

April 19, 2021

Montgomery County Council  
100 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear President Hucker and members of the Montgomery County Council:

In the absence of a formal and permanent process to determine tax duplication reimbursements for Montgomery County's municipalities, our only recourse has been to make an annual appeal to the County Executive for an equitable increase. For almost a decade, we have yet to receive any increase.

Further, we were surprised to learn last week of a March 11 proposal to decrease the Municipal Tax Duplication Reimbursement Program transportation rebate formula under County Council Resolution 13-650 and Chapter 30A of the County Code to 60 percent. We object to this significant reduction in our road maintenance funding, particularly when we had no opportunity to provide input on any aspect of the proposal. Other revisions contained in that proposal are similarly problematic.

Today, we respectfully offer four requests:

- *That the Council work to codify a consistent process and method to update the formulas for these categories in collaboration with municipalities for the future,*
- *That the Council work with municipal leaders over the next few weeks to craft alternative County Code revisions for consideration by the Council;*
- *That the Council amend the County's FY22 budget to adjust the municipal tax duplication payments to the amount for Transportation, Police, Crossing Guard and Park services as outlined in the chart provided to Montgomery County municipalities in February, which would total \$14,203,314, or higher; and*
- *That the Council urge the County Executive to begin negotiations on the formula for police and park maintenance services for the FY23 budget year.*

Last year, we were pleased that County Executive Elrich included an increase in his FY21 proposed budget. As the full impact of the global pandemic unfolded, the County Council was faced with making extremely difficult, yet vital adjustments to the proposed budget to limit the devastating public health and economic outcomes for residents and small businesses. Understandably, the Council determined that an increase to municipal tax reimbursements did not fit within the "continuity of services" framework for the FY21 budget. However, we were encouraged by your discussion and overall agreement that it was well past time to resolve the tax duplication process.

Finally, it was our understanding that once we were able to negotiate an increase for road maintenance funding with the County Executive, our next step would be to clarify the formula for park maintenance reimbursements and establish a methodology for reimbursing municipalities that provide police services. To date, these discussions have not occurred; it is our hope that you will support our future efforts to find an equitable and lasting solution for both of these additional tax duplication payments.



Takoma Park has a full-service police department that does patrol, investigations (including homicide and other serious crimes), victim-witness assistance, and provides crossing guards for students attending school in the City. Our location on the border of Washington, D.C., and Prince George's County and near downtown Silver Spring and Langley Park means that the Takoma Park Police Department plays a critical role in interjurisdictional public safety. Takoma Park has 43 sworn officers and 23 additional FTEs (full time equivalent staff).

The Rockville City Police is considered a "primary agency" and currently supplements 71 % of police services, for which the County would otherwise be responsible. Rockville's Police station is centrally located within the County. It is equipped as a DUI testing facility which includes an intoximeter that is available for use by the City's officers, Montgomery County Department of Police, Gaithersburg Police Department, and the Maryland State Police and other law enforcement agencies.

The City of Gaithersburg has been considered a "primary agency" since 2012 and currently supplements over 60% of police services on average, for which the County would otherwise be responsible. The Gaithersburg Police Department anticipates an increase in demand when the new police station opens in the late spring. The new police station is centrally located in the 6<sup>th</sup> District and adjacent to major transportation infrastructure. The station will be a DUI testing facility, equipped with an intoximeter that will be available to the City's officers, Montgomery County Police, Rockville City Police, the Maryland State Police and other law enforcement agencies.

The relationship between Montgomery County and its municipalities is a vital element to the safety and overall well-being of our communities. As such, we are ready to meet with you at any point during your deliberations to discuss these issues in more detail. We would like to work with the County Council to reach an alternative resolution that achieves the goals as outlined above for Fiscal 2022 and beyond.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Mayor Jud Ashman  
City of Gaithersburg



Mayor Bridget Newton  
City of Rockville



Mayor Kate Stewart  
City of Takoma Park

