



UPCOUNTY CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

March 7, 2012

The Honorable Isiah Leggett
Montgomery County Executive
101 Monroe Street
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Mr. Leggett:

The Upcounty County Citizen's Advisory Board was pleased to host your Upcounty Annual Budget Forum held at the Black Rock Center for the Arts on January 23, 2012. The forums are an excellent venue for receiving input for the FY 2013 from residents. This year's forum was well attended and representatives of various county agencies were on hand to provide additional information.

We support your idea to "do as little harm as possible" to services that have already been impacted by the budget challenges in recent years. Public schools, public safety, libraries, and services for the most vulnerable should be funding priorities. Other county services, including recreation, parks, general services, and housing that are aligned with your priority policy objectives are also important and are often interlinked with other services to provide a comprehensive umbrella for county citizens and should be funded to the extent possible.

It is hoped that the county's continued efforts to develop long-term savings based on the focus on productivity and performance of services and by continuing with plans to reduce the pressure of the capital budget payment obligations on the operating budget are successful. Based on the information we received from our regular meetings and the budget forum, we submit the following recommendations for your consideration.

Regional Service Centers

We support providing sufficient staff for the regional service centers to handle the critical service they provide to the community. The Upcounty Regional Service Center serves the largest geographical area and a large portion of the county's increasingly diverse population. The center continues to provide support for community issues in Clarksburg, Germantown, and Poolesville and many other communities, maintaining key government partnerships with both business and non-profit organizations, and providing assistance to residents.

Public Safety

The UCAB supports, to the extent possible, the addition of officers for the police department. The citizens enjoy safe and secure neighborhoods due to the high-quality police officers we currently have, but with increase in population and other social and economic pressures, we will need more officers to maintain that level of service.

Public Libraries

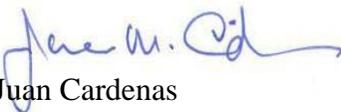
Perhaps no group has been more vocal than the citizens who advocate for the libraries. In this age of new technology growth, the libraries are refocusing services to meet the needs of citizens, providing computer work stations, e-book readers, and access to electronic databases. We support these efforts, noting that libraries are community cultural centers and open doors to education and entertainment for citizens and we are confident that the county will do so in an effective yet financially responsible way.

All Services

We realize the tremendous sacrifice made by all county employees, including those of the school system and Montgomery College, to help balance the budget by forgoing COLAs and step increases. Holding the line on compensation also contributed to the level of sustainability in the budget we have today. Employees need to be recognized for their dedication and commitment to serving the diverse citizens of Montgomery County.

The Upcounty Citizen's Advisory Board and the citizens of the Upcounty region appreciate the opportunity to offer these recommendations.

Sincerely,



Juan Cardenas