



**Testimony of the Rockville Mayor and Council
Supplemental Appropriation #24-50 to the FY24 Operating Budget
Montgomery County Government**

Good afternoon, President Friedson and County Councilmembers. I am Monique Ashton, Mayor of Rockville. On behalf of the Rockville Mayor and Council, I am pleased to provide testimony on supplemental appropriation #24-50 to the County's FY24 Operating Budget.

We are extremely grateful to County Executive Elrich, County staff, and the County Council for your collaboration with Rockville and Gaithersburg on this essential public safety issue. The Rockville Mayor and Council strongly supports the supplemental appropriation 24-50.

We understand that staff shortages and public safety needs throughout the County have contributed to the need to redeploy six Montgomery County Police officer positions that previously supported Rockville out of the City and shift full and primary response duties for calls for service to the Rockville City Police. This has significantly impacted our community, overtime needed for our existing officers to cover the calls for service, and support public safety in our City. Prior to the County's deployment shift, there was agreement that Rockville Police respond to approximately 70% of calls for service in the City, and Montgomery County Police covered 30%. Since the adjustments took effect at the end of 2023, the Rockville City Police have responded to nearly 100% of calls for service. We were informed in September of the need for this change and the shift was to begin on November 1, 2023. However, based on our data the shift started earlier in the Fall. By October, Rockville City Police were already responding to 84 percent of all calls. The 43% increase in workload has stressed the Rockville City Police staffing resources and response time. FY24 supplemental funding in from the County is urgently needed to support the continuity of Policing services in Rockville.

We are team players and understand the County's need for support. We are willing to help. To avoid impacting the public safety, County resources are urgently needed for the City to hire six Rockville Police officers and address the overtime stress that Rockville has to undertake to fill the gap created by the County Police redeployment. Since the Rockville City Police assumed responsibility for responding to nearly 100% of calls for service, non-emergency calls have been delayed due to a lack of staff capacity. Residents contacting the City Police for issues such as theft from auto, traffic collisions without injury and property crimes must now wait longer for a response until high-priority calls are resolved. The additional County funding will enable the Rockville City Police to be highly responsive on all calls for service and better protect our community.

The prorated FY24 financial support in the amount of \$538,292 is an important first step and covers eight months of salary and benefits, supplies and equipment, and vehicles. The City requests that a full year of funding be included in Rockville's Municipal Tax Duplication payment in FY25 and beyond. We ask for your full support to ensure that this important next step occurs. Rockville stands ready to partner with you on a permanent solution that will enable the Rockville City Police to continue to provide excellent crime prevention and public safety protection to our community.

In closing, I want to thank you for this opportunity and ask for your favorable vote on supplemental appropriation #24-50.