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District 5 Report from TOM PEREZ

Hitting the Ground Running...

LOTS of groundwork, hard work, and a number of critical victories - that is the best way to describe our start at the County Council.

The world does not slow down while new Council members hire staff, organize an office, and make a transition to public life.

Budget crises, blackouts, education, healthcare, environmental, and transportation issues move at the same hectic pace.

It has been a fast start, and I am very excited about what we have been able to accomplish on your behalf. We have been putting in long hours to make certain that problems are solved and promises are kept.

Gridlock, affordable housing, and school overcrowding are a few of the many issues that I have been involved in during the first six months. The Council passed a balanced budget in tough fiscal times and we also enacted a number of critical bills and resolutions. My staff and I continue to hold listening sessions across the district, so that we will have a better handle on your goals and concerns.

I hope you will not hesitate to contact our office, and make sure that your voice is heard. We will be sending out regular e-mail updates.

If you would like to get on the list, drop us a note at councilmember.perez@montgomerycountymd.gov.



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District 5 includes Downtown Silver Spring, Hillandale, Kensington, Long Branch, Lyttonsville, Takoma Park, Wheaton, and parts of White Oak and Chevy Chase

Montgomery County Council - 100 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, MD 20850
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Perez Tackles Gridlock, Purple Line

Transportation

As a member of the Transportation and Environment Committee, I spend considerable time addressing gridlock. Despite the budget woes, my colleagues and I were able to:

- Fund \$22.2 million in road improvement and expansion projects.
- Approve \$1.9 million for new Ride-On service with 15 buses.
- Restore \$183,000 to the Fare Share/Super Fare Share transit incentives for businesses and their employees.
- Include \$367,000 for pedestrian safety enhancements.
- Extend the “Kids Ride Free” program from 2pm to 7pm on Metrobus until December for \$200,000.

The bulk of my time and energy on transportation issues has been focused on the Inner Purple Line, which is my top transportation priority.

Along with many other stakeholders, I helped to establish the Coalition to Build the Inner Purple Line, a diverse group of business, environmental, transportation, and community groups.

The Coalition has led an impressive campaign to persuade Federal and State officials to build the Inner Purple Line now. I have worked closely with County Councilmember George Leventhal in the effort to keep the Purple Line on track, and I am grateful for his deep commitment to this issue.

Unfortunately, Governor Ehrlich is a major roadblock. Last year, the Glendening administration stated that the Bethesda to Silver Spring leg of



pleted by 2008.

Governor Ehrlich has derailed the Inner Purple Line, apparently as a result of commitments he made to the Columbia

said in a recent interview.

It is unfortunate that special interests have been put before the public interest. As a result, the project has been delayed indefinitely, and gridlock along East-West Highway and the Beltway will persist. I will continue to fight hard for the Inner Purple Line because I believe it is smart transportation policy, smart growth, and sound planning.

“I will continue to fight hard for the Inner Purple Line because I believe it is smart transportation policy, smart growth, and sound planning.”

- Tom Perez

the project could begin construction in 2005 and be com-

pleted by 2008. Governor Ehrlich has derailed the Inner Purple Line, apparently as a result of commitments he made to the Columbia

Country Club. “It will not go through the country club,” he



“Governor Ehrlich has derailed the Inner Purple Line, apparently as a result of commitments he made to the Columbia Country Club.”

Development Impact Tax for School Facilities (Bill 9-03)

“If you believe school overcrowding is a problem, I urge you to get involved in supporting this bill.”

- Tom Perez

Perez Leads Efforts to Address Overcrowded County Schools

Education is Tom Perez’s top priority. This is not just a slogan but a commitment of time and energy to help focus policies, plans, and programs to ensure that every resident of District 5 and the County has an education that makes them as productive and successful as possible.



THIS fall the Council will take up a bill that Councilmember Andrews and I introduced to establish an impact tax on new residential development. The impact tax will be dedicated to addressing our school construction needs.

Educating our children is the most important function that our County performs. A main reason why people want to live in Montgomery County is to attend our public schools.

There is much to be proud of in our public schools. But overcrowding threatens to unravel so much of this progress.

At Cresthaven Elementary School, more students are be-

have enough resources. The Ehrlich administration has effectively abdicated its responsibility for school construction, leaving county governments across the state holding the bag.

The proposed bill will bring Montgomery County in line with most of our neighboring jurisdictions by charging an impact tax that will generate money necessary to build new spaces for students in the County’s schools - critical resources. Affordable housing and senior housing are exempt.

The School Board, the Sierra Club, NAACP Education Committee, PTAs, and a host of community activists have lined



ing taught in portables than in the school building itself. The modernization schedule at Kensington-Parkwood has been delayed too long.

The pace of school modernization has slowed to a trickle. We need to build new schools and modernize and expand existing schools, but we do not

up behind the bill. The Planning Board has endorsed our efforts to establish a school impact tax.

The Council will take up this legislation this fall during consideration of the Annual Growth Policy. If you believe school overcrowding is a problem, I urge you to get involved in supporting this bill.

Service Levels Remain at Kensington And Takoma Park Firestations

The County Executive’s proposed budget would have forced dramatic cutbacks in staffing at Kensington Station 21. I am very grateful for the support of the community, the men and women of Kensington Station 21, and my Council colleagues who strongly backed my efforts to restore full funding to the station. The level of service at Kensington Station 21 will remain the same. In addition, the critical ladder truck will remain in Takoma Park. We simply cannot compromise fire and safety.

Key Role for Perez in Early Childhood And Adult Education Initiatives



Students from St. Camillus School visited the County Council.

Tom Perez has played a key role in preserving the Head Start program for low-income four-year-old children, and in addressing critical issues in Adult Education.

Head Start

This spring, in the middle of the budget debate, the

Federal government informed the County that its \$4.1 million subsidy was in jeopardy. Tom, Dr. Jerry Weast, and Dr. Carolyn Colvin, director of the County's Department of Health and Human Services, and other County staff met with high-ranking officials of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, where

Tom had previously served as Director of the Office for Civil Rights.

The Federal government ultimately agreed to release this money to the County. As a result, the County is able to serve the same number of students this year.

The current challenge is how to enroll more students while maintaining the critical support services, such as medical assistance and family supports. We must tackle the challenge of serving everyone, and doing so effectively. Our Council President, Mike Subin, is leading a task force that is addressing this issue. Tom will continue his active role in the effort to leave no child behind.

Adult Education

Tom has taken a leadership role in addressing critical issues in adult education. He was asked by the Council President to chair an Adult Education Task Force to develop a strategic plan to improve the County's system of Adult ESL (English as a Second Language) service delivery.

A study commissioned by the Council found that current Adult ESL programs did not meet the demand. In some areas, there are long waiting lists for English classes and difficulty



accessing service providers.

In the past several months, Tom and Rosa García have convened the Adult Education Task Force and met with various stakeholders, including members of the business community, Montgomery College, Montgomery County Public Schools, Casa of Maryland, the Literacy Council, and other non-profit and faith-based providers to consider innovative ways to build capacity, improve the quality of services, and increase resources for existing and new programs.

This fall Tom will work with the Task Force to prepare the blueprint for a new Adult ESL system of delivery in the County.

Legislative Initiative...In brief

Smoking Ban Passes

Tom helped lead the Council's recent passage of the smoke-free restaurants bill that Councilmember Phil Andrews has championed for four years. Tom was one of five original co-sponsors and helped lead the opposition to an amendment that would have delayed the implementation of the bill for a minimum of two years.

Many observers expected the amendment to pass, but Tom and others stood firm. Tom argued: "We should not play politics with public health. If everyone agrees that second-hand smoke is a public health hazard, we must provide a safe workplace for restaurant workers." The amendment to delay the implementation date failed.

The Council passed an amendment introduced by Tom and Councilmember Marilyn Praisner that would use economic development funds to help small restaurants market their healthier status and facilitate their transition to a smoke-free environment. Public health and profits can and will co-exist and thrive in smoke-free restaurants throughout Montgomery County.

Perez Seeks to Expand Affordable Housing

MONTGOMERY County is a wonderful place to live. But it is becoming increasingly difficult for many people- teachers, firefighters, police officers, low-income residents, new arrivals, and people with disabilities - to find affordable housing.

As president of the board of Casa of Maryland, I spent considerable time addressing the housing needs of low-income residents. I am continuing to do this on the Council, along with my colleagues. In recent months, there have been a number of promising developments.

Dedicated Fund for Affordable Housing - The Council passed a resolution establishing the largest dedicated fund for affordable housing in the United States.

What a difference a year makes! Last year, the Council rejected the identical measure by an 8-1 vote, with Ike Leggett casting the only vote in support of the resolution. I was proud to co-sponsor the resolution this year, which passed 6-3. I am very grateful for the leadership of County Executive Doug Duncan and Action in Montgomery, a coalition of communities across the County that helped lead the battle to pass this resolution.

MPDU Program - More recently, I introduced a bill to revamp the County's Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) program, and I am grateful that Councilmembers Leventhal and Andrews are original co-sponsors of the bill.

The MPDU program is one of the crown jewels of Montgomery County's long-

standing commitment to affordable housing. The MPDU law was adopted in 1973 to make housing available to low- and moderate-income people in areas throughout the County. It requires developers of large-scale housing projects to include moderately priced units into their plans.

This law contains a so-called "buyout" exception, whereby a developer in certain circumstances can pay money into a housing fund rather than build the MPDU. Recently, the exception has engulfed the rule. In 2002, 208 MPDUs were produced, while 195 potential MPDUs were bought out.

But for the buyout, we would have almost doubled production of MPDUs. Equally important, virtually all the buyouts occurred in one part of the County (Chevy Chase and Bethesda),

thwarting the objective of promoting the economic integration of Montgomery County.

I believe it is time to end the buyout program. The Housing Opportunities Commission agrees. The bill that we introduced will revamp the MPDU program by eliminating the buyout provision and extending the amount of time that the units must remain affordable.

Unless the Council passes the bill, I am fearful that 2003 will be a repeat of 2002 in that the number of buyouts will equal or perhaps exceed the number of MPDUs actually constructed. This trend is not in the best interest of Montgomery County. We should not send the message that certain areas of the County will have less affordable housing.

Constituent Service and Community Outreach Get Top Priority



Developing an effective system for constituent service, and ensuring that we are a visible presence in your community, are two of my top priorities. As a result, in the first 200 days of my term, my staff and I have held

over 350 meetings with constituents, and we have developed a system for responding promptly to the dozens of calls, e-mails, and letters we receive every day.

We've helped constituents address issues arising from snowstorms and blackouts, and worked with communities to tackle public safety, economic development, and school issues. We want to know what is working and what is not working in communities. We want to understand what you are thinking about your community now and in the future.

We want to generate an on-going dialogue with you. We want to make sure that every voice is heard. We are working closely with organizations such as IMPACT

Silver Spring to develop outreach plans that will ensure maximum participation. We want to make certain that government is responsive to our District's concerns and needs.

The best way to contact the office and receive a quick response is either by telephone, 240-777-7966, or by e-mail - councilmember.perez@montgomerycountymd.gov.



District 5 Report

Budget Highlights

- Funded 99% of school operating budget and restored \$2.7 million to capital budget to keep school modernization and construction schedule from slipping even more.
- Added \$100,000 for new clinics for the uninsured and increased funding for six existing clinics for the uninsured for \$240,000.
- Approved \$1.9 million for new Ride-On service with 15 buses.
- Added money for an additional class of recruits at the police academy to get more police on the streets.
- Obtained funding to begin construction of the Takoma Park community center and the Town of Kensington beautification projects.
- Restored \$250,000 for residential resurfacing and \$360,000 for pedestrian safety enhancements.
- Restored \$200,000 for home health aides and \$50,000 for in-home services for seniors and those with disabilities.
- Restored cuts to Kensington and Takoma Park Firestations.
- Restored \$44,300 for the Senior Health Insurance Program that assists seniors with insurance costs and \$65,000 for senior transportation to centers for meals and programs.
- Added \$100,000 each to African American and Latino Health Initiatives.
- Expanded the reach of the living wage, so additional workers received a raise when the bill went into effect.

“My priorities were education, fire and rescue, transportation, and protecting the safety net for vulnerable people.”
- Tom Perez

This was a very difficult budget cycle. We were confronting a deficit of \$320 million dollars, and we had to set priorities.

My priorities were education, fire and rescue, transportation and protecting the safety net for vulnerable people. I felt it was critically important to honor our negotiated agreements with labor unions, preserve reduced class size and all-day kindergarten, and restore funding for critical social services, such as home health care and after-school programs. In addition, this is no time to compromise fire and safety.

The budget we passed was far from perfect; however, given the hand we were dealt, it was the best we could do.

FY04 Budget



Legislative Initiative... *In brief*

Consular Registration Cards

Tom introduced with six cosponsors legislation that will allow County agencies to use consular identification cards issued by the home nation as valid proof of personal identification and proof of residence.

The cards have been used by Mexico and other nations for over 100

years and have been accepted as valid identification by 900 police departments, major banks, and the State of Indiana. The bill will provide agencies, including the police, with a significant tool for working with our foreign-born residents.

The bill (21-03) comes up for Council action in the fall.

“The key to effective service is people. I am very proud of the staff we have assembled to serve you. They bring a wide range of experience and an ability to serve every corner of our community. Please stop by and say ‘hello’ if you are in the neighborhood.” - Tom Perez

Dan Parr, Confidential Aide

240-777-7954 dan.parr@montgomerycountymd.gov

Dan is a long-time community activist in Silver Spring and Takoma Park, especially in education. He ran twice for the Board of Education. He was one of the founders of Voters for a Better Blair Community, Montgomery Education Forum, Partnership for Education Policy, and Coalition to Build the Inner Purple Line.

He served on the boards of CASA of Maryland, the PTAs at his children’s schools, and The Takoma Foundation. He is a graduate of IMPACT Silver Spring’s community leadership training.

Dan has run his own business for the past 18 years. He is a consultant to local, state, and national governments on geographic information systems.

He worked with more than 15 local jurisdictions designing and implementing systems for land development, public safety, permitting, environmental protection and citizen service.

He has a Master’s degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He and his wife, Ellen Weiss, have lived in the Long

Branch area of Silver Spring for almost 20 years.

Dan is working with Tom as chief-of-staff. He is involved in everything but is taking the lead on transportation, environment,

education, land use, public works, and community development. He is the point of contact for Takoma Park, Takoma/Langley Crossroads, Long Branch, and Silver Spring.



Left to right: Rosa Garcia, Dan Parr, Councilmember Tom Perez, Barbara Flack-Darko, and May Ngo

Barbara Flack-Darko, Special Assistant

240-777-7946 barbara.flack-darko@montgomerycountymd.gov

Barbara is a public affairs consultant and free-lance writer/editor. As a small business owner, she published the first newspaper that targets the County’s African-American community.

She has long been active in community affairs, including organizing an African and Caribbean leadership initiative and helping to create a consortium of historically black colleges for an AIDS project. She has served on the County’s Ethnic Affairs Committee, an SBA advisory council, and on the boards of the County’s Boys & Girls Clubs and Leadership Montgomery.

Barbara holds a Masters degree from Columbia University. She is a real, authentic soccer mom whose son has won two national championships.

Barbara’s key areas of staff involvement include economic development, small business support, arts and humanities, and outreach to minority communities. She is the point person for many of Tom’s initiatives, including his legislation to relieve overcrowded schools. She organized Tom’s first major outreach efforts in District 5 that included a community dialogue in downtown Silver Spring and a community briefing in the White Oak-Hillandale areas.

Rosa Garcia, Special Assistant

240-777-7982
rosa.garcia@montgomerycountymd.gov

Rosa is a Silver Spring resident who has spent her entire career working on behalf

American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, she worked to involve parents in educational reform and civil rights issues.

As a partnership specialist for the U.S. Census Bureau in New York City, she conducted outreach to Mexican immigrants and other hard-to-reach communities.

Rosa has been very busy working on three of her areas: adult education, early childhood issues, and consular registration cards, critical issues that have been in the news recently. Rosa monitored the crisis with Head Start and is the point person for the Council’s Adult Education Task Force that Tom is chairing.

She also covers issues related to Latino immigrants and other new residents, healthcare, community development, and outreach to minority communities.

Rosa is the point of contact for Wheaton.

Who’s Who on Our Staff

of the underdog in Montgomery County and across the nation. Most recently, she served as a board member of Centro Familia, a non-profit in the County dedicated to ensuring that language minority and low-income children have access to quality childcare and early childhood education.

A graduate of Wesleyan College, Rosa holds Masters degrees from Columbia University and the City University of New York.

As director of a leadership program for the Mexican

**Minh-Phuong Ngo
Legislative Assistant**

240-777-7966 minh-phuong.ngo@montgomerycountymd.gov

May graduated with honors this year from the University of Maryland. She was very active in the Vietnamese Student Association and the County’s Vietnamese Mutual Aid Society.

May’s parents own and operate

two small businesses in Silver Spring.

May keeps our office running smoothly. She takes care of scheduling Tom, which is one very tough job.

She also concentrates on issues related to the Asian-American and Asian immigrant communities, youth and young adults, minority affairs, and community development.



Councilmember Tom Perez
 Montgomery County Council
 100 Maryland Avenue
 Rockville, MD 20850

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**District 5
 Report from
 TOM PEREZ**

Quick Reference & Information Guide

Additional information may be obtained for all agencies through the Montgomery County website www.montgomerycountymd.gov

Councilmember			
Tom Perez	240-777-7966		
County Council	240-777-7900		
County Executive -			
Office of Community			
Outreach	240-777-2500		
Abandoned Cars	240-777-3600		
Aging & Disability	240-777-3000		
Bioterrorism Hotline	240-777-4200		
Board of Education	301-279-3617		
Building Permit	240-777-6210		
Bus Info / Ride-On	240-777-7433		
Child Care Referrals	301-279-1773		
Community Use of			
Public Facilities	240-777-2706		
Consumer Affairs	240-777-3636		
Dental Services	240-777-1875		
Eastern Montgomery			
Services Center	240-777-8400		
Economic Dev.	240-777-2000		
Elections Board	240-777-VOTE		
Electricity, PEPCO	202-833-7500		
Fire & Rescue			
Emergency	911		
Non-emergency	240-777-0744		
Community Relations	240-777-2400		
Food Licenses	240-777-3986		
Gilchrist Center for			
Cultural Diversity	240-777-4940		
Health Centers			
		Piccard Dr.	240-777-3987
		Silver Spring	240-777-3160
		Highway Services	240-777-7623
		Housing Emergency	240-777-3100
		Housing & Building	
		Maintenance	240-777-3785
		Housing Opportunities	
		Commission	240-777-6700
		Human Resources	240-777-5100
		Human Rights	240-777-8450
		Information, General	240-777-1000
		Kensington	301-949-2424
		Landlord & Tenant	240-777-3680
		Libraries	
		Kensington	301-897-2211
		Long Branch	240-777-0910
		Silver Spring	301-565-7689
		Wheaton	240-777-0678
		White Oak	301-622-2492
		Liquor Control	240-777-1900
		Mid-County Regional	
		Services Center	240-777-8100
		Park & Planning	301-495-4600
		Parking Enforcement	301-279-8000
		Permitting	240-777-6300
		Police	
		Emergency	911
		Non-emergency	301-279-8000
		Community Outreach	240-840-2585
		3rd Dist.(Silver Spring)	301-565-7740
		4th Dist. (Wheaton)	240-773-5500
		Potholes	240-777-7623
		Procurement	240-777-9904
		MFD Information	240-777-9913
		Rats	240-777-3986
		Recreation & Community Centers	
		Coffield	240-777-4900
		East County	301-572-7004
		Long Branch	301-431-5702
		Silver Spring	240-777-6978
		Takoma/Langley	301-270-1700
		Wheaton	301-929-5500
		Rental Assistance	240-777-4400
		Schools	301--279-3391
		Silver Spring	
		Regional Services	301-565-7300
		Snow Removal/Roads	240-777-7623
		Snow Removal/	
		Sidewalks	240-777-3785
		Takoma Park	301-891-7100
		Trash & Recycling	240-777-6410
		Traffic Signals	240-777-2190
		Tree Maintenance	240-777-7263
		Vendor License	240-777-6256
		Volunteer Center	240-777-2600
		Water Quality	240-777-7770
		Weeds,Grass	240-777-3600
		Women's Commission	240-777-8330
		Zoning Complaints	240-777-6259
		Zoning Information	240-777-6240