



To Lead, Advocate and Connect as the Voice of Business

PUBLIC HEARING – FY21 Capital Budget and FY21-26 Capital Improvements Program (CIP)

February 5, 2020

The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce supports County Executive Marc Elrich's FY21 Capital Budget and the FY2021-2026 Capital Improvements Program (CIP). Our Chamber has testified in support of the CIP every year because it means local dollars being put back into our local economy through infrastructure and construction projects.

Additionally, the CIP provides an opportunity for the County to establish its priorities for growing our economy through investments in education, transportation, housing, and quality of life. These capital investments ensure that our County's economy will thrive.

The Chamber supports much of the County Executives proposed capital budget but MCCC does have the following main concerns as it relates to education, transportation, and housing.

Education

This year, while the state is legislating historic investments in school construction, our County is facing development moratoriums as a direct result of school overcrowding. As such, the **decision to underfund Montgomery County Public Schools' (MCPS) requested CIP is disappointing**. Now, more than ever, is not the time to walk back the County's commitment to funding this top priority. Additionally, any state dollars brought back to Montgomery County should not supplant county funding.

Transportation

Cutting funding for the northern entrance for the White Flint Metro Station is another concern. One of the main tenets of the 2010 White Flint Sector Plan was transit-oriented development. As proposed, a northern entrance would significantly expand the Metro walkshed and is critical to encouraging development in the North Bethesda/Pike District area. This entrance is essential to fulfilling the vision of a transit-oriented, walkable community.

Additionally, on the point of transportation, **the lack of funding for the shovel-ready Capital Crescent Trail under Wisconsin Avenue** is another issue of concern. When a commitment is made to communities, those plans must be followed through.

Housing

The County recently adopted housing goals because of the 40,000-unit shortfall we are facing in the next 10 years. Much of these units are "affordable housing" units and 75% of these affordable housing units should be for low AND middle-income households. These units are defined as having monthly costs ranging from \$0-\$2500. Some of this shortfall can be remedied through zoning and regulation changes and the Chamber offers to partner with all of you to brainstorm and develop these necessary changes. However, **capital investments in unmet housing needs** is another necessary component.

We know how important economic development is to this Council and we have appreciated legislation and a platform to match that acknowledgment. As such, now is the time to be bold and visionary as it relates to capital investments in economic development. The Chamber looks forward to partnering with you and supporting each of you in these efforts.