



**Testimony of the Mayor and Council of Rockville
HB 104: Municipalities – Charter Amendments – Notice
Support**

The Mayor and Council of Rockville thank Chair Barve and members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee for the opportunity to provide comments on *HB 104: Municipalities – Charter Amendments – Notice*. We are grateful to Delegate Solomon for sponsoring this important legislation.

The Rockville Mayor and Council strongly support HB 104, as this legislation would provide needed relief for the City and other municipalities faced with increasingly high costs to notice proposed Charter Amendments, public hearings on planning and zoning issues, budgets, and other City business. It is unfortunate that no local newspaper has continued in Montgomery County and therefore the only option available to meet the noticing requirement is to place these legally required ads in a regional print newspaper which is quite expensive due to the limited options.

For Fiscal Year 2023, Rockville has already spent \$8,000 on legal noticing costs and the small size of the ads placed in the newspaper's classified listings can be easily overlooked. Fiscal Year 2022, Rockville spent more than \$16,000 on legal noticing costs. HB 104 begins to address these issues by expanding charter amendment noticing options to include a copy of a fair summary of the proposed charter amendment delivered either by hand or mail once to every municipal residence. Under HB 104, the requirement can also be met by including the notice in a newsletter or any other regular municipal publication.

HB 104 is a welcomed improvement to a costly, antiquated, and inefficient process. The Bill supports greater transparency and community engagement and would permit Rockville and other municipalities to expend more of our taxpayer resources on high-quality programs and services. For these reasons, we urge the Committee to provide HB 104 with a favorable report.