
Message from the Council President

The Council's approach to the Fiscal Year 2022 Operating Budget and to the Amended Fiscal Years 2021-26 Capital Improvements Program gives us a roadmap through the next few months of the pandemic and sets us up for a long-term recovery and revitalization. We had a singular goal - a responsive and responsible budget. We needed this budget to build a Montgomery County that is stronger, healthier, more prosperous, more equitable and more sustainable than the one we have today, and that's exactly what we did. Our budget keeps the County's effective property tax rate flat and continues to provide a property tax credit of \$692 for homeowners. The budget continues the tradition of fiscal responsibility that has allowed us to maintain the County's AAA bond rating that is the hallmark of well-run governments and funds the County's reserve at 9.6 percent of adjusted governmental revenues.



This year we funded our school system's \$2.78 billion operating budget request. This amount funds MCPS at \$40.4 million above the Maintenance of Effort level, which is mandated by the State of Maryland.

Continuing the Council's commitment to helping children, families and individuals thrive, the budget includes nearly \$11 million in funding, which is an increase of \$5 million, to support the Montgomery County Early Care and Education Initiative to expand quality early care and education opportunities for infants, toddlers and preschoolers.

The Council funded a budget of \$312.6 million for Montgomery College. County funding for the College is \$500,000 over the required Maintenance of Effort level to support two County-led initiatives--Montgomery Can Code and the Innovation Hub Initiative. Each project is expected to receive \$250,000. Both efforts work toward advancing innovation and early access to STEM disciplines. The College budget includes no increase in tuition rates or fees paid by students for FY22.

The Council added funding to extend the Ride On fare holiday through September 2021. Funding is also provided to bring Ride On back to its pre-COVID service level, but on a more gradual schedule. The budget also extends the Seniors Ride Free Program to all hours of operation starting in July. Funding for the Safe Routes to School Program is also doubled by \$200,000 in the FY22 CIP and \$150,000 in the FY22 Operating Budget. The Council also approved \$700,000 in the Emergency Management and Homeland Security budget for security grants for faith-based and ethnic organizations.

We continue to take steps to strengthen our economy during these difficult circumstances. The operating budget funds more than \$5 million to support the work of the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation. The Council allocated \$1.4 million in funding for WorkSource Montgomery, which implements the County's workforce development policies to promote job growth and attract talent. The Council funded approximately \$3 million for the County's incubator programs and nearly \$5 million for the County's business incentive programs. In addition, the budget includes \$1.6 million to fund Visit Montgomery to promote the County's hotel and tourism industry, which has been deeply impacted by the pandemic.

The budget boosts essential funding for public health and human services that were critical lifelines for residents during the pandemic. This includes funding for six new positions to increase capacity to six new Mobile Crisis Outreach Teams, expanding mental health services and providing an alternative to a police response for individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis. The Council funded \$3.6 million for the eight Service Consolidation Hubs which have been providing food, diapers and other critical goods and connecting those in needs with other County services. More than \$230,000 was added to the budget for the Care for Kids program and over \$228,000 was added to the Montgomery Cares program which provides healthcare to the uninsured. The budget also includes an increase of \$1.6 million for the Office of Community Partnerships to expand outreach activities and establish a permanent translation unit.

I want to thank my Council colleagues and the Council staff for their hard work. Thank you also to the County

Executive and his staff, and to the governing boards and staff of M-NCPPC, WSSC, MCPS and Montgomery College. Together we have produced a budget that is fiscally responsible, reflects the County's values and strengthens core government services that make our County an extraordinary place to live, work and raise a family.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Hucker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Tom Hucker
President, Montgomery County Council