



To Lead, Advocate and Connect as the Voice of Business

PUBLIC HEARING – FY22 Operating Budget and Amendments to FY21-26 CIP

April 6, 2021

Good afternoon Councilmembers, my name is Gigi Godwin, and I am President & CEO of the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce supports much of County Executive Marc Elrich's FY22 Operating Budget and amendments to the FY 21-26 CIP. Our Chamber appreciates the opportunity to testify on these budgets every year as a way to articulate our priorities for growing Montgomery County's economy through investments in education, transportation, housing, and quality of life. These critical investments ensure that our County's economy will thrive.

First and foremost, the Chamber appreciates that there are no new taxes contained in this budget, especially following the catastrophic economic impacts of COVID-19. Further, the creation of the Business Advancement Team has consolidated services to the business community by providing a central access point related to business growth and development within the County will be incredibly helpful to help our businesses navigate and thrive after this pandemic.

Operating Budget

Economic Development

The Chamber supports the following investments for our incredible partners across the County:

- Continued **support for our BioTech industry**, a key strategic economic sector in the County.
- **Additional funding for MCEDC** to lead the County's efforts to showcase the County as an ideal location to start and grow a business. The funds to support entrepreneurship, workforce development, and additional support for our minority-owned businesses, in addition to the work MCEDC is already doing, invest in the County's long term economic potential.
- **Support for Visit Montgomery** following a devastating year for our hospitality and restaurant industries, this will help facilitate the resiliency of these industries through a recovery.

Higher Education

- Full support for the **funding allocated for Montgomery College** and in particular, the Innovation Hub at the Rockville Campus.

Housing

Finally, the Chamber has been a longtime advocate for **housing** for the County's "missing middle." While we applaud the record investment in affordable housing, we hope that investments will also be directed towards this "missing middle" in the County.

FY21-26 CIP

Purple Line

As it relates to the CIP amendments, the Chamber understands the need to make schedule adjustments for Purple Line related projects. We appreciate everything the County and the State have done over the past year to keep this important transit project moving forward. We would continue to urge against any significant changes in the project, including single tracking at the Bethesda Station.

Montgomery College

We also appreciate the County's support of Montgomery College by funding their deferred maintenance.

On behalf of the membership of the Montgomery County Chamber, thank you for all you have done to help guide our County through the tumultuousness of the past year. No doubt, we likely face more challenges ahead. As you grapple with tough economic policy issues, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. The MCCC is committed to being a source of subject matter experts to help you in your deliberations. Like you, we are willing to do our part to ensure Montgomery County is a great place to live, work and play.

Thank you, again, for this opportunity.