To: Montgomery County Planning Board

From: Terri Bacote-Charles, Corporate Budget Director

Date: March 31, 2025

Subject: Non-Recommended Reductions to Meet Montgomery County Executive's

Recommended Budget

Background:

On March 14th, Montgomery County Executive Elrich released his recommended budget that contained a 3.6% increase for the Montgomery County portion of the Commission. As a result, the Commission must reduce the proposed budget for both the Administration and Park Funds. A total reduction of \$7,819,125 or 4.1% was recommended.

The table below shows the amounts needed to be reduced from the various departments in order to align with the County Executive's recommended budget.

		\$ Difference
FY26 Requested	FY 26 County Executive Recommended	Requested vs Recommended
\$189,428,053	\$181,608,928	\$7,819,125
Required Reductions Needed to N	leet County Executive's Recommende	d Budget
Non-Departmental - Admin Fund	Savings from Limiting Reclassifications	\$ 480,310
Non-Departmental - Admin Fund	Non-Recommended Reductions	\$ 314,730
Commissioners' Office	Non-Recommended Reductions	\$ 97,613
Central Administrative Services	Non-Recommended Reductions	\$ 388,442
Planning Department	Non-Recommended Reductions	\$ 862,509
Department of Parks	Non-Recommended Reductions	\$ 5,675,521
	Total Budget Cuts	\$ 7,819,125

Detailed lists and descriptions of the proposed non-recommended reductions, by department, are attached.

Non-Departmental

Savings

Due to the unprecedented budget challenges anticipated in FY26, the Commission has now decided to limit reclassifications and/or seasonal adjustments. Therefore, we can reduce the Administration Fund account by \$480,310.

Non-Recommended Reduction

Non-Departmental - Admin Fund FY26 Non-Recommended Budget Reductions			
Reduction to Meet County Executive's (CE) Recommendation – Commissioners Office	\$314,73		
Reduction to Meet County Executive's (CE) Recommendation	\$314,73		
Non-Departmental - Admin Fund – Tier 1 Non-Recommended Reductions for Restoration	Funding		
Reduce Funds Available for Employee Compensation Increases during FY26			
<u>Description:</u> The Commission included a compensation adjustment marker for FY26. The Commission is currently engaged in negotiations.			
Impact: Without this funding, the Commission cannot negotiate with labor unions in good faith. This would also impact the ability to adhere to the long-standing prudent compensation strategy - 50th percentile - neither the lead nor the lag relative to other employer's salaries based on regional compensation surveys.	\$314,730		

MC Commissioners' Office FY26 Non-Recommended Budget Reductions to Meet the County Executivew's (CE) Recommended Operating Budget		
FY25 Adjusted Adopted Budget	\$1,261,153	
FY26 Proposed Budget	\$1,427,614	
FY26 Proposed Increase	\$166,461	
Reduction to Meet CE Recommendation - Commissioners' Office	\$97,613	

Tier 1	Commissioners' Office – Tier 1 Non-Recommended Reductions for Restoration	Funding
1-1	Funding the Admin Specialist III/Constituent Services Position Description: This position will support management of constituent inquiries, preparing documents and monitoring their transmittal, and coordinate MPIA requests. The position would also support the Chair's office in policy research and responding to inquiries from legislative and executive offices on the local and state level. Additionally, the position will provide general administrative support to the Chair and the Commissioners. This includes supporting the Chair/Vice-Chair in their role with the Full Commission of the Maryland- National Capital Park and Planning Commission, which provides leadership direction to all 6,900+ Commission employees. Impact: Without this position, we will have continued delays and reduced quality in our ability to respond to constituent inquiries, be responsive to outreach from the Council, Executive Branch, and other government offices, and support public testimony. As of mid-March 2025, the office had already received more constituent inquiries for us to directly address then we had in all of Fiscal Year 2024.	\$97,613
	SUB-TOTAL TIER 1 - Departmental Priority	\$97,613
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	TOTAL OF ALL TIERS – COMMISSIONERS' PORTION TO MEET CE RECOMMENDATIONS	\$97,613

Central Administrative Services

MC CAS FY26 Non-Recommended Budget Reductions			Bi-County
FY 25 Adjusted Adopted Budget	\$ 12,945,823		\$ 27,957,737
FY 26 Proposed Budget	\$ 13,634,863		\$ 28,826,852
FY26 Proposed Increase	\$ 689,040		\$ 869,115
Reduction to Meet County Executive's Recommendation	\$388,442		\$855,836
% Reduction from FY 26 Proposed Budget	2.8%		3.0%

Central Admir	inistrative Services FY 26 Non-Recommended Reductions to Meet County Executive's Recommend		ation	PGC	Total
Department		CAS - Tier 1 Priority for Restoration	Funding		
DHRM	1-a	Delay Filling 2 vacant positions			
		Executive Director - 6 months in FY 26 - responsible for the overall strategic			
		direction, daily operations and reporting to the Chairs to ensure the mission and			
		goals are achieved	75,577	97,001	172,579
		Impact: Without this position, we continue to function over a year with an Acting			
		Director that is also responsible for other executive-level duties			
		Administrative Assistant for Policy and Management Operations (PMO) - 4 months			
		in FY 26 and remainder of FY25	17,144	22,011	39,155
		Impact: Without this position, the PMO continues to function with many of the			
		duties falling on other members to perform. This adversely impacts the effectiveness of the PMO			
-					
Finance	1-b	Delay filling the vacant Payroll Manager - 3 months in FY 26 & remainder of FY 25	15,691	20,985	36,676
		This position is responsible for regulatory compliance and will be the lead on the			
		payroll system implementation for the new ERP system			
		Impact: Without this position, payroll will be one of the highest risk areas for the			
		Commission.			
- ·			24 600	42.252	74.04
Finance	1-c	Reduce funds for professional services related to ERP and other key initiatives	31,690	42,352	74,042
		Impact: Limits resouces needed to diligently and effectively implement the new			
		ERP system.			
- Finance	1 4	Postpone contribution to Internal Service Fund - CIO & CWIT Funds, in lieu of taken	F2 774	71 067	125 (41
Finance	1-d	further vacancy lag reductions on Finance staff and operations	53,774	71,867	125,641
Office of Incorporates	+	Impact: Limits resouces available for OCIO ongoing operations			
Office of Inspector General (OIG)	1-e	Dolay in Hiring New Conier Auditor & months	32,523	43,860	76,383
deficial (Old)	1-6	Delay in Hiring - New Senior Auditor - 6 months	32,323	43,000	70,363
		The OIG is required by state statute to ensure public accountability by preventing,			
		investigating, and reporting instances of fraud, waste, and abuse and to examine,			
		evaluate and report on the adequacy and effectivness of the systems of internal			
		control. A senior auditor is needed to meet the increased demand for both			
		investigations and audits.			
		Impact: Any delay in hiring impacts OIG's ability to complete audits, evaluations			
		and investigations. Planned performance audits have been put on hold to			
		accommodate the number of increased investigations. Delays directly impact			
		Commission's ability to improve compliance with applicable laws, internal policies,			
		and ethical standards of conduct.			
Corporate IT	1-f	Postpone the annual contribution to Capital Equipment Fund	112,500	112,500	225,000
		Impact: The fund is used to replace firewalls and SAN Servers that support the			
		cybersecurity of the Commission. The CIO will increase the budget ask in			
		subsequent years to make up for this reduction. Costs are increasing for the			
		purchase of hardware and maintenance services to fortify and replace the			
		equipment as it ages and becomes obsolete			
	_	SUB-TOTAL TIER 1 - Departmental Priority to go on Reconciliation List	\$338,899	410,576	749,476

	(ADDI	CAS - Tier 2 Priority for Restoration TIONAL TIER 2 OPTIONS FOR PLANNING BOARD NOT IN DEPARTMENTAL PRIORITY	Funding	PGC	Total
Corporate IT	2-a	Limit training opportunities for emerging technologies	6,880	6,880	13,760
		SUB-TOTAL TIER 2 - Deparmental Priority to go on Reconciliation List	\$6,880	6,880	13,760
	CAS -	- Tier 3 Budget Reductions to Meet the FY26 County Executive Recommendation	Funding		
		Reduce various operating expenses to include supplies, repair funds and temp			
DHRM		agency fees	8,760	11,240	20,000
		Reduce various operating expenses to include professional and miscellaneous			
Merit		services	3,500	3,500	7,000
Corporate IT		Reduce Supplies and Materials	9,300	9,300	18,600
		Reduce various operating expenses to include furnitue, supplies, awards and			
CAS Support		professional services	21,103	25,897	47,000
		SUB-TOTAL REDUCTIONS - Will not go on Reconciliation List	\$42,663	49,937	92,600
		TOTAL OF ALL TIERS – CAS PORTION TO MEET CE RECOMMENDATION	\$388,442	467,393	855,836

MC Planning Department's FY26 Non-Recommended Budget Reductions to Meet County Executive's Reco	T
FY25 Adjusted Adopted Budge	t \$26,565,785
FY26 Proposed Budge	t \$28,082,947
FY26 Proposed Increas	e \$1,517,162
% Increas	e 5.7%
Reduction to Meet County Executive's (CE) Recommendation - Plannin	g 862,509
% Reduction from FY26 Proposed Budge	t 3.1%
Planning - Tier 1 Top Priority (Non-Recommended Reductions)	Funding
Ongoing Master Plan Support	
Description The Planning Department seeks a new flexible funding method for master plans starting in FY26, allowing for efficient allocation of resources for community engagement and necessary technical analyses. The two plans supported in FY26 are the Kensington Sector Plan Amendment and the Burtonsville Employment Area Minor Master Plan Amendment, both of which align with the objectives of Thrive Montgomery 2050 and the department's strategic goals. Impact Without this funding, the Kensington Sector Plan Amendment and the Burtonsville Employment Area Minor Master Plan Amendment projects will be delayed. This is a reduction of \$96,383 from a \$300,000 request.	\$96,38.
Director's Office - Placemaking Coordinator - Planner III (Delay Hiring New Position by 4 Months) Description Placemaking involves engaging residents and business owners in the planning process to shape their communities directly. Planning has adopted a Placemaking Strategic Plan to make placemaking a core function in master planning and regulatory review efforts. A dedicated position within the Director's Office is needed to expand placemaking's reach, build capacity, support master plan implementation, and maximize the impact of placemaking investments. This position will advance key recommendations from Thrive, ensuring more communities benefit from improvements and celebrating the county's diversity. Placemaking projects will encourage physical activity, social interaction, and a shared sense of purpose and belonging for residents. Impact The department is overwhelmed with the demand for placemaking activities. The current staffing and budget resources are insufficient to meet the increasing demands. County agencies, residents, and mission-based organizations are taking on placemaking projects, but the lack of coordination and resources is causing inefficiencies. Lack of a dedicated staff resource is limiting efforts to expand placemaking's reach, capacity building and to meet the goals of Thrive.	\$44,652
Housing Needs Assessment and Preferences Survey and Study Description The county has a serious housing shortage. With an increasing population, not enough housing is being built to keep up with this growth. Housing prices and rents have significantly increased, forcing people to look for homes elsewhere, which hurts the county's economy. The lack of housing has also resulted i some households seeking housing outside their affordability range, leaving some with significant housing burdens. The Housing Needs Assessment would update an analysis conducted prior to our wor on Thrive to better understand how well our housing supply (by type and price) meets our housing needs. The Housing Preferences Survey would be a comprehensive survey of county residents to better understand their housing needs and interests. Impact A successful Housing Needs Assessment and Preference Survey provides a solid foundation that informs future housing policy work of the Planning Department, the Executive Branch, the Planning Board, and the County Council. With this reduction, the Housing Needs Assessment will be conducted fully inhouse, which means it will take longer to complete. This would still provide funding to conduct a comprehensive Housing Preference Survey. This is a \$100,000 reduction from a \$200,000 request.	n k \$100,00

	Planning - Tier 2 (Non-Recommended Reductions)	Funding
2.1	Countywide Planning - Climate Initiatives – Planner IV Description The Planning Department needs a climate specialist to ensure climate-related initiatives are integrated into plans and policies. This position will conduct climate assessments for zoning text amendments and master plans, lead climate and resilience studies, and prepare a Resilience Functional Master Plan. Additionally, the specialist will conduct an Area Climate Change Vulnerability Study and coordinate with county agencies on Climate Action Plan efforts. The role will focus on delivering climate policies that achieve equitable outcomes, especially for vulnerable populations. The department aims to consistently integrate climate discussions into master planning, prioritizing community resilience. Impact Without this position, the Planning Department will struggle to integrate climate-related initiatives and equitable policies into their plans and assessments. This will hinder efforts to address climate change effectively, support vulnerable populations through resilient and comprehensive planning, as well as meet the climate goals of the county.	\$156,237
2.2	Management Services - Organizational Development – Administrative Specialist III Description The Planning Department identified employees as a top priority in its strategic plan. The plan emphasizes the importance of training, mentoring, succession planning and employee resource groups. This new position will manage and build upon the successful groundwork to grow these programs through continuous development, improved efficiency, better communication, enhanced collaboration, improved employee morale and organizational culture, and better adaptation to change. The department has implemented successful pilot programs; however, it needs more staff to expand them. This position would help improve training, mentoring, career development, and foster a diverse and Impact Without funding for this position, programs for training, mentoring, succession planning, and employee resource groups will remain underdeveloped, thereby limiting their potential impact. This will hinder the ability to improve staff capacity and ensure effective leadership transitions.	\$125,237
	SUB-TOTAL TIER 2 - Departmental Priority	\$281,474

Budget Reductions to Meet the FY26 County Executive Recommendation	Funding
Retail Market Analysis and Strategy Update Description In 2017, the Planning Department conducted a retail market study to assess strengths, challenges and inform recommendations for retail centers. The study led to follow-up research on retail in diverse communities, providing guidance for supporting small, diverse businesses. Due to shifts caused by the pandemic, an update to this study is necessary to understand current retail dynamics and develop strategies for growth. The updated study will help the department better support the retail sector, considering changes such as increased online shopping and food service deliveries. This request aligns with the strategic plan and aims to identify gaps and create better recommendations for retail in disadvantaged areas. Impact	\$90,000
This project will be funded using FY25 savings. Shaping Corridor Focused Growth Description Thrive emphasizes corridor planning to concentrate future growth along growth corridors, creating complete communities and enhancing quality of life. The project aims to develop innovative planning tools and practices for corridors. It will deliver a strategic plan to implement corridor-focused growth, addressing changes to processes, policies, regulations, and standards, new tools for plan implementation and stakeholder engagement, new metrics and analysis forms, public sector intervention, and incentives for property assembly and infrastructure improvements. Additionally, form-based zones will be created for growth corridors through comprehensive long-range plans, incorporating lessons from previous corridor plans and engaging stakeholders in dialogue about desired growth forms. Impact	\$250,000
This project would build off of lessons learned from recent corridor planning efforts to ensure we have the tools and methods necessary to pursue the corridor-focused growth envisioned in Thrive Montgomery 2050. Without the necessary funding, we will plan to integrate the effort into the Georgia Avenue Corridor Plan, which is just beginning. This will result in some delays to the completion of the Georgia Avenue plan.	
SUB-TOTAL - Reductions	\$340,000
TOTAL OF ALL TIERS – PLANNING'S PORTION TO MEET CE RECOMMENDATION	\$862,509

MC Department of Parks

MC Parks Department's FY26 Non-Recommended Budget Reductions to Meet the County Executivew's (CE) Recommended Operating Budget	
FY25 Adjusted Adopted Budget (exluding grants and CIP transfer)	\$140,071,309
FY26 Requested Budget (excluding grants, CIP transfer, and reserves)	\$150,088,352
CE Recommended Increase	\$4,341,522
Reduction to Meet CE Recommendation - Parks	\$5,675,521

TIER 1	Parks - Tier 1 Non-Recommended Reductions - (Major Known Commitments)	Funding	# of Positions	# of Workyears	
1-1	Compensation Increases	1,072,826	0.0	0.0	
	<u>IMPACT</u> : The Department cannot negotiate with labor unions in good faith if the compensation markers are not				
	covered. This would also impact the ability of Park Police to cover special events and remain visible in the Park				
	system.				
1-2	Utility increases - meeting the Department's obligation to pay for higher utility costs to sustain the current level of	178,882	0.0	0.0	
	services at existing parks and facilities.				
	<u>IMPACT</u> : Electric and water utility costs are going up. Not funding the utility costs increase would degrade the				
	quality of irrigated athletic fields and reduce the number of lighted ballfields and courts.				
	Operating Budget Impacts for new and expanded parks including Royce Hanson Conservation Park, South Silver	529,185	5.0	6.1	
	Spring Urban Park, Ovid Hazen Wells Recreational Park, Stonehedge Local Park, Springfield Neighborhood Park,				
	Carroll Knolls Local Park, Long-Branch Garland Local Park, South Germantown Recreational Park Adventure				
1-3	Playground, Northwest Branch Disc Golf Course, The Powerline Trail, McKnew Local Park, Fox Chapel				
	Neighborhood Park, Little Falls Stream Valley Park, Fairland Recreational Park, Cabin John Povich Field, Olney Family				
	Neighborhood Park, and Glenfield Local Park.				
	IMPACT: Without OBI, the condition of these new and expanded parks and trails will quickly deteriorate.				
	Risk Management to cover the impact of willfull vandalism (i.e. the Greenbriar playground arson, various smaller	62,500	0.0	0.0	
	events that happen throughout the park system), damage cause by weather events (i.e. a large tree came down at				
	Cabin John Maintenance Yard which damaged the roof and building structure), and various small claims. The				
1-4	Department is self-insured up to \$250k. The two above mentioned events depleted the Risk Management fund by				
	\$500,000.				
	IMPACT: The Parks Department will not have the capacity to cover any future catastrophic losses. The next				
	Greenbriar will result in a permanently closed playground.				
	Capital Equipment ISF Debt Service to cover debt payments for vehicle and equipment purchases.	575,300	0.0	0.0	
1-5	IMPACT: The Parks Department won't be able to meet their debt payment obligations putting at risk its ability to				
	issue debt in the future to purchase equipment to maintain parks.				
	Contractual increases - meeting the Department's contractual obligations to sustain the current level of services at	190,378	0.0	0.0	
	existing parks and facilities.				
1-6	IMPACT: Since many of the departmental contracts have escalation clauses linked to inflation, not funding this cost				
1-0	will effectively result in a reduction to our base budget. Basic services patrons expect of the parks department will				
	be severely cut like portable toilets, athletic field lighting repairs, tree pruning, custodial services, pest control, and				
	playground repairs.				
1-7	Inflationary increases - sustaining the current level of service at existing parks and facilities.	562,485	0.0	0.0	
	<u>IMPACT</u> : Not funding inflationary increases for supplies will result in a reduction to our base budget. Supplies and				
	commodities like fuel, vehicle and mower repair parts, turf supplies, and animal feed will be cut resulting in impacts				
	to basic services.				
	SUB-TOTAL PRIORITY FOR RESTORATION BY PHP COMMITTEE -	\$ 3,171,556	5.0	6.1	

TIER 2	Parks - Tier 2 Non-Recommended Reductions		# of Positions	# of
		Funding		Workyears
	Parks Clean Up Program Assistant - This full-time position will assist the Volunteer Parks Clean Up Program in	84,504	1.0	1.0
	continuing to assist organizing community members to learn about their watershed, environmental issues, and to			
2.1	engage in stewardship activities by cleaning up litter in their parks. The position will also assist with the ongoing			
2-1	public requests to address trash in the parks, respond to customer service concerns and community requests, and			
	assist with MS4 permitting reporting requirements. This function is currently fulfilled by a grant funded seasonal			
	position which was sufficient to launch a successful program but not to maintain it long-term.			
	Park Facelifts - this funding will be used to update park amenities that need refreshing. With our large park system,	200,000	0.0	0.0
	aging infrastructure, and large backlog of maintenance needs, many of our smaller amenities get neglected. Now			
2-2	that we have filled many of our vacancies, we want to redirect staff to update or enhance some of our most visible			
	amenities. Funding will be used for multiple small projects throughout our park system to update amenities such as			
	signage, kiosks, and other furniture and fixtures.			
	GIS Specialist - This position will help improve data analysis by expanding our mapping efforts across the	84,504	1.0	1.0
	department, meeting the data needs of PROS, and making public-facing maps more accessible for people with			
2-3	disabilities. The position will also play a pivotal role in the in meeting the targets identified in the GIS Strategic			
	Action Plan. The strategic plan seeks to complete 116 projects in four years, ranging from data creation, data			
	improvement, mapping, analytics, outreach and education.			
	Public Outreach Specialist- This request includes one full-time bilingual Outreach Specialist. This position will allow	77,240	1.0	1.0
	Montgomery Parks to increase community engagement and provide more internal support for the hundreds of			
	annual park projects and initiatives. This positions will further enable the department to deepen engagement within			
	diverse communities and equity focus areas and to meet the community where they are.			
	Electric Equipment – Zero Turn Mowers and Trailers - This request will allow the department to continue to	200,000	0.0	0.0
	transition toward meeting the County Council's 2035 Mandate. Electric zero-turns are significantly more expensive			
	than comparable internal combustion engine units. Pre-wired enclosed trailers with shore-line connection allow for			
	simple overnight charging. Enclosed trailers prolong equipment life by keeping them out of the elements.			
	Strategic Planner - This enhancement will add a Planner position to support and manage research projects, studies,	84,504	1.0	1.0
	and data analysis. This position will help the department refine the strategy and prioritization for creating public	- 1,55		=
	spaces that accommodate multiple needs, acquiring and developing parks in urban areas with good transportation			
2-6	options, and ensuring that parks are accessible and equitably distributed. This position will help identify and support			
	the research and studies required for timely, high quality, and innovative planning to implement PROS 2022 and look			
	forward to PROS 2027.			
	ActiveMONTGOMERY Training and Support Analyst - This full-time position will interface with Park's	48,943	1.0	0.6
	ActiveMONTGOMERY locations and clients; develop and deliver support documentation, training, and reporting;	.0,5 .0	1.0	0.0
	and serve as a back-up to the Park's ActiveMONTGOMERY Help Desk to fill in and add support during high volume			
	seasonal registration and reservation periods. The cost for this position is split 60/40 between the Park Fund and			
	the Enterprise Fund.			
	Nature and Outdoor Programming for 55+ Community - This enhancement will add one full-time Principal Park	123,373	1.0	1.6
	Naturalist, one seasonal staff member, and \$12k of services funds to expand programming focused on supporting	123,373	1.0	1.0
	the physical and mental wellness of our increasing senior population. This program will provide outdoor and nature			
	recreation as well as community and social connections. Request includes an additional \$47k for a vehicle which			
	will be funded in Capital Equipment ISF.			
	Hard Surface Trails Construction Inspector - This full-time Hard Surface Trails Construction Inspector position will	34,278	1.0	0.3
	support the implementation of numerous multi-year hard surface trail grants through construction. This position	34,276	1.0	0.3
	will improve consistency and quality and ensure resource protection. The cost for this position will be offset by a			
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	CIP chargeback. Request includes an additional \$47k for vehicle which will be funded in the Capital Equipment ISF.			
	SUB-TOTAL PRIORITY FOR RESTORATION BY PHP COMMITTEE -	\$ 937,346	4.0	3.5
	555 . G	¥ 55. ju 40	4.0	3.3

Parks - Budget Reductions Submitted by Montgomery Parks to Meet the FY26 County Executive Recommendation				
Risk Management - prepay a portion of the cost using FY25 funding		0.0	0.0	
Defer hiring of new OBI positions based on realistic project completion dates		0.0	0.0	
Defer hiring merit positions associated with Program Enhancements (defer by 4 months)		0.0	0.0	
Reduce Electric Equipment – Zero Turn Mowers and Trailers		0.0	0.0	
Reduce funding for telecommunications, contractual, inflationary, and seasonal increases		0.0	0.0	
SUB-TOTAL - Budget Reductions	1,566,619	0.0	0.0	
TOTAL OF ALL TIERS - PARKS' PORTION TO MEET CE RECOMMENDATION		9.0	9.6	