Montgomery County's Priorities for the 2023 General Assembly Session

<u>Invest in Montgomery</u>

Montgomery County has been a prime economic driver for the State for many years. For Montgomery County to continue to thrive as the State's key economic engine, the State must be a full partner in investing in the County's future. Without a strong partnership, Montgomery will struggle to maintain its ability to compete regionally, nationally, and globally.

Montgomery has strong assets: a nationally recognized public education system, a highly educated workforce, the home of key federal facilities and one of the top four tech/biotech clusters in the country, plus a culturally rich population. Unfortunately, the area has a reputation for having some of the worst traffic congestion in the country. The County has acted to help bridge gaps, including investing hundreds of millions of dollars to finance State transportation projects, and has under development a bus rapid transit system to help improve mobility. But it cannot go it alone given the magnitude of investment needed.

Other infrastructure challenges also exist, particularly in education. Driven by enrollment increases and program demands, the physical plants at Montgomery County Public Schools need continued capital infusions. The County has an excellent multi campus community college (Montgomery College) and is privileged to be the home of the Universities at Shady Grove, which employs a unique higher education delivery model by hosting programs offered by nine University System of Maryland (USM) constituent institutions. The County has been a major investor in both. However, the County is missing a key piece to help support its growth: a research university presence that can support and enhance its national life science industry leadership. The County's vision is to partner with the State and USM to create the Institute for Health Computing to anchor the redevelopment of the site that was short-listed for the placement of Amazon HQ2 around the North Bethesda Metro station. This will expand the County's life sciences market and help move the State into the top tier of Life Science clusters in the country.

A list of requested State investments for the 2023 Session is attached.

<u>Education and Early Care</u>

- Support efforts to enhance the Blueprint for Maryland's Future as necessary to address implementation challenges, including pressures of global inflation, and ensure adequate and equitable funding to support students and families served by the County's school system and private child care providers.

- Acknowledging that access to quality and affordable child care for families is only achieved when the early care and education workforce is compensated adequately for the essential work that it performs, support efforts to further enhance the funding that was allocated last session to secure the financial viability of providing early care and education through direct payments to early care and education workers.

Elections

- Support legislation that was vetoed by the Governor in 2022 to authorize earlier canvassing of absentee ballots to allow for effective management of ballot volume.

Environment

- Support bold and equitable clean energy, building decarbonization, transportation and waste management policies and investments needed to achieve State and County climate goals and protect our natural environment.

- Support efforts that create opportunities to collaborate with partners across the State to develop and test innovative solutions to shared challenges.

Health and Human Services

- To promote the health and safety of the residents of Montgomery County and to build individual and family strength and self-sufficiency, ensure that as pandemic-related funding is phased out, the State works in partnership with local governments to implement the best practices learned during the pandemic response through continuing programs and funding that have improved the well-being of Marylanders over the last three years.

- Continue to elevate awareness of the urgency around the level of the State's nursing home inspections and work with the incoming administration to increase State inspection efforts, as well as to increase communication and data sharing with local agencies.

- Continue the work underway through the Commission to Study the Health Care Workforce Crisis in Maryland, and adopt best practices and changes identified by the Commission's work.

Public Safety

- To reach the County's Vision Zero goals of ending serious and fatal crashes on our roadways, expand Montgomery County's Safe Speed Program by allowing more roadways to be eligible for automated traffic enforcement, consider local initiatives such as graduated automated enforcement fines for excessive speed, and close the loophole in the Drunk Driving Reduction Act of 2016 (Noah's Law) which requires persons convicted of alcohol-related driving offenses to participate in Maryland's Ignition Interlock System Program.

- Support efforts to enhance the Maryland Police Accountability Act of 2021 as necessary to address legal and operational challenges that rise to the surface as implementation continues to roll out at both the State and local levels.

Broadband Accessibility and Affordability

- Support efforts to expand State initiatives and enable local initiatives that enhance broadband accessibility and affordability, with particular attention to programs that support underserved areas, including both rural and urban areas. Since lack of digital skills is one of the biggest obstacles to accessibility, support programs and funding that enhance digital skills as well as those that expand broadband infrastructure and access to digital devices.

Cybersecurity

- Support increased funding for programs that enhance the County's ability to address cybersecurity threats and oppose the imposition of overly burdensome administrative requirements on local officials that divert resources from cybersecurity efforts.

Local Authority

- Retain and where needed expand the County's Home Rule Authority to allow the County to enact local laws regarding priorities that are not fully addressed at the State level.

- Ensure that any legislation to implement legalization of recreational cannabis includes local authority regarding revenue generation (taxation), land use and zoning (e.g., location of retail outlets), and public safety efforts related to legalization.

Montgomery County Capital Projects
2023 General Assembly Session Listing

Priority Projects *

1. Montgomery County Bus Rapid Transit System (BRT) – $100,000,000

2. Montgomery College Transit Station – $25,000,000

3. Burtonsville Park & Ride – $13,000,000

4. New Zero Emission Ride On and BRT Bus Depot– $50,000,000

5. Bowie Mill Bike Trail – $9,350,000

6. Montrose Road Diet – $2,500,000

7. Boyds Transit Center Historic Hoyles Mill Station – $2,500,000

8. Connected School Safety Beacons – $550,000

9. Corrugated Metal Pipe Culverts Replacement - $5,000,000

10. Wheaton Arts & Culture Center – $38,100,000

11. High School Wellness Centers – $18,000,000

12. School Building Modifications to Support Blueprint for Maryland's Future – $10,000,000

13. Streeteries (Wheaton/Silver Spring/Bethesda) – $6,000,000

14. Damascus Library/Senior Center Refurbishment – $5,000,000

* The County also strongly supports the Montgomery County Public School's $164,000,000 request for school construction projects, Montgomery College's $10,328,000 request for capital improvement projects located on its three campuses, and the Montgomery Parks / M-NCPPC's $10 million request for the Powerline Trail Project and projects at the Wheaton Regional and Long Branch Parks.

Projects Already Preauthorized by the General Assembly for FY 2024

County Projects

1. Bethesda Market Lots 10-24, Town of Chevy Chase – $500,000

2. Black Rock – $350,000

3. Montgomery College East County Expansion – $2,000,000

4. Montgomery College - Takoma Park/Silver Spring - Library – $1,342,000

5. Montgomery County Bus Rapid Transit System (BRT) – $7,000,000

6. Montgomery County Public Schools Playgrounds – $1,350,000

7. North Bethesda Metro Station North Entrance – $2,000,000

8. North Bethesda Redevelopment – $6,000,000

9. Restoration Center – $5,000,000

10. Town of Brookeville – $500,000

11. Zero Emission Buses – $5,000,000

Other Projects Located Within the County

1. MedStar Montgomery Medical Center – $1,000,000

2. Olney Boys and Girls Club - Performance Sports Center – $1,500,000

3. Sandy Spring Museum – $1,500,000

4. South Valley Park Improvements – $1,000,000

11/15/22