



**Testimony of the Rockville Mayor and Council
FY25 Operating Budget Public Hearing
Montgomery County Council**

Good evening, President Friedson and County Councilmembers. I am Monique Ashton, Mayor of Rockville, and the President of the MML Montgomery Chapter. Thank you for the this opportunity.

We are grateful to the County Council, County Executive, and County staff, for your collaboration on municipal tax duplication with the adoption of Expedited Bill 2-22. This was an incredible historic accomplishment, and we are deeply appreciative. Thank you also for Supplemental Appropriation #24-50 for Rockville and Gaithersburg to address the County Police patrol redeployment outside of our cities for FY24. Rockville does have several concerns with the FY 25 recommended tax duplication allocations for Police and transportation, and we need your help.

At the February MML Montgomery Chapter meeting, we learned for the first time that estimates included in the Expedited Bill 2-22 code document posted online were lower than the actuals. FY25 was to be the year that we go to 100 percent reimbursement per the phased in approach. However, several municipalities have noted lower than expected totals and request a review and correction for FY 25. I am joined this evening by leaders who also seek your help.

In the City of Rockville, our FY25 reimbursement allocation is much lower than expected – by approximately \$600,000 - due to the County decreasing all components of the calculations. While we are aware the formula will be reviewed in the future, we request that adjustments be made for FY25 to reflect the actual environment. I also wanted to note that the County Code notes that we should be receiving the formulas for calculation. We received them for the first time this year and were able to identify some issues. There are two allocation areas that require significant review in FY25 that I want to highlight.

Police Reimbursement:

We all know that the cost to support public safety has gone up, not down. Yet, the County's calculations show all Police salaries staying relatively flat or decreasing. We recognize that the County has experienced staffing shortages and are not factoring overtime which the County is leveraging to address the Police staffing shortage. The City should be receiving an additional \$357, 346. This is significant and runs counter to national trends and the need to spend more on competitive salaries, benefits, and all aspects of police compensation. If the County is not willing to revise their calculation, we request \$820,000 for the six new officers and the FY24 salaries be adjusted for inflation.

Transportation Reimbursement:

While required by the Code, the County last year did not provide the municipalities with the transportation formulas. This year, we identified a flaw that artificially reduces the allocation, and reveals the formula is not equitable. The County's per traffic signal reimbursement is artificially low because it factors in the cost to install and maintain traffic signals and traffic beacons, but we are only getting reimbursed for traffic signals and not for traffic beacons. We request that the County budget staff work with our staff to correct this issue and ensure an equitable reimbursement. Additionally, the City's transportation reimbursement is much lower due to

the County's 'Road Maintenance' Operating Budget decreasing by 28% from FY22 to FY23. While some of the reduction is due to snow and ice removal, we are concerned that most other categories are also trending down. The reduction is inconsistent with the experience of the municipalities, and does not provide adequate compensation for the cost to maintain our roads. The current formula leaves municipalities with no protection against dramatic swings in the County's annual spending. We request that the County address this problem.

In addition to taking on County functions, we are committed to being good partners. We ask that you do the same. Thank You.