

Dear Community Leader,

My colleagues on the County Council and I would like to invite you to a FY14 County Budget Planning Forum. The past few years have been economically challenging for the County as they have been for individuals, families, and businesses all across the country. The upcoming year's operating budget looks like it will be no less difficult.

In addition, recent changes in State law regarding K-12 public education funding have added a layer of complexity to the County's budget deliberations and fiscal outlook. The Maryland General Assembly recently amended the Maintenance of Effort (MOE) law that governs local education funding and shifted a large portion of the cost of teacher pensions to the County.

Our Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) recently analyzed how continuing economic pressures and these recent changes in local school funding requirements would affect the Council's budgeting and fiscal planning in FY14 and future years. The Council received this report and an initial briefing on October 16, and the Education and Government Operations Committees held a worksession on the report the following week. We would now like to broaden the conversation by including a wide range of County stakeholders and community leaders. Attendees at the November 29 forum will have an opportunity to review our fiscal climate and the budget choices facing us and direct budget planning questions to the council.

With limited resources and ever-growing needs, it is more important than ever for all stakeholders to understand the multiple demands on our County's budget. It will also be more important than ever for us all to work together to ensure that the needs of our entire community are supported. We hope you and your colleagues will join with us in this critical effort, and we look forward to hearing your voice as we begin this process for the upcoming year.

Please join us on Thursday, November 29, 2012 from 7:30 – 9:00 pm in the 3rd floor hearing room of the Council Office Building in Rockville for this discussion. Your perspective is important to us and to the success of our community moving forward.

Sincerely,
Roger Berliner
Council President

Nancy Navarro
Council Vice-President

Valerie Ervin
Chair, Education Committee