



**Testimony of the Rockville Mayor and Council
FY26 Operating Budget Public Hearing
Montgomery County Council**

Good afternoon, County Council President Stewart and County Councilmembers. I am Monique Ashton, Mayor of Rockville, and the President of the MML Montgomery Chapter. Thank you for this opportunity.

Tax Duplication:

We are grateful to the County Council, County Executive, and County staff for your ongoing collaboration on the municipal tax duplication resolution. We support the County Budget reimbursement allocation included in this year's budget.

Looking ahead, per Expedited Bill 2-22, we will need to engage on the quadrennial review of the tax duplication formula, and we request that planning and discussions with our municipalities begin this summer. We hope this assessment continues to be collaborative and inclusive of all County and municipal stakeholders.

Police Reimbursement

For FY26, Rockville and Gaithersburg worked with the County's Office of Management and Budget to modify the police component to more accurately account for all expenses associated with providing policing services and address the reallocation of police resources outside of our City. We are thankful to the County for updating the methodology to cover our public safety expenses and support the reimbursement included in the County Executive's budget.

Transportation Reimbursement:

For FY26 transportation, Rockville's allocation decreased, mainly due to an error in the County's data from prior years. The County corrected the error, resulting in a reduction to the city's transportation allocation. Moving forward, we request more diligence in data reviews and tax duplication formulas, and that the details of the calculations be shared early in the process.

Support for School Support Services and County After School Programming at Twinbrook Elementary School

We have testified before MCPS, and we come to you to support funding for paraeducators, mental health and social services, and maintenance workers included in the MCPS Operating Budget. We also endorse operating efforts that support the revitalization and studies for schools within Rockville. In addition, we request that the County fund and operate an Excel Beyond the Bell program at Twinbrook Elementary School which would remove barriers to service by providing free after school programming. Twinbrook Elementary School is a Title I school with an 88% FARMS rate, and has significant needs for educational, social, and family services.

Proposed Service Reductions to the Rockville Volunteer Fire Department

While the City understands that the County Fire Chief put the proposed reductions to the Rockville Volunteer Fire Department Station (RVFD) #3 on hold, Rockville is opposed to the removal of heavy Rescue Squad vehicle #703 and three career staff from Station #3 in Rockville Town Center. The proposed reductions would

reduce essential fire and rescue response resources for our residents in Town Center and southern Rockville. We hope that the County will work collaboratively with RFVD to improve the plan and address the needs of both parties.

I would also like to highlight the following:

- We want to thank you for your continued commitment for increased security at the County's Crisis Center to help those who receive care at the facility.
- For the rental assistance program, the County reduced the AMI eligibility from July – December 2024. We encourage the County to maintain the 60 percent AMI eligibility.
- Regarding the impact tax MOU, we are close on a deal. The City looks forward to a mutually agreeable resolution and reimbursement for transportation projects.
- In closing, amidst widespread Federal workforce and transition issues, we commit to ongoing collaboration with the County to share information and resources to support those who have been directly impacted.

Thank you.