



## Montgomery County's Priorities for the 2022 Session

### **COVID-19 Relief & Economic Resilience**

- Supporting ongoing COVID-19 relief and economic resilience programs including those that enhance the County's goals regarding racial equity and social justice, public health, emergency response, housing support and eviction diversion, childcare, broadband, and an inclusive and sustainable local economy.

### **Fiscal Health & Economic Development**

- Ensuring that the State budget respects the nexus that exists between the State's fiscal stability and its counties' fiscal health, and respects counties' role as the delivery system for public services.
- Supporting initiatives to strengthen local economic development and small businesses consistent with the priorities established by WorkSource Montgomery and the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation.
- Supporting overriding the veto of Senate Bill 199/House Bill 114 (*Transit Safety and Investment Act*), which in addition to mandating additional financial support for the Maryland Transit Administration, established a Purple Line Construction Grant Program to provide funds to qualified businesses that suffered revenue losses as a result of the construction of the Purple Line.
- Supporting initiatives to expand affordable housing, including funding to construct new affordable housing units and to preserve and rehabilitate existing affordable housing units.
- Supporting a higher allocation of federal 9% Low-Income Housing Tax Credits to projects located within the County.

### **Transportation**

- Ensuring a fair and equitable allocation to the County of anticipated historic increases in federal transportation funding that will flow through states and supporting efforts to enhance collaboration with State and federal partners to develop and implement a modern transportation system to address the region's current and future needs.
- Securing the future of the Purple Line project without any additional local contribution.
- Providing financial support and ensuring administrative cooperation for implementation of the County's bus rapid transit system, including MD 586 (Veirs Mill Road) and MD 355.
- Supporting the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) project with the awareness that the County is currently reevaluating its proposed alignment.

- Reinforcing the Maryland Department of Transportation’s commitment to pedestrian and bicycle safety, both through policy and investment.
- Reinforcing the Maryland Department of Transportation’s support for local transit and highway user revenue distributions.

## **Education**

- Continuing to implement the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future in a manner that:
  - (1) Maintains the State’s commitment to early childhood education, high quality and diverse teachers and leaders, college and career pathways, more resources to ensure success for all students, and governance and accountability; and
  - (2) Ensures a fair and equitable allocation of funding to support students and families served by the County’s school system, including funding that helps address racial and social inequities in learning exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Supporting continued implementation of the Built to Learn Act and reasonable modifications to State policies that are currently contributing to State financial participation rates in public school construction projects in Montgomery County and other counties that are well below the State’s maximum public school construction cost share percentages.
- For Montgomery College, obtaining \$3.9 million in fiscal 2023 for construction of the Catherine and Isiah Leggett Math/Science Building and \$5 million in fiscal 2023 for the renovation of the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Resource Center.
- Supporting efforts to increase culturally and linguistically proficient mental health and social/emotional learning, staffing, and practices, including efforts to facilitate career pathways for school counselors, mental health professionals, teachers, and nurses and reduce unnecessary professional licensure barriers.

## **Elections**

- Supporting efforts to increase State funding and support of elections, including requiring the State to provide at a minimum 50% or more of the cost of voting equipment and related systems as originally envisioned in 2001 when the State created the Uniform Statewide Voting System and ensuring that appropriate local input is obtained before the State Board of Elections makes procurement decisions that obligate County funds.
- Supporting measures to protect the Constitutional right to vote and opposing efforts to reduce or impede that right.
- Supporting legislation to permit the earlier canvassing of absentee ballots to more effectively manage the volume of ballots.

## **Environment**

- To help advance the County’s chief climate goal of achieving zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2035, ensuring a fair and equitable allocation to the County of anticipated historic increases in federal infrastructure funding that will flow through states and supporting efforts to enhance collaboration with State and federal partners to address climate change. Opportunities include funds for clean energy, improved transportation

options including support for electric vehicles, green bank funding to assist with leveraging private financing, and funds to address energy efficiency in existing buildings. Communities across the State, the country, and the world must do their part to curb the cataclysmic social, environmental, and economic impacts of climate change. Additionally, State level support is needed for improved recycling requirements, extended producer responsibility and accountability, and for support from electric utilities and distributors for transition to clean energy sources.

### **Health and Human Services**

- Supporting all efforts to develop and implement a Statewide plan to address the shortage of inpatient beds needed for individuals with mental health care needs, particularly youth under age 18, who wait months to enter treatment or are not able to be served at all. The plan should increase the number of available beds and broaden the populations of youth able to be served by the program, accounting for the myriad reasons these beds are in short supply.
- Supporting efforts to increase the number of linguistically and culturally competent health care, behavioral health, and social service professionals serving our residents, including efforts to facilitate career pathways and reduce unnecessary professional licensure barriers.
- Supporting initiatives to mitigate eviction and to keep residents housed as part of COVID-19 economic recovery, including the reintroduction of House Bill 729/Senate Bill 530 (*Landlord and Tenant – Eviction Actions- Filing Surcharge and Prohibited Lease Provisions*) and House Bill 31 (*Courts – Surcharges and Payment to Special Funds – Prohibited Lease Provisions*) of 2021. These bills had the goal of protecting tenants from superfluous evictions filings by raising the surcharge filing fees for summary ejection (failure to pay rent), tenant holding over, and breach of lease actions against a residential tenant. Maryland has among the lowest fees in the country for filing these actions; by raising the fees, landlords would not be incentivized to turn to the courts at the earliest opportunity to resolve these issues.

### **Public Safety**

- Monitoring implementation of the Maryland Police Accountability Act of 2021 and supporting efforts to enhance this police reform package to address legal and operational challenges that rise to the surface as implementation continues to roll out at both the State and local levels.
- Supporting efforts to reimagine how public health agencies and other social service resources can best support public safety functions, including expanding efforts to integrate behavioral health supports with law enforcement efforts.
- Supporting legislation generally prohibiting juveniles from being charged as adults.

## **Broadband Accessibility and Affordability**

- Supporting State initiatives, and enabling local initiatives, to expand broadband accessibility and affordability, with particular attention to programs and funding that ensure that urban areas are eligible to receive funding for broadband infrastructure as well as digital inclusion training and device programs.
- Working to assure that the National Association of Counties (NACo) Broadband Task Force findings, [NACo-BroadbandTaskforce-report.pdf \(July 2021\)](#), are translated into local action items sensitive to local conditions.

## **Cybersecurity**

- Supporting funding for cybersecurity programs that enhance the County's ability to address cybersecurity threats and opposing the imposition of overly burdensome administrative (e.g., reporting) requirements on local cybersecurity officials that divert resources from necessary cybersecurity efforts.

## **Local Authority**

- Retaining the County's broad Home Rule Authority to ensure that the County is not preempted from enacting or enforcing its own local laws (past examples include potential restrictions on local authority regarding control of public rights of way, siting of small cell facilities, licensing of electricians, siting of large-scale solar farms, carryout bag tax, and excise tax on electronic smoking devices).
- Expanding the County's authority and flexibility to enact local legislation when necessary to address County priorities that are not fully addressed at the State level, including increasing County flexibility to raise revenue and have local control for property tax classification.
- Supporting overriding the veto of Senate Bill 133/House Bill 319 (*Local Tax Relief for Working Families Act of 2021*) which authorized local governments to impose the county income tax on a bracket basis to allow for greater progressivity in county income tax systems.

## **State Capital Projects**

- Please refer to the attachment, which reflects a listing of capital projects that should qualify now or in the future for State investment.

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## **Montgomery County Capital Projects 2022 Session Listing**

### **Major projects (descriptions of these projects follow):**

1. Restoration Center -- \$18 million
2. Bethesda Metro South Entrance -- \$20 million
3. Zero Emissions Bus Program - \$18 million
4. Veirs Mill Road Flash Bus Rapid Transit - \$20 million
5. Great Seneca Science Corridor Transit Vehicles - \$13.5 million
6. Personal Living Quarters -- \$25 million (\$7 million available in federal HUD HOME funds)
7. Criminal Justice Center – \$74 million
8. Public School Construction, Traditional and EGRC programs (does not include Built to Learn funds) – \$45 million

### **Smaller denomination projects:**

1. Montgomery College – build out of leased space for a 4<sup>th</sup> location in East County with longer term goal of establishing a more comprehensive 4<sup>th</sup> campus
2. Maryland Statewide Mesonet (Statewide system for real-time community-level monitoring of weather conditions) - \$1.5 million
3. Olney Theatre – \$1.5 million
4. Olney Theatre, Root Outdoor Theatre -- \$.5 million
5. Bowie Mills Bike Trail -- \$1.5 million
6. Parks – various improvements throughout the County’s parks system

### **Already in the queue for FY 23 State funding:**

1. Montgomery College, Silver Spring/Takoma Park campus, Leggett Math & Science Building -- \$3.9 million
2. Montgomery College, Silver Spring/Takoma Park campus, Resource Center -- \$5 million

**Restoration Center - \$18M.** The Restoration Center is a facility that will provide a continuum of care for those in crisis in an appropriate community-based setting. The Restoration Center will support the implementation of the Crisis Now model in Montgomery County and will provide alternatives to using hospital Emergency Departments or defaulting to criminal justice options for people experiencing a behavioral health crisis. The Center will be operated by DHHS or a DHHS contractor. It will provide a variety of Behavioral Health

Services, to include triage, crisis stabilization, and warm hand off referrals to appropriate services for those experiencing mental health, substance use disorder, and/or other types of behavioral health crisis. It will provide an option to Police, Fire and Rescue, and community members and reduce the use of emergency rooms, hospitals, and jail detention. The Restoration Center will be staffed by a multidisciplinary team to include nursing staff, licensed mental health and addiction professionals, peer specialists, and resource navigators. The Center will operate 24/7/365 and will operate under a 100% admission ("No Wrong Door") policy.

**Bethesda Metro South Entrance (BMSE) - \$20M.** As part of the Purple Line project, Montgomery County is funding the BMSE project, which provides for the design and construction of a new access from Elm Street west of Wisconsin Avenue to the southern end of the existing Bethesda Metrorail station. The BMSE project includes six elevators, emergency stairs and associated facilities located in the Elm Street right-of-way connecting the street level with the existing Bethesda Metrorail station, a horizontal underground connection to the existing Metro station and the new Purple Line light rail system, and a new mezzanine above the existing Metrorail station platform. The availability of funds would help in filling an unexpected funding gap of \$20 million to allow for the completion of the \$25 million mezzanine project element. This project is a great example of an investment in critical infrastructure that expands the multi-modal transportation network, improves safety through a new station egress location, reduces congestion and associated carbon emissions, and increases access to better connect people and places. The BMSE is a key element needed to realize the benefits of the overall Purple Line project - to bring thousands of jobs to the region, attract new residents and businesses to Montgomery and Prince George's counties, and help meet the demand for high-quality, reliable east-west transit service inside the Capital Beltway.

**Zero Emissions Bus Program - \$18M.** Through its Climate Action Plan (CAP), Montgomery County has adopted goals to reduce the County's greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2027 and 100% by 2035. To meet these goals, one of the main strategies is to convert the County's Ride On 368-bus transit fleet to a zero-emissions vehicle fleet. The County is developing a phased plan to address its transit infrastructure, fleet, depots, and operational needs over the next fourteen years. The County recently launched its first four electric buses and is in the process of procuring its next ten; it is constructing an electric microgrid that will charge up to 70 electric buses; it is actively looking for grants; and, evaluating technology, fleet, infrastructure, and facilities alternatives for resilient growth. Fuel cell buses cost approximately \$1.3M each, and battery electric buses cost approximately \$900,000 each. Based on Ride On's service routes length, it is likely that a hybrid fleet comprised of both battery electric and hydrogen fuel cell buses will be required. The availability of funds would help in filling this cost gap; funds would be used to purchase zero emission buses as part of the County's plan to provide a clean, innovative transportation network of the utmost quality and build a more sustainable transit fleet to support the elimination of greenhouse emissions by 2035. The amount requested would fund either 14 fuel cell buses or 20 battery electric buses.

**Veirs Mill Road Flash Bus Rapid Transit (VMR Flash) - \$20M.** The \$44 million VMR Flash will be a 7-mile, limited-stop, branded bus service with twelve stations planned along Veirs Mill Road between the Wheaton Metrorail Station and Montgomery College Rockville. The project will transform mobility options by connecting riders to activity and employment centers. This

new service will improve transit travel time and increase opportunity for users, including a significant number of minority and low-income riders living along a highly congested corridor. Where possible, VMR Flash will run in its own lanes to bypass the existing traffic congestion. Bicycle and pedestrian improvements along the corridor will make it easier and safer to get to the VMR Flash stations. The VMR Flash Project is currently nearing completion of the Preliminary Engineering phase, is funded through Final Design in the County's capital program and is anticipated to be in operation within the next 5 years if funding for construction is available. Montgomery County plans to enter the project into the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA's) Small Starts program in Winter 2022 to request funding for 50% of the project cost. The \$20M State contribution would be used to fund a significant portion of the local match for the grant, helping to advance the project into construction.

**Great Seneca Science Corridor Transit Vehicles - \$13.5M** MCDOT is designing and constructing physical improvements to provide premium transit service between Shady Grove Metro Station and key destinations in the Great Seneca Science Corridor including the National Cancer Institute, the Universities at Shady Grove, Adventist Medical Center, Crown, Falls Grove, and numerous growing biotech research facilities. This new transit plan is a critical component of the County's efforts to support and encourage the growth of the biotech industry in this area, including portions of the City of Rockville and the City of Gaithersburg. To make this service a reality a fleet of 15 additional battery electric buses are needed and the financial capacity to provide these vehicles is not available within the County budget. The capital cost of 15 battery electric buses is \$13.5M.

**Criminal Justice Center - \$74M.** The new Criminal Justice Center (CJC) will replace the existing Montgomery County detention Center (MCDC) which currently provides short term detention services for men, women and juveniles including intake, initial care, custody and security for inmates for up to 72 hours prior to transfer to the Montgomery County Correctional Facility (MCCF). (Note: the State supported about 40% of the cost to build the MC Corrections Facility in Clarksburg which was completed in 2004)

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