



# Montgomery County Council

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*From the Office of Council President George Leventhal*

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## **Montgomery Council President Leventhal's Remarks on Council Agreement on Fiscal Year 2016 Operating Budget**

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ROCKVILLE, Md., May 14, 2015—Montgomery County Council President George Leventhal made the following remarks as the Council reached agreement on the Fiscal Year 2016 County operating budget:

Today the Council will make final decisions on the County operating budget for Fiscal Year 2016. I want to start by thanking all my colleagues for their hard work. Together we have developed a budget that effectively addresses the top priority concerns of County residents while holding the line on taxes.

I also want to thank the County Executive. The budget he recommended in March provided a strong foundation for our work. We have supported most of what he proposed. After listening carefully to our community, as the Council does every year, we have strengthened the budget by targeting limited additional resources to priorities in education, public safety, health and human services, libraries, parks, transportation and new initiatives like the Public Election Fund.

Many of us would like to have done more for our one million residents, and several would have liked to reduce the large 2010 increase in the County energy tax. But we are dealing with the slow revenue growth that the nation, and this region in particular, have experienced in the past year.

The total budget before us has an increase of just 1.7 percent over the current year's budget. The net increase compared to the Executive's recommended budget, including reductions we have made, is \$17 million. That is 0.3 percent—three tenths of one percent—of the \$5.07 billion recommended budget. But as

the final reconciliation list shows, the targeted additions we have made will make a big difference to our community.

So I want to commend all my colleagues for your outstanding work. You have each added great value to this budget, and it has been a privilege to work with you.

I also want to commend our extraordinary Council staff. My Chief of Staff, Patty Vitale, is an outstanding manager and a true professional. Thank you, Patty, for helping deliver a government that works. Colleagues, I know that you are all as grateful to your Chiefs of Staff, and your entire staffs, as I am to mine. I also want to thank Council Administrator Steve Farber, Deputy Council Administrator Glenn Orlin, Council Clerk Linda Lauer and our remarkable corps of analysts from both the Council staff and OLO, our attorneys, our Legislative Information Office and our administrative and IT staff. They too have done a terrific job. Thanks to all of you. We have much to be proud of.

We have accomplished this task on time, cooperatively. Working together, I am confident we will continue to be productive for the balance of the year. We are going to continue to deliver a government that works. That is what our constituents expect, and that is what they pay for.

Now I will recognize any of my colleagues who have remarks they would like to make.

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