

MEMORANDUM

May 6, 2010

TO: County Council
 FROM: Amanda M. Mihill, Legislative Analyst *amihill*
 SUBJECT: **Consent Calendar:** FY11 Operating Budget for the Board of Elections

Management and Fiscal Policy Committee recommendation (2-0, Councilmember Navarro absent): approve the Executive's recommended budget with the following changes:

- lapse the vacant Office Services Coordinator position for 6 months to save \$35,485 (p.4); and
- add \$254,500 to the reconciliation list to fund payments to the State for the Touchscreen voting machines (p.4).

Under the Committee recommendation, the Board's budget would increase to \$8,194,325.

The Executive's recommendation for BOE is attached at ©1-5.

Overview

For FY11, the Executive recommends total expenditures of \$7,975,310 for BOE, a 78.5% increase from the FY10 approved budget.

(in \$000's)	FY09 Actual	FY10 Approved	FY11 CE Recommended	% Change FY10-FY11
Expenditures:				
General Fund	\$9,916,836	\$4,468,770	\$7,975,310	78.5%
Grant Fund	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0%
TOTAL Expenditures	\$9,916,836	\$4,468,770	\$7,975,310	78.5%
Positions:				
Full-time	28	28	28	0.0%
Part-time	0	0	0	0.0%
TOTAL Positions	28	28	28	0.0%
WORKYEARS	47.2	46.2	44.4	-3.9%

The Executive is not recommending a change in the number of full-time or part-time positions.

The FY11 Executive recommendation is a decrease of \$96,270 from the FY10 approved budget from the following identified same services adjustments:

Identified Same Services Adjustments:	
Group Insurance Adjustments	\$12,880
Retirement Adjustment	\$10,240
Annualization of FY10 Personnel Costs	\$820
Motor Pool Rate Adjustment	-\$2,500
Printing and Mail Adjustments	-\$47,530
Furlough Days	-\$70,180
NET SAME SERVICES ADJUSTMENT TOTAL	-\$96,270

Public Hearing Testimony

The Council received testimony from the League of Women Voters noting that there are “unknowns” which could require the Board’s budget to be supplemented during FY11, including early voting (©6).

FY11 Expenditure Issues

Many of the Board’s services are mandated by federal and state election law. Article 33 of the Maryland Code, §2-203, requires the County to appropriate funds to the local board of elections to cover the necessary and reasonable expenses incurred in the performance of its duties as prescribed by law.

1. Election Year Fluctuations (\$3,641,900).

The BOE workload fluctuates according to the following four-year election cycle:

FY11-FY14 Election Cycle		
Year	Election	Fiscal Year
One	State & County Primary and General	FY11
Two	Presidential Primary	FY12
Three	Presidential General	FY13
Four	Local & Municipal	FY14

The recommended FY11 Operating Budget reflects this cycle and contains several cost changes associated with election cycle changes. Additionally, the County Board is subject to State Election Law, which has imposed several unfunded mandates and BOE must continue to follow ever-changing directives from the State Board of Elections. The table on the following page summarizes these election year fluctuations.

Item	Amount
Temporary Clerical Services - Voter Registration Services	\$1,262,340
Election Judge Stipends	\$1,067,200
Election Cycle Overtime	\$485,810
Printing Costs	\$265,450
Sample Ballot Postage	\$160,000
Sample Ballot Printing	\$132,000
Election Cycle Changes	\$82,000
Building or Space Rental/Leases	\$63,000
Ballot and Supply Expenses - State Voting System	\$50,000
Local Telephone Service Charges	\$42,000
Polling Place Supplies	\$13,600
Computer Equipment	\$10,000
Costs Associated with Election & Canvassing Days	\$5,000
Repair and Maintenance Agreements for Office Equipment	\$3,500
Net Election Year Fluctuations Total	\$3,641,900

Committee recommendation (2-0, Councilmember Navarro absent): support the Executive's recommended budget for these items.

2. Add: Local Early Voting Costs (\$244,440)

The State passed legislation mandating early voting centers in all jurisdictions. Because of its population, the County is required to have 5 Early Voting Centers for 6 days before the primary and general elections. This line item includes costs related to re-keying early voting facilities, ballot cages, furniture for election judges, polling place supplies, provisional ballot bags, telephones, mileage, and staffing, including election judges. Not included in this amount are costs assessed by the State Board for items and equipment it provides for use in the Centers. BOE indicates that Early Voting Centers will be in county-owned facilities so funds to lease private facilities will not be needed.

Committee recommendation (2-0, Councilmember Navarro absent): support the Executive's recommended budget for this item.

3. Restore: Candidate/Campaign Position (\$70,970)

In FY10, the Council lapsed an Office Services Coordinator position because the position was vacant and was not exempt from the County's hiring freeze. The Board expects to hire a person to fill this position for FY11, but has indicated that they can defer hiring this position until January 1, 2011.

Committee recommendation (2-0, Councilmember Navarro absent): restore this position at 0.5 workyear with an anticipated fill date of January 1, 2011. Lapsing this position for an additional 6 months would save \$35,485.

4. Decrease Cost: Targeted Budget Reduction (-\$354,500)

The Executive's recommended budget includes a target reduction of \$354,500. If the Council approves this budget reduction, Board staff indicate that the following reductions will be taken: (1) \$50,000 for part-time salaries; \$50,000 for temporary clerical support; and \$254,500 for payments for the Touchscreen voting machines. The local board indicates that the State has a history of modifying payments mid-year. However, if the State bills the full amount projected, the local board will need to defer payment until FY12 if the State concurs. If the State does not grant a waiver, the local board will need a supplemental during FY11 to cover these costs.

Committee recommendation (2-0, Councilmember Navarro absent): add \$254,500 to the reconciliation list to fund payments to the State for the Touchscreen voting machines. Due to the volatility of the current fiscal situation, the Committee recommended against deferring these payments to FY12 or funding these payments by supplemental in FY11. As noted above, the State can modify payments mid-year; therefore, a supplemental may still be necessary during FY11 if the State invoice for the Touchscreen voting machines, electronic pollbooks, or MD Voters (the statewide voter registration system) increases.

5. Additional Positions

Because of a historical staffing shortage, the Board of Elections typically uses temporary workers to perform certain functions. The Board has identified 3.5 staff workyears they believe are required to address this staffing shortage. These positions and potential costs and savings, are summarized in the table below.

Position	Work- years	Permanent Position Cost	Temporary Worker Cost	Net Cost
Voter Registration	1.6	\$90,410	\$28,240	\$62,170
Administrative Support	0.5	\$25,000	\$18,690	\$6,310
Absentee Voter Reg Staff	0.8	\$45,200	\$14,120	\$31,080

A. Voter Registration (\$90,410, 1.6 workyears)

The Board indicates that it needs 2 Office Services Coordinator positions to address the increased workload associated with use of the statewide voter registration system. Although the Board will at times be required to hire temporary employees to deal with increased workload, which fluctuates with the election cycle, Board staff indicate that they could reduce the temporary staffing by \$28,240. If the Council were to grant these positions, it would be a net increase of \$62,170.

Committee recommendation (2-0, Councilmember Navarro absent): Due to fiscal constraints, the Committee did not recommend adding these positions at this time.

B. Administrative Support Staff (\$25,000, 0.5 workyears)

The Board indicates that it needs 1 part-time position to provide administrative support to the Board of Elections, Election Director, Deputy Election Director, Administrative Specialist III, and the management team. The Board does not have any secretarial positions and report difficulties with temporary employees being able to access certain on-line functions of County Government because of their temporary status. The Board staffs this position with a temporary employee at a cost of

\$18,690. If the Council were to grant this position, it would be at a net increase cost of \$6,310. **Committee recommendation** (2-0, Councilmember Navarro absent): Due to fiscal constraints, the Committee did not recommend adding this position at this time.

C. Absentee Voter Registration Staff (\$45,200, 1.0 workyear)

The Board indicates that it needs 1 Office Services Coordinator position to address the workload associated with the increased interest in absentee voting. The Board staffs this position with temporary employees at a cost of \$14,120. If the Council were to grant this position, it would be at a net increase cost of \$31,080. **Committee recommendation** (2-0, Councilmember Navarro absent): Due to fiscal constraints, the Committee did not recommend adding this position at this time.

FY11 Revenue Issues

FY11 revenues for the Board are calculated based on publication sales. State law mandates the fees charged for election publications, and sales are expected to produce \$2,500 in FY11. In the past, the Board's budget reflected revenues received from the rental of warehouse space to the State. The State pays 50% of the costs associated with warehousing voting equipment and in past budgets, the local board has billed the State for amounts due to the local board. The State Board has changed its procedures and will now deduct the amount owed to local boards from other financial responsibilities the local board pays to the State.

Committee Recommendation

As noted above, the County Board is subject to State Election Law, which has imposed several unfunded mandates over the last year. In addition, the County Board must follow ever-changing directives from the State Board of Elections. The Committee recommended (2-0, Councilmember Navarro absent) approval of the BOE operating budget as submitted by the Executive with a reduction of \$35,485 to lapse an Office Services Coordinator position for 6 months and an addition of \$254,500 to the reconciliation list for payment to the State for Touchscreen voting machines. Under the Committee recommendation, the Board's budget would increase to \$8,194,325.

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Board of Elections

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Board of Elections is to register voters; conduct elections; assist persons seeking elective office with candidate filings and campaign fund reports; assist citizens seeking to place questions on the ballot; and preserve election data.

BUDGET OVERVIEW

The total recommended FY11 Operating Budget for the Montgomery County Board of Elections is \$7,975,310, an increase of \$3,506,540 or 78.5 percent from the FY10 Approved Budget of \$4,468,770. Personnel Costs comprise 46.4 percent of the budget for 28 full-time positions for 44.4 workyears. Operating Expenses account for the remaining 53.6 percent of the FY11 budget.

LINKAGE TO COUNTY RESULT AREAS

While this program area supports all eight of the County Result Areas, the following are emphasized:

- ❖ **A Responsive, Accountable County Government**
- ❖ **Vital Living for All of Our Residents**

DEPARTMENT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Performance measures for this department are included below, with multi-program measures displayed at the front of this section and program-specific measures shown with the relevant program. The FY10 estimates incorporate the effect of the FY10 savings plan. The FY11 and FY12 targets assume the recommended FY11 budget and FY12 funding for comparable service levels.

PROGRAM CONTACTS

Contact Margaret A. Jurgensen of the Montgomery County Board of Elections at 240.777.8523 or Bryan Hunt of the Office of Management and Budget at 240.777.2770 for more information regarding this department's operating budget.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Voter Registration Services

The Voter Registration Services program provides clerical and administrative support to register new voters and maintains the currency of information in the official registry. Currently, 612,094 registered voters are on file and the expected growth rate is 6 percent. The Federal Help America Vote Act mandated the establishment of a statewide voter registration database (MDVOTERS) that occurred in 2006 moving the County voter registration database to a statewide platform under aegis of the State Board of Elections. In addition, this program processes all changes of name, address, and party affiliation and maintains a delete file, removing voters for reasons of death, felony conviction, not eligible to perform jury duty, moving out of the jurisdiction, and other valid reasons. The program provides legally-required training for volunteer registrars; responds to various voter and candidate requests for voter registration applications, listings, CDs, and labels of registered voters; verifies nominating or referenda petitions submitted; and issues and canvasses absentee and provisional ballots. Implementation of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993, on January 1, 1995, requires all motor vehicle and State social service agencies to solicit voter registration applications and information changes from every client or customer. The program also tracks returned mail and sends a second mailing in order to accurately maintain the database.

Program Performance Measures	Actual FY08	Actual FY09	Estimated FY10	Target FY11	Target FY12
Number of Registered Voters (000s) ¹	560	565	570	575	580
Number of Voter Registration transactions (000s)	230	250	240	250	250
Number of provisional ballots issued on election day(s) (see footnote 1) ²	12,000	5,400	NA	5,000	5,000
Number of absentee ballots requested (000s) (see footnote 1) ³	17	56	NA	42	15
Number of absentee ballots voted/returned (000s) ⁴	14	51	NA	35	12

¹ Active registered voters.

² FY09 quantity is for 2008 general election. No elections in FY10. FY11 quantity is for 2010 general election. Early voting, a new service, is expected to impact the quantity of provisional ballots beginning in FY11.

³ FY08 is presidential primary election only; FY09 is actual number of absentee ballots requested for 2008 presidential general election. No

elections in FY10; 2 gubernatorial elections in FY11 and 6 days for early voting prior to both elections.

⁴ FY09 number is actual for 2008 presidential general election. FY11 covers two gubernatorial elections and early voting, expected to affect quantity of FY11 absentee ballots.

FY11 Recommended Changes	Expenditures	WYs
FY10 Approved	1,219,070	18.0
Enhance: Computer Equipment	10,000	0.0
Enhance: Repair and Maintenance Agreements for Office Equipment	3,500	0.0
Miscellaneous adjustments, including furloughs, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting more than one program	537,890	-1.2
FY11 CE Recommended	1,770,460	16.8

Notes: Increased cost due to the FY11 implementation of Early Voting, and the need to conduct State and County Primary and General Elections.

Election Operations

The Election Operations program provides administrative, clerical, and technical support for the conduct of local, State, and Federal elections. The Election Operations program assists individuals seeking elective office with candidate filings; provides information, guidance, and monitoring of required campaign committee filings and financial report submissions; delineates and maintains accurate precinct boundaries; prepares and produces various district and precinct maps; administers the results of redistricting; acquires and maintains required polling places; surveys and monitors compliance of handicapped accessibility at all polling places; obtains and provides all polling place supplies and logistics to properly equip the polling places for voting; and develops training materials, recruits, and trains election judges to staff the polling places. In 2008, the State of Maryland approved legislation mandating the implementation of early voting in all jurisdictions. Montgomery County will provide five early voting centers, open ten hours per day, for six days prior to each election.

An example of a four-year election cycle, is shown below.

Year One: State and County Primary and General Elections (FY11)

Year Two: Federal Primary Elections (FY12)

Year Three: Federal General Elections (FY13)

Year Four: Local and Municipal Elections (FY14)

Program Performance Measures	Actual FY08	Actual FY09	Estimated FY10	Target FY11	Target FY12
Number of designated polling places per general election. ¹	243	243	NA	248	248
Number of election judges recruited, trained, and placed per general election (see footnote 1) ²	4,200	4,600	NA	5,000	5,000

¹ No countywide elections in FY10; two gubernatorial elections in FY11 plus early voting at 5 voting centers.

² FY09 actual numbers from 2008 presidential general election; an additional 2,600 voters were recruited and trained to serve as stand-by election judges. Beginning in FY11, election judge number increases for early voting centers.

FY11 Recommended Changes	Expenditures	WYs
FY10 Approved	2,350,570	21.7
Enhance: Temporary Clerical Services	1,262,340	0.0
Increase Cost: Election Judge Stipends	1,067,200	0.0
Increase Cost: Election Cycle Overtime	485,810	0.0
Enhance: Printing Costs	265,450	0.0
Add: Local Early Voting Costs	244,440	0.0
Restore: Candidate/Campaign position funding	70,970	0.0
Enhance: Building or Space Rental or Leases	63,000	0.0
Increase Cost: Ballot and Supply Expenses Associated with the State Mandated Voting System	50,000	0.0
Enhance: Local Telephone Service Charges	42,000	0.0
Enhance: Polling Place Supplies	13,600	0.0
Miscellaneous adjustments, including furloughs, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting more than one program	-1,117,550	-0.8
FY11 CE Recommended	4,797,830	20.9

Notes: Increased cost due to the FY11 implementation of Early Voting, and the need to conduct State and County Primary and General Elections.

Administration

The Administration program of the Board of Elections includes budget development; fiscal control; administration of personnel and contractual issues; procurement; program planning and evaluation; and coordination and cooperation with Federal, State, and local government agencies, elected officials, and political organizations. This includes ensuring that the requirements of Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act are met by providing all election related materials in both English and Spanish languages. The program is also responsible for providing accessible voting for all registered voters and coordinating all technology needs and activities with the

State and County technology systems. Finally, the program is responsible for programming and coordinating resources for a voting system comprised of 3,120 Touchscreen voting machines, 850 express poll books; and 800 printers and required peripheral equipment for deployment to 243 polling places plus 5 early voting centers located within Montgomery County.

Program Performance Measures	Actual FY08	Actual FY09	Estimated FY10	Target FY11	Target FY12
Number of electronic poll books prepared and used on election days (see footnote 1) ¹	820	820	NA	820	820
Number of voting units prepared and used on election days (see footnote 1) ²	2,800	3,000	NA	3120	3120
Total ballots cast (000s) (see footnote 1) ³	230	441	NA	350	150

¹ FY09 quantity is for the 2008 general election. FY11 quantity is for the 2010 general election. Equipping early voting centers begins in FY11.

² FY09 is actual quantity for the 2008 general election. No County-wide elections were conducted in FY10. Two elections, State and County Primary and General, will be held in calendar year 2010 (FY11).

³ No County-wide election in FY10. For FY11, 2010 general election quantity is indicated, along with the first cycle for early voting and no-reason absentee voting. FY12 is solely a Federal primary election year.

FY11 Recommended Changes	Expenditures	WYs
FY10 Approved	899,130	6.5
Increase Cost: Sample Ballot Postage	160,000	0.0
Increase Cost: Sample Ballot Printing Contract	132,000	0.0
Increase Cost: Election Cycle Changes	82,000	0.0
Increase Cost: Group Insurance Adjustment	12,880	0.0
Increase Cost: Retirement Adjustment	10,240	0.0
Increase Cost: Costs associated with Election & Canvassing days	5,000	0.0
Increase Cost: Annualization of FY10 Personnel Costs	820	0.0
Decrease Cost: Motor Pool Rate Adjustment	-2,500	0.0
Miscellaneous adjustments, including furloughs, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting more than one program	107,450	0.2
FY11 CE Recommended	1,407,020	6.7

Notes: Increased cost due to the FY11 implementation of Early Voting, and the need to conduct State and County Primary and General Elections.

BUDGET SUMMARY

	Actual FY09	Budget FY10	Estimated FY10	Recommended FY11	% Chg Bud/Rec
COUNTY GENERAL FUND					
EXPENDITURES					
Salaries and Wages	3,401,496	1,863,700	1,863,690	3,053,380	63.8%
Employee Benefits	582,993	513,770	511,940	649,890	26.5%
County General Fund Personnel Costs	3,984,489	2,377,470	2,375,630	3,703,270	55.8%
Operating Expenses	5,932,347	2,091,300	2,690,520	4,272,040	104.3%
Capital Outlay	0	0	0	0	—
County General Fund Expenditures	9,916,836	4,468,770	5,066,150	7,975,310	78.5%
PERSONNEL					
Full-Time	28	28	28	28	—
Part-Time	0	0	0	0	—
Workyears	47.2	46.2	46.2	44.4	-3.9%
REVENUES					
Rental of Warehouse Space	24,180	78,900	78,900	0	—
Publication Sales - Board of Elections	3,219	2,500	2,500	2,500	—
County General Fund Revenues	27,399	81,400	81,400	2,500	-96.9%

FY11 RECOMMENDED CHANGES

	Expenditures	WYs
COUNTY GENERAL FUND		
FY10 ORIGINAL APPROPRIATION	4,468,770	46.2
Changes (with service impacts)		
Enhance: Temporary Clerical Services [Election Operations]	1,262,340	0.0
Enhance: Printing Costs [Election Operations]	265,450	0.0
Add: Local Early Voting Costs [Election Operations]	244,440	0.0
Enhance: Building or Space Rental or Leases [Election Operations]	63,000	0.0
Enhance: Local Telephone Service Charges [Election Operations]	42,000	0.0
Enhance: Polling Place Supplies [Election Operations]	13,600	0.0
Enhance: Computer Equipment [Voter Registration Services]	10,000	0.0
Enhance: Repair and Maintenance Agreements for Office Equipment [Voter Registration Services]	3,500	0.0
Other Adjustments (with no service impacts)		
Increase Cost: Election Judge Stipends [Election Operations]	1,067,200	0.0
Increase Cost: Election Cycle Overtime [Election Operations]	485,810	0.0
Increase Cost: Sample Ballot Postage [Administration]	160,000	0.0
Increase Cost: Sample Ballot Printing Contract [Administration]	132,000	0.0
Increase Cost: Election Cycle Changes [Administration]	82,000	0.0
Restore: Candidate/Campaign position funding [Election Operations]	70,970	0.0
Increase Cost: Ballot and Supply Expenses Associated with the State Mandated Voting System [Election Operations]	50,000	0.0
Increase Cost: Group Insurance Adjustment [Administration]	12,880	0.0
Increase Cost: Retirement Adjustment [Administration]	10,240	0.0
Increase Cost: Costs associated with Election & Canvassing days [Administration]	5,000	0.0
Increase Cost: Annualization of FY10 Personnel Costs [Administration]	820	0.0
Decrease Cost: Motor Pool Rate Adjustment [Administration]	-2,500	0.0
Decrease Cost: Printing and Mail Adjustment	-47,530	0.0
Decrease Cost: Furlough Days	-70,180	-1.8
Decrease Cost: Targeted budget reduction	-354,500	0.0
FY11 RECOMMENDED:	7,975,310	44.4

PROGRAM SUMMARY

Program Name	FY10 Approved		FY11 Recommended	
	Expenditures	WYs	Expenditures	WYs
Voter Registration Services	1,219,070	18.0	1,770,460	16.8
Election Operations	2,350,570	21.7	4,797,830	20.9
Administration	899,130	6.5	1,407,020	6.7
Total	4,468,770	46.2	7,975,310	44.4

FUTURE FISCAL IMPACTS

Title	CE REC.					
	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16
(5000's)						
This table is intended to present significant future fiscal impacts of the department's programs.						
COUNTY GENERAL FUND						
Expenditures						
FY11 Recommended	7,975	7,975	7,975	7,975	7,975	7,975
No inflation or compensation change is included in outyear projections.						
Elimination of One-Time Items Recommended in FY11	0	-3,886	-3,886	-3,886	0	-3,886
Items recommended for one-time funding in FY11, including (Temporary Clerical Services, Election Judge Stipends, Overtime, and other Election Cycle related costs), will be eliminated from the base in the outyears. FY15 repeats the FY11 Election cycle for State and County Primary and General Elections.						
Motor Pool Rate Adjustment	0	3	3	3	3	3
Restore Personnel Costs	0	70	70	70	70	70
This represents restoration of funding to remove FY11 furloughs.						
Subtotal Expenditures	7,975	4,162	4,162	4,162	8,048	4,162

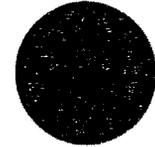
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Delgado, Annette

From: Floreen's Office, Councilmember
Sent: Wednesday, April 07, 2010 10:18 AM
To: Montgomery County Council
Subject: FW: Testimony: FY2011 Operating Budget and Public Services Programs

055725



-----Original Message-----

From: LWV of Montgomery County, MD [mailto:lwvmc@erols.com]
Sent: Tuesday, April 06, 2010 4:16 PM
To: Berliner's Office, Councilmember; Knapp's Office, Councilmember; Andrew's Office, Councilmember; Ervin's Office, Councilmember; Floreen's Office, Councilmember; Leventhal's Office, Councilmember; Elrich's Office, Councilmember; Trachtenberg's Office, Councilmember; Navarro's Office, Councilmember
Subject: Testimony: FY2011 Operating Budget and Public Services Programs



RECEIVED
MONTGOMERY COUNTY
COUNCIL
2010 APR -7 PM 4: 27

To the Montgomery County Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to present our response to the proposed FY 2010 Operating Budget. As you know, the League studies and takes positions on a wide variety of government issues. The following remarks are based on local studies which the League has performed in past years.

Before I begin with our specific comments, we would like to point out that we recognize the extremely difficult economic conditions that you and the County Executive have been facing in the past few years and recognize that we cannot continue with "business as usual." We were pleased to see that the proposed budget makes an effort to maintain the safety net which provides support to our most disadvantaged citizens. That being said, we do have concerns about several specific programs and proposals.

Board of Elections

The League has first hand experience with the Board of Elections through our collaboration on registration issues and the Polling Place Support Program. While we are not suggesting an increase in the Board of Elections proposed budget at this time, we would like to point out that there are currently unknowns which could require that the budget be supplemented later in the year. First and foremost are the implementation of early voting, the need to educate the public about this change to the way we have traditionally voted and the impact of early voting on the provisional ballot process. We hope that you will look favorably on requests by the Board of Elections if it needs additional funding to implement these programs during the coming year.

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While we recognize that the budget format follows a four year cycle, we suggest that in the case of the Board of Elections, a fifth year be added in order to allow comparability of expenses and measures related to years with like activities. Also, we recommend that the Council look into a policy change in its special election procedures for filling vacancies and suggest changing to a single special election using instant runoff voting (IRV) to fill vacancies as a cost saving measure.

Transportation

We consider the Ride On bus service a lifeline for many of our residents. Those who do not own automobiles or are unable to drive for various reasons are entirely dependent on the public transportation service. There are many bus riders who have chosen where to live because of the proximity to bus service. Frequently, these are people who are using the Ride On service to either get to the Metro or to other parts of the county in order to get to work. Therefore we note the proposed reduction in Ride On service throughout the county of \$2.6 million, especially since the School District will apparently not be paying for the transportation of students who are enrolled in support special programs. We suggest the following revenue generating ideas as increases in fares, possible changes to the senior citizen no fare system, repair of all fare boxes, changes in schedules for routes with low ridership in off peak hours, and consideration of fees for county park and ride lots be considered.

The League completed a study of Bicyclist and Pedestrian Safety issues in Montgomery County in 2008 and reached a strong consensus that the county should continue to promote both endeavors. While we are disappointed to see a cut in funding for this initiative, we understand today's fiscal reality and hope that funding can soon be restored to pedestrian buffer treatments, bikeway maintenance pedestrian safety outreach and raised pave marker program.

During the current session of the Maryland Legislature, the League supported HB710/SB229 which will create a Blue Ribbon Task Force to study transportation funding. We all know that the current system doesn't meet our transportation infrastructure needs. We ask that you begin to lay the groundwork now with your constituents and our members of the General Assembly for the need for increased public financial support for transit, sidewalks and bike lanes as well as roads in Maryland.

Environment

We question the wisdom of adding funds to the leaf collection programs while reducing the budget for cutting, trimming and planting trees. Given that the role that trees play in the amelioration of air temperature, absorption of carbon dioxide, cleaning of air and water and retaining runoff, we believe that the maintenance of our tree infrastructure should have a higher priority. Continued reductions in the tree maintenance and planting budgets will lead to the need to remove some of our larger trees in the future.

Housing

We appreciate that many housing programs have been preserved although their funding has been reduced. We do wonder, however, if decreasing the appropriation for the Montgomery Housing Initiative from \$34 to \$13 million is appropriate in face of increasing suffering by many in the housing sector.

Health and Human Services

In view of the increased need for services due to stresses of the recession and reductions by the state, we question the wisdom of eliminating a child and mental health psychiatric contract and the abolition of a