

Montgomery Council votes to cut construction spending

By: [Rachel Baye](#) | 10/04/11 7:00 PM

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The Montgomery County Council voted Tuesday to cut funding for construction projects in an effort to reduce the county's debt obligations.

Five council members — Marc Elrich, D-at large, George Leventhal, D-at large, Nancy Floreen, D-at large, Nancy Navarro, D-Eastern County, and Phil Andrews, D-Rockville/Gaithersburg — voted to ignore the recommendation of the council's Government Operations and Fiscal Policy committee and reduce the county's general obligation bond debts from \$1.91 billion to \$1.77 billion.

The cuts follow recommendations by County Executive Ike Leggett that the county cut \$150 million from the \$2.24 billion, six-year construction budget.

However, officials have raised concerns that slashing budgets could add new burdens to an already overburdened school system and stall long-awaited development projects.

Others, like Councilman Roger Berliner, D-Bethesda, said Tuesday that given the low cost of construction, now is the time to build. Berliner suggested the council create a "hybrid" budget with larger allocations for the first two years of the six-year span and lower allocations for the last four.

The council will have another opportunity to revise the budget suggestion in February before officially setting the fiscal 2013 budget.