



April 4, 2022 Testimony on Proposed FY2023 Budget

My name is Mike Stein and I am President of the Twinbrook Community Association. Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the Rockville FY 2023 budget on behalf of the Twinbrook neighborhood. TCA engaged neighbors throughout the year through the use of virtual meetings, monthly walk and talks, and online surveys. Based on feedback from neighbors and discussion within TCA's Executive Committee, we make the following comments:

Related to staffing, TCA supports numerous items proposed in the budget including an increase from .5 FTE to 1 FTE for the Boards and Commissions Task Force and Volunteer Coordinator. We also support an increase from .5 FTE to 1 FTE for an ADA coordinator.

Related to public safety, TCA supports the included Police Service Aide position that increased from .5 FTE to 1 FTE. We strongly support additional FTEs that could act as dedicated community officers based out of recreation centers in the City, including Twinbrook Recreation Center. TCA also supports any increase in fixed pole speed cameras above the 6 included in the draft budget.

Last year, TCA submitted three requests through the community engagement process led by the City Manager's office and would like to comment on each of those requests:

1. A dog park was one of the most requested amenities in an online survey we published last summer asking neighbors about what they think about living in Twinbrook. We were happy to learn that the city has a goal to increase the number of dog parks in the city and we embarked on a months-long process to identify where a potential dog park might be built in Twinbrook. Ultimately, Rockcrest Park was identified as the most likely spot. After many rounds of outreach to neighbors at the city's request we were advised the city will not pursue that option; however Rockcrest park is still referenced in the budget under the "Neighborhood Association Requests" section. TCA still supports a dog park in Twinbrook. Our survey on whether the neighborhood supports a dog park in Twinbrook generated nearly 200 responses with 80% in support. Based on this support we request the city continue to pursue a dog park for Twinbrook and move the location to Civic Center park. Several neighbors specifically mentioned Civic Center park as a good location due to its ample parking and expansive grounds.

2. TCA also notes Twinbrook is one of the few neighborhoods, if not the only one, without any neighborhood welcome signs. TCA continues to focus on placemaking as a way to improve the neighborhood and build a sense of community. We understand the city plans to develop a policy and plan for implementation of its sign standardization initiative in FY 23. If money cannot be allocated for welcome signs for Twinbrook in this year's budget we strongly encourage the city to fast track completion of its sign initiative that is part of the adopted Comprehensive Plan.

3. Last, but not least, a new connection from the neighborhood to the west side of the tracks and new development along 355 continues to be a priority. We look forward to the feasibility study that will be completed by the end of this summer. We encourage the city to begin looking in earnest for ways to fund this initiative in partnership with county, state, and federal partners.