



Committee: Directly to Council
Committee Review: N/A
Staff: Gene Smith, Legislative Analyst
Purpose: Discussion – no vote expected
Keywords: Economic Development

AGENDA ITEM #3
November 30, 2021
Discussion

SUBJECT

Discussion – Economic Development Panels

EXPECTED ATTENDEES

The Council President has invited two panels for today's discussion on economic development in the County. In addition to the panelists below, County and agency staff will be available if specific questions arise during the discussion.

Panel #1:

Cherri Branson, 3rd Vice President, NAACP
Valerie Davis, Business Advocate
Natalia Luis, Co-CEO and Owner, MLuis Construction
Javier Solis, Chief Operation Officer, Toros Taxes
Herman Taylor, President, Minority Business Economic Council

Panel #2:

Casey Anderson, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board
Gigi Godwin, President and CEO, Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce
Daniel Koroma, Business Liaison Officer, Montgomery County Government
Jacob Sesker, Harpswell Strategies
Ben Wu, President and CEO, Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation (MCEDC)

DESCRIPTION

The Council President invited two panels to discuss economic development efforts in the County. Panel #1 will focus on the perspective of business owners and trade leaders about operating a business in the County. Panel #2 will focus on the broader economic themes and trends to inform the Council's discussion how best to assist and grow businesses in the County. Both panels will provide additional context as the Council prepares to receive the updated Comprehensive Economic Strategy later this year from MCEDC.

BACKGROUND AND PANELS FORMAT

- The Council adopted [Council Resolution No. 19-300](#), the County's Economic Development Platform, on November 19, 2019. This platform focused on four pillars to strengthen the County's economic development efforts – 1) housing; 2) transportation; 3) workforce development; and 4) business development.
- The Council enacted [Bill 10-21](#) on May 27, 2021. This bill shifted the duties of drafting a Comprehensive Economic Strategy from the County Executive to MCEDC. The bill also

incorporated the framework of Council Resolution No. 19-300, the Economic Development Platform, as part of the strategy.

- The Comprehensive Economic Strategy is a four-year plan that details the approach for the County, County agencies, and County partners to 1) create jobs; 2) grow wages; 3) identify and support strategic industries; 4) retain and attract new companies and employers; 5) grow the tax base; 6) support and increase entrepreneurial activity; and 7) other actions necessary to promote economic development in the County.

The strategy's outcomes must be consistent with the Council's Economic Development Platform and include: 1) a thriving and diversified economy; 2) racial equity and social justice; 3) greater innovation; and 4) environmental sustainability, including a reduction in climate change.

- **Below is the general format for both the panels.**
- Panel #1 will focus the perspectives of business owners and trade leaders about operating businesses within the County. The general format for the discussion will be:
 - 1) The Council President will moderate and ask each panelists a set of prepared questions.
 - 2) Since County and agency staff will be attending, the Council President may ask them to respond to a specific topic addressed by one of the panelists prior to finishing the prepared questions. The discussion will continue with the prepared questions following any of these clarifying responses.
 - 3) Following the prepared questions, the Council President will open the discussion to all Councilmembers for comments and/or questions for Panel #1.
- Panel #2 will focus on broader economic trends to inform the Council's discussion how best to assist and grow businesses in the County.
 - Many of the organization's represented on Panel #2 have released documents about the County's economy in the past year. These documents include:
 - County Executive's Economic Advisory Group – [An Economic Roadmap to Recovery and Long-term Success](#);
 - Planning and MCEDC – [Montgomery County Economic Indicators Briefing for Q1 and Q2 2021](#);
 - Harpswell Strategy Report to Empower Montgomery – [Jobs, Jobs, Jobs: Post-pandemic Economic Leadership for Montgomery County](#); and
 - MCEDC's Economic Advisory Panel – [Connecting the Dots](#).
 - Panel #2's discussion format will be like Panel #1.
 - 1) The Council President will moderate and ask each panelists a set of prepared questions.
 - 2) The Council President may ask business owners attending for their perspective on Panel #2's comments prior to finishing the prepared questions. The discussion will continue with the prepared questions following any of these clarifying responses.
 - 3) Following the prepared questions, the Council President will open the discussion to all Councilmembers for comments and/or questions for Panel #2.

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