

#### DESCRIPTION

This project will provide for the development of a combined facility to include a new Wheaton Library and Wheaton Community Recreation Center. Included in the scope is the development of a Program of Requirements (POR) and conceptual design followed by full design services and construction of the facility.

The Library and the Recreation Center will be comparable to libraries and recreation centers of similar service needs. These building sizes will be analyzed in greater detail to see what efficiencies of area and program can be made due to the shared use of some spaces. These could include lobbies, meeting rooms, restrooms, and parking which could reduce the overall space requirements and the operational costs.

Other issues to be studied include the transfer of the Wheaton Recreation Community Center property from M-NCPPC to the County, providing road access to the residences by relocating existing roads and access, determining how storm water management can be provided, and preparing concept layouts for the building and parking on the new combined site.

New Strategic Plans for Library Facilities and Information Technology will be completed by Summer of 2012. These plans will shape the key programmatic and design planning documents for this facility. These plans will recognize the need to adjust to how to best deliver library services given the rapid changes in technology.

#### ESTIMATED SCHEDULE

Facility concept study is being planned and expected to be completed in FY12. Design phase estimated to start in late summer 2014 (FY15) and last 18 months.

#### COST CHANGE

Project budget is based on the past historical costs for a Community Recreation Center and Library project. These costs may change as more is learned regarding the implications of a shared use facility as well as the completion of the Libraries Strategic Facilities and Information Technology Plans.

#### JUSTIFICATION

The Wheaton Library is one of the busiest libraries in Montgomery County, with over 535,000 items circulated and more than 410,000 visits by the public in FY11. The Friends of the Library book sale is located on the lower level as is a satellite office of the Gilchrist Center. There are serious moisture problems and the building does not meet current mechanical, safety and building codes. The mechanical, elevator and HVAC systems are outdated and worn, and they are not energy efficient. The facility was opened in 1960 and was renovated in 1985. It is in need of space reconfiguration to meet current library information needs.

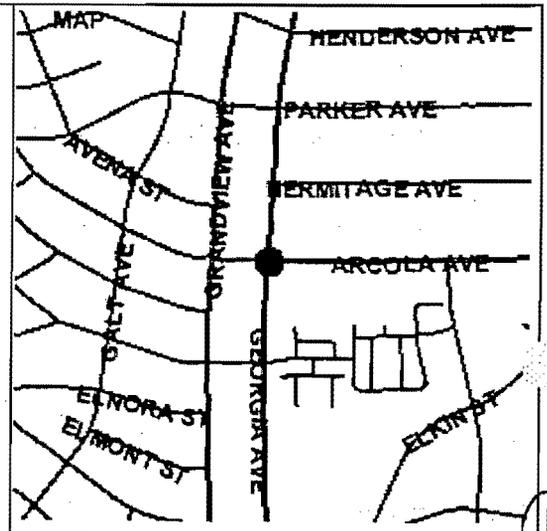
The Department of Recreation has operated the existing Wheaton Recreation Center, owned by the M-NCPPC, for many years. As early as 1997, this facility was designated for replacement with a larger full service facility, originally included in Facility Planning and Site Evaluation projects as the Kemp Mill (later Wheaton/Kemp Mill) Community Recreation Center. In the 2005 update to the Department's facility plan and in the FY07-12 CIP, a "Wheaton Area Recreation Facilities" study was included in the MCG Facility Planning Project #508768 for this purpose. That study included site and structure, stabilization and design development for future renovation, remodeling, and expansion of the Wheaton Community Recreation Center - Rafferty to provide an additional recreation facility to complement the existing facility. After review of the Rafferty component, space limitations, utility and plumbing challenges did not make it feasible to complete the project on its current site. A decision was made to pursue an alternative combined facility.

#### FISCAL NOTE

The site for the present Wheaton Library is presently owned by the County. The site of the present Wheaton Recreation Community Center is owned by

APPROPRIATION AND EXPENDITURE DATA		
Date First Appropriation	FY12	(\$000)
First Cost Estimate	FY12	35,983
Current Scope		
Last FY's Cost Estimate		250
Appropriation Request	FY13	0
Appropriation Request Est.	FY14	0
Supplemental Appropriation Request		0
Transfer		0
Cumulative Appropriation		250
Expenditures / Encumbrances		0
Unencumbered Balance		250
Partial Closeout Thru	FY10	0
New Partial Closeout	FY11	0
Total Partial Closeout		0

**COORDINATION**  
 Department of General Services  
 Department of Libraries  
 Department of Recreation  
 Department of Transportation  
 M-NCPPC  
 State Highways  
 Mid-County Regional Services Center  
 WSSC  
 Pepco



## Wheaton Library and Community Recreation Center -- No. 361202 (continued)

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M-NCPPC. The issues associated with the transfer of the property will be identified during the planning phase.

Other cost includes \$300,000 for the collection.

### **OTHER DISCLOSURES**

- A pedestrian impact analysis will be performed during design or is in progress.

There is no approved bid yet (for Phase 2); all Phase 2 costs are based on estimates. The increased costs are due primarily to new cost estimates based on more complete documentation of the project. However, for example, the numbers also represent escalation, additional requirements for prevailing wage monitoring, and increased permitting fees.

- The PDF includes \$700,000 in current revenue to support the collection. How did the Department determine the amount of additional collection needed? Why is funding for the new collection being appropriated in FY13 and FY14? Will these new collection materials be put into circulation at the current Silver Spring Library site?

The new facility is physically larger, built to serve more residents, and will be busier due to its urban location, longer hours, and co-location with the Purple Line. The current collection is older, and requires substantial modification given the many changes in demographics, library materials technology, and the surrounding community since the opening of the original library. \$700,000 will provide for an approximate 25% modification/enhancement of the existing 102,000 item collection, providing the equivalent of 28,000 new book volumes at an average cost of \$25 per volume. The actual materials modification will be composed of a mix of electronic data sources, e-readers, books, media, and other material types or technologies needed to allow the new library to better meet the needs of the community and present library materials via modern technology, print, media, electronic data, and other technological means of delivering library content. It takes a substantial amount of time and effort to plan for such an enhancement, typically two to three years before opening, as was the case for Germantown and Rockville libraries. There are also some follow-up investments made after opening to adjust to expressed customer needs. Any physical materials purchased will not be used in the current facility, but will be stored in anticipation of opening day and the first three months of operation in the new building.

- Should the cumulative appropriation in the PDF be 59,670 (the cumulative appropriation plus the FY12 appropriation request in last approved PDF)?

The current Approved PDF, as amended last year ([http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/omb/FY12/appr/cip\\_pdf/710302.pdf](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/omb/FY12/appr/cip_pdf/710302.pdf), FY12 Approved Capital Budget and... Volume 2, p.7-67) had Cumulative Appropriation of \$56,590,000 plus FY12 Appropriation of \$3,060,000, totaling the \$59,650,000 of Cumulative Appropriation shown on the Recommended PDF.

### **Wheaton Library and CRC**

- What work has been completed on the project to date?

A feasibility study is under way, informed by a Draft POR. The Library Department is working on new strategic plans for Facilities and Technology, which may have an impact.

- Has the feasibility study been completed on the project, and if not, when will it be conducted and completed?

The feasibility study is expected to be completed late Spring / early Summer 2012.

- What are the estimated costs needed to complete the feasibility study and develop the program of requirements? Are these costs included in the current PDF or part of another PDF, e.g., Facility Planning-MCG?

Estimated cost is \$191k as indicated on the PDF. Costs are in Wheaton Library and CRC PDF.

- The PDF suggests that there are "serious moisture problems" and outdated building systems associated with the Wheaton Library. What are the anticipated annual costs to maintain the existing library and recreation facilities before replacement can occur?

Answer will be provided 2/8.

- Is it possible for design work to be started on the project before FY15?

Fiscal capacity determined the recommended start of the project. Design work could theoretically start after approval of the referenced feasibility study.

- How was the total construction cost estimate calculated? Why is the Executive recommending that construction costs be programmed in the PDF when the POR for the project has not been completed and construction costs are typically not programmed until the design schematics.

The Executive chose to include an estimate of construction costs for this project to demonstrate his commitment to the community. The construction cost estimate is based on the most recent completed or under construction library and recreation projects of similar size; such as the White Oak Community Recreation Center (\$17 million) and the Germantown Library (\$11.5 million).

I'm Jill Brantley, speaking the Wheaton Library Advisory Committee and joined in the spirit of these remarks by the Wheaton-Kensington Chamber of Commerce (see attached letter from Kathleen Guinan).

We ask that you consider two changes to the Wheaton Library Renovation in the CIP, these changes let Council be good stewards both conservatively in saving money and innovatively in supporting economic growth. Please consider moving the start of the design phase closer to the completion of the feasibility study, provided for in this year's CIP, and moving the start of construction closer to the completion of the design—there are nearly two year gaps in both cases. These gaps create delays that will cost the County money in terms of upkeep of the present building, changes in construction costs as time passes and, most importantly loss of opportunities the library both provides and creates.

I want to reiterate what the CIP acknowledges. The Wheaton Library while still standing and serving citizens—**at a rate of 1500 visits per day**—is in bad shape: built in 1960; it is mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and not equipped at the most basic level of enough electrical outlets to service today's communications revolution; the moving parts—doors, HVAC, plumbing—are being held together by gravity and the force of will of the staff; and the building leaks top and bottom when it rains. Our need is very real.

But our need is also a real opportunity, which we can see if we revisit the CIP's classification of libraries as part of "Culture and Recreation"—a classification that misrepresents what the 21<sup>st</sup> century library is about ("culture" being too often understood as "high art"). An alternative understanding of the library can be found in sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's thesis that culture is one of **four** types of capital: where **economic capital** is assets and income, **cultural capital** is the ability to navigate the systems of knowledge deemed significant by a society—including, technical and socio-political as well as aesthetic knowledge; **social capital** is networks and relations one can activate to achieve a goal, and **symbolic capital** is traits and possessions that are accorded prestige. The Wheaton Renovation can give Montgomery County all four kinds of capital: it will improve direct services to business, especially small businesses; provide a location and expertise for people seeking the cultural capital they need for today's workplace, offer state of the art meeting rooms where business and civic groups can build social capital; and as a combined Library and Recreation Center create symbolic capital as a "gateway to Wheaton," a place to live that nourishes the whole person. We think moving Wheaton up in the CIP is a capital idea.

Wheaton & Kensington  
Chamber of Commerce

the  
voice  
for  
business!

February 2, 2012

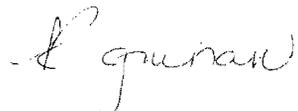
Dear Montgomery County Council and County Executive,

The Wheaton & Kensington Chamber of Commerce represents businesses that are part of the economic revitalization of the Wheaton area. We support the renovation project that would expand the Wheaton Library and combine with the Recreation Center next door so that they can coordinate programs. Wheaton has a growing level of residential development, and the community needs the necessary infrastructure.

We support and urge the inclusion of the design phase funding in Montgomery County's new Capital Improvements Budget for the library and recreation center renovation project on Georgia Avenue. We also support moving start of construction to a time closer to the completion of the design phase.

Wheaton is the fourth most used library in the county, and plays an important role in the community. Many people use the library as a place to study for college degrees and professional certificates – which has an impact on growth in jobs. Since the library's scheduled 2009 renovation was delayed, there is now an urgent need for funding to carry out design studies for the library and recreation center renovation project.

Sincerely,



Kathleen Guinan  
President, Wheaton & Kensington Chamber of Commerce

Statement of Art Brodsky  
Member, Montgomery County Library Board  
Montgomery County Council Hearing on the FY 2013 Capital Budget  
and FY 2013-2018 Capital Improvements Program  
February 7, 2012

President Berlin, Vice President Navarro and members of the Council,

I'm Art Brodsky, a member of the Montgomery County Library Board. Thank you for the opportunity to spend a couple of minutes with you tonight to talk about libraries and the Capital Improvements Program.

As a general matter, it was very disappointing to see what had been done to libraries in the CIP, and equally disappointing why it had been done. Most of the work on libraries has been pushed off on the theory that Montgomery County Public Libraries did not have a strategic plan and an information technology plan sufficient to support any design and planning work.

That premise is entirely wrong. MCPL does have a strategic plan, and it is being implemented. The technology plan, which will be completed soon, does not have the items that should delay the start of planning and design for our library buildings. Many of the items in that plan deal with central computer services, such as updating the catalog, allowing for more online services, and RFID identification of materials, that have no or little bearing on an individual branch. These are projects run out of central servers. If a building needs increased Wi-Fi capability, then it's only a matter of another router or two, perhaps some cabling, but nothing that would prevent design and planning work from being done on a structure to be rehabilitated.

The space can be designed to be filled any number of ways -- from book shelves to more computer terminals. And, yes, we will still need books far into the future. And we will need the quiet, safe environments that libraries provide for doing homework or meeting a tutor, for research and reading.

I urge you to move at least some portion of the planning of the library projects into the FY 13 budget so that work can start on repairing structures that are urgently in need of repair.

Two projects in particular warrant your special attention. The first is the Wheaton Library and Recreation Center. The combination would be a fine one. We note that the library and senior center are combined in Damascus, and a library and rec center are combined in the Deanwood section of Washington, D.C. More than that, the Wheaton library is the gateway to the Wheaton business district, and the building is sadly in need of repair and updating, as it is one of the busiest branches in the system. The people of Wheaton deserve a recreation center. It was once thought that the Rafferty Center, left behind when the Our Lady of Good Counsel High School decamped for Olney, would be that rec center. Sadly, it is not. and the Recreation Center across from the library has seen better decades. It had seen better decades when I was in high school. Led Zeppelin may or may not have performed there. Starting the main design and planning for this complex facility in FY 2015 is unconscionable.

The Davis Library also is in a bad way, particularly on the ground floor, where there are problems with mold and with damp and unhealthy air in the meeting rooms which require staff time to combat. The CIP took note of "chronic air quality problems." Starting work in FY 17 on the project does grave disservice to the community. Please consider moving this up as well.

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL PREPARED BY  
FRANK JOSEPH FOR THE PROPOSED FY 13 CAPTITAL BUDGET  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2012

Good evening. My name is Frank Joseph and I live in District 1 of Montgomery County. I currently serve as volunteer President of Friends of the Library, Montgomery County, an organization I have been involved with for more than 6 years.

As Friends, our mission is to support and protect our public libraries so that they continue to serve our community. Libraries provide vital resources to our county residents. We're doing everything we can to support them; and we urge you, as members of the Council, to do the same.

There are several library construction projects outlined in the County Executive's proposed budget, including the completion of the Olney Library renovation by spring 2013; the completion of the Gaithersburg Library renovation and addition by spring 2013; and the new Silver Spring Library completion by fall 2014. It is critical that these projects stay on course for timely completion so that residents don't lose access to full library services and are forced to do without services they need.

That's what's happening in Gaithersburg and Olney right now. While Gaithersburg has an interim branch and Olney library patrons will have a temporary facility in place, the permanent library branches have been closed for an extended period of time. Residents have had to do without library services and programs such as public computer access for job seekers, English conversation clubs for New Americans, and free space for after school tutoring. For the benefit of their residents, finishing Gaithersburg and Olney must be made a priority.

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL PREPARED BY  
FRANK JOSEPH FOR THE PROPOSED FY 13 CAPITAL BUDGET  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2012

The new Silver Spring branch will replace a deteriorating facility that the community has outgrown. The Silver Spring community anxiously awaits completion by the scheduled date.

Two other needed library construction projects -- at the Wheaton and Davis branches -- have been delayed. The situation at Wheaton is particularly disappointing, since that community has been waiting for at least 10 years to know whether they will get a new branch or a renovated one. As you recall, last year, the project was removed from the capital budget entirely while community input meetings took place to determine whether it would be relocated to the business district.

The Wheaton library is the community hub. It is where small business owners go to plug in. It is where teens gather and study. The Wheaton community deserves a 21<sup>st</sup> century library. It is long overdue.

The Davis branch is too small. It cannot keep up with the demands of a community that is slated to see massive growth in the White Flint area alone. And most of the lower level of Davis cannot be used at all due to mold. This problem needs to be remediated at once.

We urge you to move these projects up in the budget process. The Wheaton and Davis communities need fully operational branches. They can no longer be patched.

There'll never be a better time to do it. Construction costs are at a low. Materials and labor will never be cheaper than they are right now. Please add these two projects to the budget. You'll be helping our communities while at the same time saving taxpayer dollars.

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL PREPARED BY  
FRANK JOSEPH FOR THE PROPOSED FY 13 CAPITAL BUDGET  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2012

Thank you for your time tonight and thank you for your ongoing support of  
libraries. Libraries still matter. Build them up. It is in *your* power to do so.