

City of Rockville Report
REDI Board of Directors Meeting
March 28, 2024

February 26, 2024 Mayor and Council Meeting

Community Engagement and Outreach

Staff presented an overview of an interim community engagement and outreach plan that uses the City's engagement events used in the past to foster a relationship with the community, staff, and the Mayor and Council. The Mayor and Council approved the interim plan and provided comments to staff. Highlights of the interim plan include:

- Continuation of walking Town Hall Meetings where the Mayor and Council and staff meet with residents in City neighborhoods.
- Neighborhood Connect meetings featuring informal conversation on issues of interest with civic and homeowner's associations in the communities where they live.
- Meet and Greet events held at Rockville community centers which feature front facing service departments participating in meet and greet events to discuss current and future projects with residents.

The Mayor and Council are exploring the possibility of developing a strategic community engagement and outreach plan, with the assistance of a consultant. If the City moves forward with the plan, it would provide direction and best practices for enhancing existing efforts, and adopting new methodologies to be more effective and meet the community's and Mayor and Council's desired outcomes.

Consideration of 2024 State Legislation

Staff provided additional information on State legislation of interest to the Mayor and Council. The Mayor and Council provided direction to staff for the City to support two bills and provide testimony to the committees of jurisdiction. An overview of the bills is provided below:

SB 783/HB 1435: Renewable Energy – Net Energy Metering Aggregation, Solar Renewable Energy Credits, and Taxes on Solar Energy Generating.

The legislation codifies recommendations from the Maryland Task Force to Study Solar Incentives and removes barriers to installing net-metered small solar systems and establishes a Small Solar Energy Generating System Incentive Program needed to ensure that the State meets the solar energy goals established in Maryland's Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS). Net metering is a billing system that credits solar energy system owners for the electricity that they generate and add to the grid. The legislation establishes a Small Solar Energy Generating System Incentive Program that increases the renewable energy credits for small systems located on rooftops, parking canopy, or brownfields.

HB 601/SB 442 - Street Racing and Exhibition Driving – Prohibited Acts, Enforcement, Penalties

An overview of the bill is provided:

- This bill increases penalties and points assessments for violations related to participation in racing or speed contests.
- The bill also establishes a statewide prohibition on exhibition driving on any highway or private property that is used for driving by the public.
- By expanding application of an existing provision, the bill establishes a statewide prohibition on exhibition driving, racing, and other related activities in a special event zone.

March 4, 2024 Mayor and Council Meeting

Presentation of the FY 2025 Proposed Budget

The City Manager and Finance leadership provided a presentation to the Mayor and Council on the FY 2025 Proposed Budget. The FY 2025 operating budget totals \$168.9 million for the City's 10 operating funds. This represents an overall increase of 7.4 percent from the FY 2024 adopted budget. The FY 2025 proposed budget focuses on the ongoing implementation of adopted plans, community safety and policing, and economic development. The FY 2025 proposed CIP budget includes new appropriations of \$31.4 million to address the priorities of the Mayor and Council and residents of Rockville. This new funding combined with prior year carryover funding of \$87.7 million, supports a total of 47 capital projects in FY 2025.

FY 2025 Federal Earmarks

The Mayor and Council approved four capital improvement projects for submittal as FY 2025 earmarks to the Federal Delegation. The projects deliver core public services related to water and sewer operations with an emphasis on equity focus areas. The projects are located in census tracts in the southeastern portion of the City and have been identified as environmental justice communities by the Maryland Department of the Environment. The approved critical infrastructure projects are as follows:

- Lead Service Line Inventory Investigation - \$500,000.
- Disadvantaged Community (DAC) Orangeburg Lateral Replacement - \$2,520,000.
- Disadvantaged Community (DAC) Wastewater Collection System Rehabilitation - \$2,416,000.
- Disadvantaged Community (DAC) Water main Rehab and Improvement - \$2,576,000.

March 18, 2024 Mayor and Council Meeting

Budget Worksession #1 FY 2025 Budget Worksession: Revenues, Fees, and Cost Recovery

The Mayor and Council held their first budget worksession and provided comments and questions to staff. The City of Rockville's real property tax rate is proposed to remain flat at \$0.292 for every \$100 of assessed value. The FY 2025 Proposed Budget includes a minor inflationary increase in the fee schedule related to building permitting and inspections for FY 2025. An approximate 4% increase to most fees is recommended, in line with the average Consumer Price Index (CPI) for calendar year 2023. The FY 2025 proposed budget recommends funding to conduct a comprehensive fee study, which will be used to inform future adjustments, with the goal of right sizing the City's fees with other comparable jurisdictions.

Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Public Hearing #2

The Mayor and Council held the second FY 2025 budget public hearing. Residents participated in-person and virtually and provided comments in support of city programs and services. The FY 2025 budget public hearing public record is open until April 12, 2024. Residents and businesses are encouraged to share input with the Mayor and Council. Feedback can be provided at the attached link for the FY2025 Community Budget Priorities Survey. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RockvilleFY25Budget>

Upcoming Mayor and Council Meeting

April 8, 2024 Meeting:

- FY 2025 Budget Worksession #2 - Operating Expenditures
- FY 2025 Budget Public Hearing #3