



Thomas E. Dernoga

Chair
District 1

"Effective. Responsive. Committed."

January 24, 2023

The Honorable Michael A. Jackson, Chair
Prince George's County Senate Delegation
3 West Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1991

The Honorable Nick Charles, Chair
Prince George's County House Delegation
Lowe House Office Building, Room 207
Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1991

Re: 2023 Prince George's County General Assembly Legislative Priorities

Dear Senator Jackson and Delegate Charles:

As we continue to rebound from the COVID-19 pandemic, we must ensure that we are doing all we can to keep our communities growing, thriving, and realizing their potential. As we have over the last four years, the Alsobrooks Administration, the County Council, and our partner agencies throughout the County, working with the State of Maryland, will continue to pursue the following legislative agenda during the 2023 Maryland General Assembly Session. We look forward to working with you to advocate for these priorities and ultimately help foster an even prouder and more robust Prince George's County.

Leaning on the power of true partnership, we plan to work together to secure a level of common good, a better quality of life, and an expansion of opportunity for all residents, not limited to certain zip codes or neighborhoods. Prince George's County looks to build on these partnerships that were strengthened in 2022 and work collaboratively to deliver on priorities that will enhance the lives of the nearly 1,000,000 residents who call Prince George's County home.

Transportation

Blue Line Corridor – This transformational development effort stretches from the D.C. line, down Route 214 into downtown Largo. During the 2022 General Assembly, working with both the Governor, the Presiding Officers, and our State Delegation, we were able to secure \$400.0M in bonding authority for this vital corridor. We will be seeking an additional \$42.5M to continue the reimagining of Downtown Largo and Arena Drive, and the creation of residential, retail, and commercial parcels to maximize the potential of this corridor. This funding will support the completion of the Central Avenue Connector Trail, creation of key road access and infrastructure additions, bike lanes and walk paths, and structural improvements to create developable parcels. Building on previous state investments along this corridor will enhance our ability to maximize access from Central Avenue into districts generated by this area.

Revitalization of the Downtown New Carrollton Metro Station – A major project in need of state capital funding is the development of the New Carrollton Metro Station. The County is seeking \$56.3M for the redevelopment of this site to create a new transit hub in Prince George's County that will connect Maryland to Washington, D.C. and major cities along the East Coast. The requested funds will include needed pedestrian safety and multimodal road infrastructure improvements, critical environmental and stormwater infrastructure, and the ability to leverage federal grants for the modernization of the train station.

Cheverly Hospital Demolition Funding – The demolition of the former hospital site presents an incredible opportunity to bring significant community benefit to the gateway to Maryland, the Town of Cheverly, broader Prince George's County, and the State of Maryland through delivering housing, creating opportunities for residents to age in place, and preserving communities. Providing the \$18.0M in funding for this demolition project makes way for over \$1 billion in development. Given the large institutional use of the property, assistance to defray the cost of demolition at the site would enhance the success of timing for delivery of this catalytic project.

Road Safety – Several road projects are critical to achieving the Vision Zero Prince George's multimodal enhancements on State-maintained roadways to improve vehicle and pedestrian safety along our roadways. We must continue to advocate for funding that will help improve safety, including additional interchanges and protected bicycle lanes along Route 210 and widening Maryland 197 between Route 50 and Route 450. In addition, we will seek funding targeted in the Prince George's County High Injury Network (HIN), which encompasses one-mile segments of roads with the greatest severity of bike and pedestrian crashes. Each of the HIN corridors are located within Equity Emphasis Areas (Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments) with most crashes occurring in urban areas reflecting higher concentrations of low-income and minority populations.

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) – Key to the growth of Prince George's County is our unified effort to continue moving forward on our vision of transit-oriented development centered around our transportation hubs. The County's proposed projects for the State CTP include funding for Medical Center Drive Interchange/Blue Line Corridor improvements to further enhance the areas surrounding the University of Maryland Regional Medical Center, the new downtown Largo, and the Blue Line Corridor; for a smooth and efficient system for delivery of the Central Avenue (MD 214) Complete Streets; for key developments to attract the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) Headquarters including the I-95/Greenbelt Metro Access and Landover improvements; and for the realigning of the State list to be consistent with County plans as well as aggressively advancing projects at all TOD's including Greenbelt, New Carrollton, Branch Avenue and the Largo/Blue Line Corridor. We must also ensure that in addition to these projects, we also continue to advocate for funding for the expeditious completion of the Purple Line project; progress on the Southern Maryland Rapid Transit project; the transition of TheBus, the independent County-operated transit system, to Zero Emission Buses and a new LEED certified facility; the continual funding of the Prince George's County Bus Rapid Transit (BRT); and a multitude of vital projects on State roads and highways, especially MD 223 Piscataway Road/Woodyard Road (MD 4 to Steed Road), where the County is requesting \$5.0M for the widening of MD 223 at the intersection with Brandywine Road/Old Branch Avenue. These projects will work in conjunction to make the County safer, more pedestrian friendly, and more suitable for future development.

Economic Development and Housing

As we continue to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, we must continue to ensure that residents, businesses, and institutions in Prince George's County are competitive across the State and region and have the opportunity to grow in our County. Growing the commercial tax base in Prince George's County is a top priority. During the 2023 Legislative Session, we must advocate for opportunities to bring economic growth and stimulation to our County. This year we are going to Annapolis to secure needed funds to revitalize our downtowns and build critical mass transportation, road, and pedestrian safety infrastructure, as well as funding for local road maintenance and aligning our regulations with regional competition to ensure the County is viable for business and fertile for development. These projects ensure Prince George's County has economic development opportunities across the entirety of our County that allow us to widen our commercial tax base, grow our population and strengthen our economy.

Affordable Housing – To support the County's Equitable Economic Growth Vision and achieve the affordable housing preservation and production goals of our Economic Development agenda, our Housing Department recommends investments that will deepen our ability to provide affordable housing to low-income residents. To accomplish this, we have already launched our Right of First Refusal (ROFR) program that allows the County, working with non-profits, to protect rental households at risk of displacement from their homes. We will be seeking an additional \$15.0M from the state to help fund this program. In addition, we are seeking the creation of two new funds to ensure that as our County continues to grow in population, wealth, and development, our residents can afford to stay in their neighborhoods and enjoy their community's new amenities. The first fund is a \$25.0M Affordable Homeownership Fund for the development of new affordable homes for households earning up to 80% of Area Median Income (AMI). The second is a \$25.0M Low Access Rental Housing Fund to expand the creation of new, affordable, mixed-income rental units for households earning between 50% and 30% of AMI, which are identified as the most vulnerable households at risk of displacement or homelessness. These state funds enable the County to move forward with our goal of protecting, preserving, and producing the types of housing stock we envision, ones that fulfill our vision to develop our County without displacing our residents.

Healthcare

Mental Healthcare Delivery – The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the health disparities that already existed in our County. As we continue to recover from the pandemic, we must do all we can to ensure that our residents have access to equitable and quality healthcare. An immediate need is the expansion of crisis and mental healthcare services. We are seeking \$2.0M for the expansion of Mobile Crisis Teams who perform vital crisis intervention and stabilization services for those in our community who have emergencies that are not suitable for a law enforcement response and ensure that the mental health and safety of residents are prioritized in law enforcement engagement. We will also be seeking \$5.0M in funding for operating costs of a Crisis Stabilization Center. Prince George's County plans to open its first crisis stabilization center in 2023. The expansion of these operating funds will ensure the center can remain effective.

Telehealth Services – We will advocate for \$3.5M in state funding for School Telehealth Grants that our Health Department needs to continue its partnership with Prince George's County Public Schools in creating a public health utility via a pediatric telehealth network. The project will install telehealth equipment in HIPAA-compliant space in schools and in customized mobile vans that will circulate among the campuses of schools that lack the physical space that can be converted for telehealth use. These investments will maintain services including telehealth services, referral network, and maintenance and staffing of telehealth vans.

Community Investments

Environment and Water Infrastructure – Securing our promise of safe and healthy communities involves our environment, ensuring we have clean air and waterways, comprehensive waste diversion, and mitigation tools to combat the negative effects of climate change. We will advocate for additional resources to build the necessary stormwater mitigation infrastructure to create comprehensive flooding solutions. We will seek to target those resources through the lens of environmental justice in areas that have been historically overlooked and underfunded, including communities with failing water infrastructure that are currently coping with historic flooding. We will advocate for \$12.0M to create a fund for flood mitigation projects in areas identified by the State's Environmental Justice (EJ) Tool, having an EJ burden of 80% or greater to alleviate the flooding and water quality impacts. Additionally, we will be advocating for \$1.4M for stormwater mitigation feasibility studies to ensure that future areas of development are designed to withstand a 100-year flood, which are becoming more common.

Public Safety & Correctional Services – We must make safe communities a priority, which includes not simply reducing crime, but investing in a holistic criminal justice system that is truly just. While the County is undeniably a safer and more attractive place to live, work, and visit, we will continue our efforts to increase the resources that are available for County agencies to reduce and prevent crime. In addition to curbing crime in our communities, we are also seeking \$500.0K in funding to ensure that we have the resources to support the formerly incarcerated members of our community and reduce rates of recidivism through our Re-Entry Employment Incentive Program, moving towards a system that focuses on reformation, not simply incarceration. Also, we will seek \$1.0M in funding for our Violence Interrupter Program, an anti-violence initiative that supports community-based efforts to reduce incidents of violence within the County. Additionally, we are seeking \$4.5M in funding for grants to be made available to non-profits in Prince George's County to expand vital out of school programming for our youth. We have seen that with an uptick in crimes being committed by juveniles, there is a need for more support for afterschool programming and services. This funding would allow the County to expand those services by aiding the non-profits that provide those needed services.

Additional Priorities

Additionally, we will support the \$244.0M request from Bowie State University for the construction of a new Student Center and Campus Library, and the \$21.0M request from the Alzheimer's Association to eliminate the statewide waitlist for the Senior Care Program to aid our seniors in receiving vital care. We are also supportive of the legislative priorities of the Maryland Association of Counties as they strive to strengthen all counties across our State.

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Over the last four years, we have worked collaboratively to achieve much success on behalf of the residents of Prince George's County, including bringing back historic funding and resources for our residents while advocating for the passage of legislation that allows our County to continue to move forward. As we move forward together, we understand that the collective support for our youth, care for our seniors, stewardship of our environment, support and protection for our communities, growth in our economy, and increased affordability in our housing market are objectives we all share. We look forward to continuing in unity to secure our promise and deliver results for Prince Georgians.

Always Prince George's Proud,

Angela D. Alsobrooks
County Executive

Thomas E. Dernoga
County Council Chair

cc: Governor Westley Moore
Hon. Bill Ferguson, Senate President
Hon. Adrienne A. Jones, Speaker, House of Delegates
Members, Prince George's Senate Delegation
Members, Prince George's House Delegation
Council Members, Prince George's County Council
Tara Jackson, Chief Administrative Officer, Office of the County Executive
Joy Russell, Chief of Staff, Office of the County Executive
John Erzen, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the County Executive
Ron Young, Legislative Director, Office of the County Executive
Delora Sanchez Ifekauche, Cornerstone Government Affairs
Marverly Nettles-Simpson, Committee Director, Prince George's County Council