

Message from the Council President

This year, in the FY17 Operating Budget and the FY17-22 Capital Improvements Program, the Council decided to make a major course correction. We committed ourselves to the core goals of closing the educational achievement gap; reducing class sizes across the board; making decisions that are both achievable in the short term and sustainable over time; and ensuring that residents see results for any additional investments we ask them to make. To achieve these goals we recalibrated the budget and rebalanced our spending in a way that is responsible to all.



Two of the four goals relate directly to the classroom. That is why we forged a historic partnership with the Board of Education to adopt an “education first” budget.

With this budget and CIP, students and parents can look forward to more teachers, para-educators, counselors and other student support positions, in addition to expanded programs to support minority achievement and enhance college and career readiness. School revitalizations and additions have been accelerated. We also further increased our strong support for another of our greatest assets, Montgomery College.

While this is an “education first” budget, it is not an “education only” budget. The budget provides a much-needed boost to public safety by adding more police officers and firefighters and giving them the equipment they need, including police body cameras. It also strengthens our libraries, recreation, parks, the safety net, and transportation programs. While our unemployment rate has fallen steadily since the recession, our newly privatized program for economic development promises an even stronger job market in the future.

This year’s decisions represent more than a one-year budget. They represent a plan for the future. For the first time in eight years, we opted to raise the property tax over the Charter limit. That was not an easy decision, but I am optimistic that we have established a structure that is responsive to our community’s needs and sustainable over time. We will be backed by the very large reserve we have set aside for contingencies: a historical high of \$415 million, 8.4 percent of our adjusted governmental revenues, in keeping with our AAA bond rating.

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 and WSSC as well as MCPS and Montgomery College, for their contributions, and to the thousands of County residents who shared their views with us. I am proud of what we have achieved together on behalf of our community.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy Floreen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nancy Floreen
President, Montgomery County Council