

# **TIME FOR YOU TO SPEAK UP!**

**Bigger budget deficits, higher taxes and new challenges are making more and more residents of Montgomery County think twice!!!**

*Can you afford to live here as your costs, including property taxes, skyrocket?*

*Is it really possible to maintain the County's renowned quality of life while battling traffic gridlock and other signs of growing urbanization?*

*With the tough budget choices facing the County, how can you hold your elected officials accountable and make sure that your tax dollars are well spent?*

**BUDGET FACTS: Current and projected fiscal realities underscore the urgency of the decisions facing Montgomery County:**

- The initial FY 2009 County budget shortfall has already led to spending cuts and increased property taxes. The FY 2008 budget projected a 3.0% property tax increase for FY 2009 but it turned out the projected property tax increase is 12.8%.
- The projected revenue gap for the next budget cycle (FY 2010-2014) is \$2.64 billion.
- Almost half of the budget is for the Montgomery County Public Schools.
- 80.4% of the tax-supported budget, a \$190.9 million increase, goes for salary/compensation and retirement benefits for County employees – criticized by some for being more generous than many in Federal Government and private sector.

## **WHAT CAN YOU DO?**

Proposals for closing the budget gap without tax increases and cuts in services range from re-negotiating contracts with County employee unions, to limiting property taxes based on the County Charter limit -- as well as taking more drastic measures.

**You can help your elected officials take constructive action by completing the attached Taxpayer Survey!** Use this one-page survey to highlight your general concerns about spending, taxes and policy questions and indicate your specific priorities. The non-partisan Montgomery County Taxpayer League (MCTL) and Montgomery County Civic Federation (MCCF; [www.montgomerycivic.org](http://www.montgomerycivic.org)) will provide the results to your elected representatives and publicize the data via their websites, newsletters and in the press.

**ACT TODAY! Mail your TAXPAYER SURVEY to MCTL P.O. Box 826 Rockville, MD 20848-0826 or email it to [djwilhelm@verizon.net](mailto:djwilhelm@verizon.net) before November 8, 2008.**

## TAXPAYER SURVEY FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY RESIDENTS

**Check whether you think your elected County officials should (1) cut spending, (2) change taxes, and/or (3) address broader policy questions. For each of the three categories indicate a maximum of two specific priorities:**

**1. \_\_\_ Cut spending? If so, what?**

- \_\_\_ a. Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS)
- \_\_\_ b. Labor contracts
- \_\_\_ c. Grants
- \_\_\_ d. Supplemental appropriations
- \_\_\_ e. Capital improvement cost overruns
- \_\_\_ f. Other – Specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. \_\_\_ Change taxes? If so, how?**

- \_\_\_ a. Cut property tax rates for everyone
- \_\_\_ b. Reduce property tax for low income citizens
- \_\_\_ c. Curb property tax rises to less than the present 10% cap
- \_\_\_ d. Reduce other taxes/fees - Specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ e. Raise property taxes to fund additional services -Specify
- \_\_\_ f. Increase developer's infrastructure contributions
- \_\_\_ g. Other – Specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**3. \_\_\_ Address broader policy questions? If so, which ones?**

- \_\_\_ a. Provide more budget accountability (such as increased use of recently introduced County/Stat mechanism for tracking budget compliance)
- \_\_\_ b. Ensure more public input into policy process (such as more time to testify at County hearings and Committee sessions)
- \_\_\_ c. Increase focus on impact of growing urbanization (such as development density, need for more mass transit, etc.)

**Comments:**

**Please provide your ZIP Code \_\_\_\_\_**

**Name/Contact (Optional): \_\_\_\_\_**

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