



MID-COUNTY CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

Luisa Montero-Diaz
Mid-County RSC Director

April 21, 2017

The Honorable Roger Berliner
President, Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: Operating Budget, FY18

Dear Council President Berliner:

The Mid-County Citizens Advisory Board (MCCAB) welcomes the opportunity to share our observations about County Executive Leggett's Recommended FY18 Operating Budget. Last fall our Board established multiple priorities in which we guide all discussions and in our April meeting we based the following recommendations on those topics.

We recognize that the proposed budget reflects the necessity to be restrained in expenditures due to fiscal realities and uncertainties facing the County. Under County Executive Leggett's plan, we have again retained our AAA Bond rating and proved that investors can trust our County. We believe this is crucial and will allow us to capitalize on future growth opportunities as they arise. We support maintaining this standing through budgetary discipline and appreciate maintaining an adequate amount in the County's Reserve Fund.

Public Safety

We strongly support the proposed funding for Public Safety in the Police and Fire Budgets. The Board prioritizes this funding considering adjustments to the Budget prior to adoption and in case of mid-year cuts. Specifically, we endorse the proposed increase in police personnel and the increase in the police body cameras program, yet we would also like to see an increase in police staff for District 4 as suggested in Councilmember Navarro's April 17th memo. We are pleased for the increase in staffing for Olney Fire Station 40, a chase unit for station 25 and the incremental increase in EMS training and services.

Transportation

Obviously, all aspects of transportation from road and sidewalk maintenance, bike paths and bike-share availability, and pedestrian safety have major impacts in our day to day lives. We support the efforts to utilize all approaches in developing and improving a comprehensive transportation infrastructure. The Board welcomes the addition of bike-share stations in the Wheaton area and see this as an appropriate example of the overall redevelopment strategy.

MCPS

We support the recommended funding for MCPS without imposing restrictions on the proposed spending.

Libraries

The Board appreciates the additional funding to increase the operating hours at several libraries, including Twinbrook. We support the goal of having all County Library sites using the same, full service, and operating hours given their central role in all communities throughout the County. We feel that libraries contribute to both youth and adult education, while providing a valuable after school destination that is positive and safe.

Parks

We support the need and importance of local parks to serve neighborhoods, while welcoming the attention to destination parks, such as Wheaton Regional Park. These amenities provide families and individuals the quality of life that is expected in a thriving County such as our own.

The Mid-County Citizens Advisory Board thanks you for considering our comments and suggestions as you go through the process that will result in the approval of the FY18 Operating Budget for the County.

Sincerely,



Francisco Romero, Chair
Mid-County Citizens Advisory Board

cc: County Executive Isiah Leggett

Council Members:

Hon. Nancy Navarro

Hon. Tom Hucker

Hon. Sidney Katz

Hon. George Leventhal

Hon. Marc Elrich

Hon. Craig Rice

Hon. Hans Riemer