



**Testimony of the Rockville Mayor and Council
County Executive's Recommended FY 25 Capital Budget and FY25-FY30
Capital Improvements Program.**

Good afternoon, Council President Friedson and members of the County Council. I am Monique Ashton, Mayor of the City of Rockville. On behalf of our entire Council, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the County Executive's Recommended CIP.

We respectfully and urgently ask for your support for the following Rockville priority MCPS capital projects:

- We implore you to please not reduce or eliminate the FY25 recommended appropriation for planning and design for the new Major Capital Project for the Twinbrook Elementary School. The project is desperately needed, and we urge you expedite the full project completion in the FY25-FY30 CIP. It is a matter of equity and inclusion for this underserved community for the school to be completely rebuilt as it was constructed in 1952. It is not ADA compliant and lacks decent space for specialists to provide individualized support for students which is critical to closing the achievement gap.
- Expedite the Wootton High School Major Capital Project to an August 2026 completion date. We are deeply concerned that the project has been delayed by eight years to August 2029 while others have jumped ahead. We've heard directly from Cluster leaders about the negative emotional impact this aging and deteriorated facility is having on Wootton students. The non-compliant ADA and safety issues in the front of the building and unsafe and crowded student parking areas have still not been addressed. This Major Capital Project must be equitably prioritized.
- Expedite the opening of Crown Farm High School from August 2027 to August 2026. This new school will relieve persistent overcrowding at Richard Montgomery High School, which has more than 2,000 students, and will provide the necessary school capacity to support additional housing that is critically needed. The City is working with the school to try to accommodate the overflow by installing more bike racks, as there were so many that students were locking them to each other, and is offering a pilot parking program since portables have been placed on parking spaces. However, these measures do not address the overcapacity inside of the building.
- Expedite the reopening of Woodward High School to August 2026 which will relieve severe overcrowding in the Walter Johnson Cluster.
- Complete a timely feasibility study for a major capital project at Gaithersburg Middle School.

There are two issues in the Lincoln Park and East Rockville neighborhoods that have been overlooked by the County for decades that I want to highlight.

- Please approve County Executive's recommendation of \$3.5 million for an FY25 renovation of the historic Lincoln High School that includes roof replacement, some building envelope repair, and design and construction of interior improvements of a warm lit shell. The building is a historic treasure for the Lincoln Park community, the City of Rockville and the County. The previous work to make minor envelope repairs in FY23 did address the major structural deficiencies, environmental concerns, and fire code issues. Once again, this is a matter of respect for the community and justice in addressing previous segregation of education in our County.

- We urge you to include funding to begin the design for the relocation of the MPCS Materials Management Facility. We are concerned for the safety of on-site MCPS employees due to the deteriorated condition of the buildings. A solution is needed for the glaring inequity of this blighted property in our Historic African American Lincoln Park community. Transit oriented housing is needed in this community. Rockville strongly supports the potential collaboration between Habitat for Humanity, the County, and school system that would redevelop the site into transit-oriented affordable housing and community amenities.

Thank you.