

**Statement by Eugene M. Ebner
President, Civic Association of River Falls (CARF)
before the Montgomery County Council**

February 6, 2024

My name is Eugene Ebner, President of the Civic Association of River Falls. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Montgomery County Council to discuss the need to mitigate flooding issues in our River Falls neighborhood.

Our civic association fully supports the \$1.25 million of funding included in the proposed FY25-30 CIP budget for the design of the River Falls Drainage Improvements identified in the County's June 2022 River Falls Drainage Study. We request that the Council provide this design phase funding and thereafter full construction funding for the designated projects once the design phase is completed. This will ensure a smooth transition to their implementation and avoid the risk of future damage to our community and further cost increases.

These steps are critical given the risk that another severe storm event could once again result in extensive and significant additional property damage to homes, cars and other property in our neighborhood and threaten the safety of our residents. The execution of these improvements will mitigate the severe flooding that has overwhelmed the River Falls Community 3 times since July of 2019 – including most recently in June 2023 – due to major storm water drainage issues that originate from the existing substandard Rock Run/River Falls drainage system.

As noted in the County's report, when compared to other County communities with storm drains, River Falls experienced the worst flooding from the summer storms of 2019 due to the undercapacity, inadequate pipe sizes and configuration of our storm drain system. The County determined that our system is so deficient that it does not even meet its own established 10-year storm event standard.

The County's final report on the 2019 floods and our community's drainage system recommended two actions that would be climate-resilient and also serve as a model for similar projects in other County communities: bioswale best management practices to reduce runoff within the existing drain system and upgrades to improve storm drainpipe segments in order to meet a 10-year storm event. Fully funding these recommended actions and upgrades is essential to mitigate our neighborhood's flooding issues.

As a welcoming and diverse 500-home community including many young children, River Falls rightly expects that the County will provide the adequate drainage infrastructure and maintenance that the County's own standards deem essential to assure the safety of our neighbors, homes, roads, and properties.

For all of these reasons, we request that full funding for the projects' design and follow-on construction be provided expeditiously to implement the drainage improvements cited above. The inclusion of this line item in the County Executive's proposed CIP funding recommendations, which our community very much appreciates, further indicates that this project is one of the major capital needs of Montgomery County.