



March 17, 2022

VIA Email (County.Council@MontgomeryCountyMD.gov)

Hon. Gabe Albornoz, President
Hon. Evan Glass, Vice President
Councilmembers of the Montgomery County Council
Montgomery County Council Building
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

RE: **\$1,082,000 Supplemental Budget Appropriation for Ellsworth Drive Sewer and Water Upgrades (Council Agenda for 1:30pm, March 22, 2022 Public Hearing)**

Dear President Albornoz, Vice President Glass, and Distinguished Councilmembers of the County Council:

I am the President and CEO of CentroNia, a community-based, non-profit early learning organization serving more than 240 children, ages 0-5, in Takoma Park, MD. I am submitting this written testimony, on behalf of the Martha Gudelsky Child Development Center (MGCDC)/CentroNia partnership, ***in support of*** the County Executive's request for a **\$1,082,000 Supplemental appropriation** and CIP amendment to fund the needed sewer and water improvements on Ellsworth Drive to adequately serve ***all*** the properties that rely on the Ellsworth Drive facilities, including the County's former Silver Spring library property.

In support of the proposed Supplemental Appropriation and CIP amendment, I note the following:

1. **We are grateful for all of the County's support for critically needed Early Care and Education (ECE) services in the County.** CentroNia expresses our most heartfelt appreciation for all the efforts by the County Council and the Executive Branch to advance and support ECE services in the County, especially to serve children of low-income working families. We appreciate the Council's efforts, both *generally* (including dedicating substantial County funds to ECE efforts Countywide, and *specifically* in support of MGCDC and CentroNia's plans to repurpose the County's property as a much needed child care facility.
2. **The need for these sewer and water upgrades by WSSC exists irrespective of the proposed MGCDC/CentroNia.** We understand that this Supplemental Appropriation request has been titled as "for Martha B. Gudelsky Child Development Center Sewer Improvements." But, we respectfully note, that this title suggests that the need for the sewer and water upgrades is due to the MGCDC/CentroNia project. This is *not* the case for at least the following reasons: (a) this property's sewer and water service dates back over 60 years (to when the library first opened in 1957); (b) the only significant change in the past 60 years in this area that has triggered this present need for sewer and water upgrades is the development of the Chelsea Courts townhome

- community, 8-9 years ago, which (at the time) WSSC did not require these upgrades; (c) MGDCD's operations will have less demand for sewer and water on evenings and weekends than the prior library used during its 60 years of existence; (d) WSSC's present position is that these sewer and water upgrades would be required *regardless* of the repurposed use on the County's former Silver Spring library property. Even if MGDCD chose to locate elsewhere, and the County wanted to use its land for some other purpose --- for example, for a public park or recreation use --- WSSC's position remains that these upgrades would still be necessary); and (e) the County still retains the fee simple title to this land and is the actual land owner/landlord of this property. MGDCD is merely the planned tenant.
3. **The County's \$1+ Million investment for these sewer upgrades would unlock an enormous >\$20 to \$1 "return on investment" for the County, in the form of MGDCD's >\$21 Million pledge to fund a premium ECE center at this location.** Without these water and sewer upgrades --- which, as noted above, serve the *entire* Ellsworth Drive service area and would be needed regardless of what use the County placed on the former library property --- MGDCD cannot move forward with its planned premiere ECE facility. With this \$1 Million Supplemental Appropriation and CIP amendment, WSSC can move forward with installing these upgrades, which will then enable MGDCD to complete its design, engineering, and other land use entitlement processes that are required to construct and operate its planned ECE facility.

For at least the foregoing reasons, we respectfully suggest that it is most appropriate for: (1) WSSC to perform the work to make these upgrades, and (2) the County to pay for these upgrades. Once again, we ***fully support*** the County Executive's request for, and respectfully request the County Council's approval of, this Supplemental Appropriation and CIP amendment.

For all the Montgomery County families and children who will have access to high quality and affordable child care in the coming years at the MGDCD/CentroNia facility, I thank the Council ever so much for all your time and careful consideration --- and hopefully approval of --- this Supplemental Appropriation and CIP Amendment.

Respectfully Submitted (electronically),



Myrna Peralta, President and CEO, CentroNia

cc: Hon. Marc Elrich, County Executive
Rita G. Regino, President, Martha Gudelsky Child Development Center