



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Marc Elrich
County Executive

November 1, 2020

Dear Friends,

National and local incidents involving police use of force have focused attention on the structure and funding of police around the country and here in Montgomery County. I have been wanting to review the work and responsibilities of the Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD) for some time now and began the work last year. We hired a new Police Chief through a process that included community engagement. We reached an agreement with the police management and union about a “Duty to Intervene” policy, requiring officers to intervene when they witness excessive force by other officers. We created a civilian Assistant Police Chief, who will oversee community policing efforts and be part of efforts to demilitarize police operations and lead social justice efforts for the police department. I convened a group to work on decriminalizing homelessness, and we now have their report, which will help guide our actions. I'm also supportive of work in the legislature to decriminalize poverty. We have engaged a consultant to conduct an independent, racial bias audit of the MCPD. If there are any implicit, systemic, and/or racial biases uncovered, we welcome and will strongly consider recommendations on how to resolve them.

We in County government, cannot do this work alone and need our community partners to help us reform policing in the County and reimagine public safety. In order to have a thoughtful discussion and review of our public safety efforts, I formed the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force to advise the County on community needs and how we may rebalance spending priorities and invest more in communities as we reimagine public safety while working toward making the County more equitable. We have heard from our Police Chief and other police departments that police officers are spending a significant amount of time responding to non-policing related calls. We must figure out how to change policing – so that police do what they should do and not the things they shouldn't do.

The Task Force includes 46 community representatives; however, I want to hear from more community members and invite you to participate in this community input survey. The survey is now available and will remain open until November 14, 2020. Once we have gathered your responses and analyzed the information, we will conduct a community forum to discuss the results. Please plan to join me on December 3, 2020 for a virtual community discussion on the survey results.

Thank you for your time and input. I look forward to reading your ideas and seeing you in December.

Sincerely,

Marc Elrich