

## Message from the Council President

The FY15 Operating Budget and the FY15-20 Capital Improvements Program approved by the Council on May 22, 2014 are fiscally responsible and will make our strong community even stronger.

Many people have made this result possible. I would like to thank my Council colleagues and Council staff for their hard work. Thank you as well to County Executive Isiah Leggett and his staff for providing a sound starting point and productive collaboration. I also appreciate the contributions of MCPS, Montgomery College, M-NCPPC, and WSSC.



I also want to thank the thousands of people in our broad community who testified at our public hearings and offered excellent ideas via letters, email, and phone calls. That's what our open and inclusive budget process is all about.

The result of this collaboration is a balanced and sustainable budget that achieves many important goals. It fully funds our world-class public school system. It provides major new support to Montgomery College, one of the best community colleges in the nation. It adds new resources to our outstanding parks system. It gives a major boost to critical services that suffered badly during the Great Recession, including our library system, our Police and Fire and Rescue Service, Corrections, our safety net services, our transportation system, and other functions that mean so much to the quality of life in our County. We were also able to provide additional support to our nonprofit partners whom we rely on to provide many services and programs that enhance the lives of our residents.

All these advances are reinforced by our far-reaching new six-year Capital Improvements Program. And our budget once again provides fair compensation increases to our employees.

At the same time, our budget is fiscally responsible, with reserves at historic highs, in keeping with our AAA bond rating. And for the third year in a row, we have reduced the energy tax increase that was needed in 2010 to help us survive the worst ravages of the recession. All of us have worked hard to come together on this budget. I am proud of what we have achieved on behalf of our great community.

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

Craig Rice  
President, Montgomery County Council