



## EAST COUNTY CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

December 27, 2023

The Honorable Marc Elrich  
Montgomery County Executive  
Executive Office Building  
101 Monroe Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Mr. Elrich,

Please see attached recommendations of the East County Citizens Advisory Board (ECCAB) for the County's FY25 operating budget. We appreciate the opportunity to sponsor and participate in the November 15, 2023 community forum you held at the White Oak Community Recreation Center. Our input is inclusive of those from the at large community.

### **Community Health Services:**

- A recent presentation at an ECCAB meeting on the County's Community Health Needs Assessment alerted us to the immediacy of the crisis of disparity of healthcare services to those most in need is attributable to economic and income stratification. *Pediatric dental services* are one of those services. It is in high demand in the County and prominently so in East County health services programs. Directors of non-profit organization have noted that the request for this service overwhelms their ability to meet it. We need funding for this service in East County.
- We support and recommend expansion of the DHHS Mobile Health Clinic services to East County's vulnerable, high risk and underserved populations and neighborhoods. This effort should be in close collaboration with the East County Consolidated Food Hub and the East County Regional Services Office.

### **Implement the Fairland-Briggs Chaney Master Plan area, White Oak Science Gateway Master Plan area, the Burtonsville Neighborhood Sector Plan - creating and connecting East County residents and businesses to new economic opportunities:**

- Funding for community building, placemaking, branding, marketing and business support.

- Provide funding for a proof-of-concept "East County Civic, Business, and Community Advocacy Coalition", similar to a chamber-of-community or civic-federation, function in East County that would incorporate business, health services, faith-based communities, and other grassroot community groups for development, advocacy, and on-going support of economic growth in East County coordinated out of the East County Regional Service Center.
- County funding support needed for WSSC Water and Sewer upgrade/expansion in the White Oak Science Gateway Area.

### **Newcomers to Montgomery County:**

- Funding is requested especially designated for new-comers whose needs are immediate for resettlement, food security, legal aid, housing, language access and health and human services (both physical and mental). A recent increase in newcomers and a projected future increase must be met with widespread efforts across the county to meet those needs, lessening substantial burden on already vulnerable communities.
- Support for newcomers should be addressed throughout the county so that there is not a substantial burden on already vulnerable communities.

### **Housing:**

- The community encourages the development of market rate housing while ensuring that there is no loss to the current supply of affordable housing in East County. If East County is to thrive, budget items need to address the equitable distribution of affordable housing across the county. Comparatively, the region has a sufficient supply of affordable and subsidized housing. What the Eastern region needs is for the current affordable and subsidized housing numbers to be stabilized and immediately establish a plan to increase the availability of market rate housing
- There should be funds to address the needs of the homeless as well as the needs of the communities where they are found.

### **Youth Programs:**

- Youth programs that address both youth violence and support for healthy alternatives should be well-funded. An integrated approach that includes policing, recreational and athletic programs, families and schools is needed. ECCAB request that funding be provided to support a holistic approach for coordination between programs that address the needs of our youth and resources needed.
- Funding for a county or school coordinator to coordinate and communicate comprehensive year-around and summer youth employment and paid job-related training for all eligible low-income youths.
- Funding for transportation to promote full access to community recreation programs and activities for youth and underserved neighborhoods.

### **Transportation - Easier Commutes, Growing communities:**

Transportation is the lifeline of communities. A properly designed and maintained local and regional transportation system/amenities is vital for East County's diverse communities. We support funding and support for transportation developments and initiatives to meet the needs of our citizens to get back and forth to work, school and county-wide activities including:

- Funding at all BRT and bus stations, and at all existing facilities to provide adequate canopies that cover people and more benches for BRT and bus passengers, including the Briggs Chaney and White Oak Transit stops.
- Funding for an advanced study of the Randolph Road BRT to ensure clean integration of the US29, New Hampshire, and Randolph Road BRT routes and stops.
- We request funding to expand the Ride On bus route between East County and Shady Grove on Route 200.
- Funding is requested for an East County regional circulator bus around East County to promote access to recreation centers, libraries, schools and community events, White Oak Medical Center for patients and staff, transit centers, and employment centers for youth and seniors in disconnected and hard-to-reach neighborhoods, cost-free to all passengers or to school students, ADA qualified persons, and seniors.
- Undertake a BRT alternative study to change a segment of the existing US29 Orange route from US29 to Old Columbia Pike to connect activity centers at Briggs-Chaney, Old Columbia Pike, Life Science Center, and White Oak Center

#### **Public Safety:**

- Increased funding for stationary and portable police cameras at retail and shopping centers to prevent ongoing crime in East County.
- Funding is requested to improve East Randolph Road and Randolph Road roadways which have had multiple incidents of fatal and near-fatal accidents for improvements-traffic calming/pedestrian safety.
- Improve street lighting around public spaces and along county roads in East County to deter crime (e.g. Stewart Lane, Lockwood Drive, Briggs Chaney Road, Outlet Drive, etc.)
- Funding for continued training on racial and social justice impact awareness for Public Safety officers.

#### **Youth & Family Services:**

- Childcare Subsidies Program - There is an ongoing need to support families by providing subsidies for childcare in our county, and especially in East County. If our families are to thrive, we request that funding for this program be expanded and made accessible to most needy families.

#### **Community Development:**

- Fund commercial/shopping centers facade improvement projects throughout East County, specifically: Cloverly shopping center on New Hampshire Avenue, Briggs Chaney Outlet/shopping center (we suggest the County follow the suggestions in the

Fairland/Briggs Chaney Master Plan), northbound New Hampshire shopping center across from Colesville Center, White Oak Shopping Center on 29, and White Oak strip mall on Lockwood Drive

**Technology:**

- Funding for cellular services, optionally upgraded to 5G service, in East County to support residents, businesses, and for safety reason. East County has numerous cellular service desert areas that need to be rectified.

**Business Assistance**

- Increased funding for the expansion of small business center assistance programs and services in East County and other East County Regional Services Office efforts

**Montgomery College**

- Increase funding of Montgomery College's budget to implement and/or continue technology and life science work skills training programs at their East County Education Training Center.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of our recommendations and continuous support in service to Eastern Montgomery County.

Sincerely,



Peter Myo Khin  
Chair, East County Citizens Advisory Board

Cc: Andrew Friedson, County Council President  
D5 County Council Member Kristin Mink  
D7 County Council Member Dawn Luedtke  
Jewru Bandeh, Director, ECRSC  
Jenny Bryant, OMB Director

**Testimony of East County Citizens Advisory Board to County Council on FY25**  
**Operating Budget**  
**April 25,2024**

Good afternoon, Council President Friedson and fellow councilmembers. My name is Peter Myo Khin and I am Chair of the East County Citizens Advisory Board. I have submitted this testimony and a copy of a letter submitted previously to County Executive with copy to the Council on this matter.

The Board takes the following positions on the County Executive's proposed FY-25 operating budget:

- In **Community Health Service**, we support expansion of the DHHS Mobile Health Clinic services and request added funds for the Criminal Street Gang Units. We hope this also supplements additional staffing in East County, notably in the MCPD 3<sup>rd</sup> District's Ida Sector.
- Funding is also requested for a proof-of-concept "**East County Civic, Business, and Community Advocacy Coalition**", similar to the chamber-of-commerce or civic-federation function, that would incorporate business, health services, faith-based communities, and other grassroots community groups for development and advocacy, for on-going support of economic growth in East County. This would be coordinated out of the East County Regional Service Center. Also, we need funding for the WSSC Water and Sewer upgrade/expansion in the White Oak Science Gateway Area in support of upcoming development in the area.
- Regarding **Public Safety** of our community, we ask for increased funding for stationary and portable police cameras at retail and shopping centers. Funding is also requested to improve East Randolph Road and Randolph Road roadways upon which fatal and near-fatal accidents have occurred, and improve street lighting around public spaces and along county roads in East County to deter accidents and finally, funding for continued training on racial and social justice impact awareness for Public Safety officers.
- As for **Transportation**, we noted in our previously submitted recommendations, we ask for funding for an advanced study of the Randolph Road BRT to ensure clean integration with the US29, New Hampshire, Viers Mill BRT routes. As the only East-West traversing BRT route in the county, the early study and analysis is critical to ensure a holistic approach between the Randolph Road BRT route and the other aforementioned routes. Funding in the Operation Budget is needed for this study with subsequent tasks and activities designated in the CIP budget.
- Regarding **Newcomers-in-need** to the county, funding is needed for resettlement, food security, legal aid, housing, language access and health and human services (both physical and mental). The current increase in newcomers and a projected future increase must be met with widespread efforts across the county to meet those needs, lessening substantial burden on already vulnerable communities.

Support for newcomers should be addressed equitably throughout the county so that there is not a concentration in just few communities within the county.

- In **Education**, positive youth development, social services and workforce development are priorities for us. We support the funding request included in the operating budget for the Paint Branch-Springbrook school cluster and the overall MCPS school budget.
- We need funding for **Youth Programs** that address both youth violence and support for healthy alternatives. ECCAB requests that funding be provided to support an approach for coordination between all county programs that address the needs of our youth and resources. Also, funding is needed for a dedicated county or school coordinator who would coordinate and communicate comprehensive year-around and summer youth employment opportunities and paid job-related training for all eligible low-income youths.
- Finally, there is ongoing need to support families by providing subsidies for **Childcare** in our county, and especially in East County.

I thank you for the opportunity to address the matters that impact our community and ask you to support the issues I just discussed and those in the letter we previously sent County Executive with copy to the Council on this matter.

Thank you for your time.