



Testimony of the Mayor and Council of Rockville
SUPPORT
HB 381 – Municipalities – Charter Amendments – Notice
February 8, 2022

Good afternoon Chairman Barve and members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee. I am Bridget Donnell Newton, Mayor of the City of Rockville, and I thank you for the opportunity to share the City's comments on HB 381. We are grateful to Delegate Solomon for sponsoring this important legislation.

The Rockville Mayor and Council strongly support HB 381 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 print media 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 FY22, Rockville has already spent almost \$10,000 on legal noticing costs and the small size of the ads placed in the newspaper's classified listings can be easily overlooked. HB 381 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 381, the requirement can also be met by including the notice in a newsletter or any other regular municipal publication.

HB 381 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 381 with a favorable report and forward it to the House for a vote.