

HHS COMMITTEE #3
September 27, 2010

M E M O R A N D U M

September 24, 2010

TO: Health and Human Services Committee

FROM: Essie McGuire, Legislative Analyst 

SUBJECT: **Update on Design Plans for the Silver Spring Library**

Today the Health and Human Services Committee will receive an update on the status of site work and design plans for the new Silver Spring Library. Representatives from the Executive Branch will be present to update the Committee and answer any questions.

As the Committee discussed during spring budget worksessions, the current schedule is to complete the library construction in two phases. The initial site and utility work began this summer, building construction is to begin in the spring of 2011, and project completion is anticipated in spring of 2013.

The Council has received correspondence from the Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board (circles 5-6) and other constituents regarding recent design changes. The purpose of today's worksession is to receive a status report on the work to date and hear the latest design plans for the new library. Executive branch staff provided the project description and update attached on circles 1-2 which addresses the three areas outlined below.

Design issues: The attached report states that current cost estimates are above the amount requested and approved in the Capital Improvements Program (CIP). As a result, the County is exploring various steps and strategies to reduce the cost and manage the project within budget. At this juncture, Executive staff reports that the entry escalators will remain in the design as this option was strongly supported by the community. Other cost reduction options include scaling back or eliminating the top floor of County office space, relocating meeting rooms, and reducing ceiling height in the library space.

Retail and arts space: Circle 2 outlines the process currently in place to work with Pyramid Atlantic to occupy the arts space in the building. Plans to have a café in the retail space were the subject of some concern in the community; circle 2 outlines the current proposal for selecting a business under the Local Small Business Reserve Program.

Disability access: Circle 2 summarizes the disability access options for the new library. These include increased disability parking for the library closer to the library entrance, a covered drop-off location, and elevator access.

Councilmember Ervin wrote a memorandum to the Committee (circles 3-4) requesting discussion at this worksession of the previously proposed pedestrian bridge between the Wayne Avenue garage and the new library. Council staff understands from previous Executive updates that the library design allows for a pedestrian bridge to be constructed in the future, if necessary.

2. Update - design plans for the Silver Spring Library

- **Please provide an update on the design plans for Silver Spring. Please specifically address the community concerns that have been raised regarding the library entrance and escalator, and whether these concerns can be addressed.**

In response to the requirement to begin the utility relocation work early in order to prepare the site for construction, the design schedule has been modified from a typical project schedule.

At present, we have finished the Schematic Design (SD) and submitted the project for M-NCPPC Mandatory Referral (MR), usually done later in the design process.

We needed MR and the related Forest Conservation Plan (FCP) approvals in order to file and obtain permits for the first phase of construction, which is the "Utility Relocation Package". This work will relocate sewer, storm and other utilities which currently cross the site and which must be relocated before the library can begin.

We received our MR and FCP approvals and subsequently permits necessary to start the utility work. The groundbreaking for this work occurred on August 30th. This work is scheduled to take approximately 10 months to complete.

At the end of the SD process, we obtained estimates of the construction cost of the building. The project as designed is over the amount requested in the last CIP budget. While we are optimistic that the market conditions will offer savings of up to 10%, we cannot count on that alone and are proactively managing the design process to include a variety of strategies to bring the project in on budget. In this process we have been careful to avoid options that might adversely impact the library program.

One strategy is to identify design elements that can be substituted with less costly alternatives without severe impact to the approved design. One such example is substituting a more conventional glass curtain wall for the structural glazing at the Fenton Street entrance. Design upgrades can still be included in the construction solicitation as add-alternates that may be reincorporated into the design should market conditions be favorable.

Another strategy is to reduce the amount of un-programmed space, such as building support and circulation space. These options included:

- reducing the floor-to-floor height of the library floors from 20 ft to 18 ft, which will still allow for a comfortable ceiling height
- eliminating the 3-story escalator, replacing it with 2 elevators, thereby reducing the size of the entry pavilion
- relocating the meeting rooms to a lower floor, thereby reducing the area of emergency egress stairs

- reducing the amount of County office space or eliminating this floor altogether. Under this option the space can be designed so that at the time of bid a decision can be made to include all the finished space, include it as unfinished space, accept some reduction in the size of the space, or eliminate the floor altogether as a deduct-alternate.

DGS and Library staff met with the community to discuss these options. The community clearly indicated its support of the escalators, which are now in the building design. The community didn't express preference for or rejection of any of the other savings options. As design progresses the architect will continue to look for ways to reduce the cost of the building while retaining the design and community preferences. The resulting modified design will be re-estimated and a decision will be made to continue to value engineer the design or to move ahead to complete the project.

- **Please describe the current plans for identifying occupants for the library café, other retail space, and the arts space in the building.**

The business occupants of the coffee bar, to be located on the ground floor of the Fenton Street entrance, will be determined by response to a RFP to be issued in the future. The solicitation for a coffee bar/café will be issued under the Local Small Business Reserve program under which only qualifying local businesses may compete for a contract.

Pyramid Atlantic (PA), the arts use currently planned to be located in the building was selected through an RFP process completed in 2009. Space requirements have been determined and a full POR is being developed. PA has a requirement for classrooms, artist studios, administrative support, and a galley/retail store to be located on the ground floor to activate the street. The architect has met with PA to review some preliminary designs. A Letter of Intent (LOI) is currently being prepared and negotiated with PA.

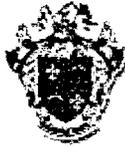
- **Please provide an update on disability access to the library as reflected in the current design and site development.**

Currently the access to the Library Building is provided at three locations.

The primary entrance is at Wayne Avenue. A bus stop is located in front of the entrance and the Wayne Avenue garage is across the street. At the garage, parking will be set aside for patrons of the library and additional parking for the disabled will be provided close to the elevator bank closest to the library entrance. All library patrons will take the elevators to the ground floor, exit the garage, turn left and travel to the corner, cross Wayne, and travel to the Library Building entrance.

The Fenton Street entrance will include escalators, a stair and one elevator. A bus stop is located on Fenton Street near this entrance.

A vehicular drop-off is located at the west side of the building along the service drive. This provides a ramped entrance to the main lobby of the building. The drop off is covered and is immediately adjacent to where the Metro-Access bus will stop.



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

VALERIE ERVIN
COUNCILMEMBER
DISTRICT 5

September 23, 2010

TO: George Leventhal, Chair, Health and Human Services Committee
Nancy Navarro, Health and Human Services Committee
Duchy Trachtenberg, Health and Human Services Committee

FROM: Valerie Ervin, Council Vice President 

SUBJECT: Request to Revisit the Silver Spring Urban Renewal Plan

As I work with Council staff to reopen the Silver Spring Urban District Renewal Plan, I am writing to ask for your continued support to construct a pedestrian bridge for the Silver Spring Library. While site work is being completed over the next 10 months, I believe the time is right for the Council to comprehensively reexamine including a pedestrian bridge on the site.

As you know, this mixed-use public facility at the corner of Wayne Avenue and Fenton Street will become a hub for community life in downtown Silver Spring. In addition to the library, this project will include offices, a future light-rail stop for the Purple Line and other amenities.

As the district Councilmember, I have worked on the Silver Spring library project for the past four years. I have attended public meetings and advocated for changes in the program of requirements to enhance the library.

While I initially did not vote to amend the Urban District Renewal Plan (Resolution No.16-1086, 8-1 vote, with HHS Chair voting in favor of reopening the plan); I cast my vote with the belief that Executive Branch staff would be able to accommodate accessible parking for our disabled residents in and around the site. While several options have been explored, it's my understanding that the only access to parking for a significant number of disabled patrons is in the parking garage on Wayne Ave. This parking issue is exacerbated by the plan to make the new Silver Spring Library one of the few libraries in the county serving those with special needs. Since no other solutions were developed to address this issue, I believe it is time for the Council to reconsider constructing a pedestrian bridge for the Silver Spring Library.

I plan to attend the HHS Committee meeting on September 27. I respectfully request that you will allow me to discuss this issue as part of your scheduled update on the design plans for the Silver Spring Library.

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Subsequent to this meeting it is my intention to work with you, the Council President and Council staff to reintroduce an amendment to the Urban District Renewal Plan to provide the ability to construct the pedestrian bridge for the Silver Spring Library.

I hope that your previous support for building this pedestrian bridge is a sign of things to come. Thank you in advance for your consideration of this matter.

cc: Diane Schwartz Jones, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer, Office of the County Executive
David Dise, Director, Department of General Services
Jeff Zyontz, County Council Staff
Vivian Yao, County Council Staff
Essie McGuire, County Council Staff

Lot 2 zoning



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SILVER SPRING CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

July 19, 2010

Mr. Isiah Leggett
County Executive
Executive Office Building
101 Monroe Street, 2nd floor
Rockville, MD 20850

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2010 JUL 23 PM 2:42

MONTGOMERY COUNTY
COUNCIL

Dear Mr. Leggett

The members of the Silver Spring Advisory Board are writing to express our support for the Silver Spring Library beginning construction as scheduled in 2011. The design was the result of months of public meetings, charrettes, and an open public process. We recently have been informed of several proposals that include "value engineering" changes in the design. We understand these are only proposals, but we want to express our objection to the proposal to remove the escalator at the Fenton Street entrance and (2) we want to ensure that the commercial space will support the local businesses of Fenton Village.

First, removing the escalator from the Fenton entrance will alter the very core of the design feature to use the library as the gateway to Fenton Village. The escalator will move people more quickly in and out of the library. The "value engineering" proposal of two elevators as the major entrances will inhibit the flow of pedestrian traffic and will substantially diminish the vibrancy of the Fenton Street entrance.

Second, the proposed café is not integral to the library's function and would compete with several existing commercial businesses within blocks of the building.

We are grateful to Mr. Dise and his staff for meeting with us to discuss these proposals and understand that is carefully reviewing all projects and possibilities. However, we strongly advise the County Executive to continue to work with the community with the following:

- Continue open communications with the community concerning major design changes concerning the Silver Spring Library.

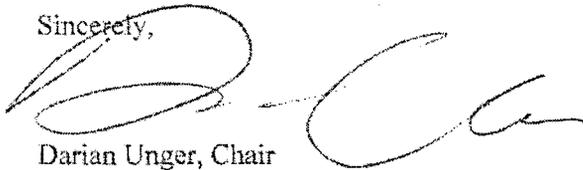
Silver Spring Regional Center
Silver Spring Civic Building at Veterans Plaza
One Veterans Place * Silver Spring, MD 20910 * 240-773-5300
www.montgomerycountymd.gov/silverspring
www.silverspringdowntown.com

Mr. Leggett
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- Build the Fenton Street Entrance Escalator so library customers can move quickly and efficiently and such that it adds vibrancy and connection to the community.
- Open the "commercial space" to support the local business community.

We urge you to consider these recommendations to keep Silver Spring moving in a positive direction.

Sincerely,



Darian Unger, Chair

cc:

Nancy Floreen, Council President
Valerie Ervin, Councilmember
George L. Leventhal, Councilmember
Marc Elrich, Councilmember
Roger Berliner, Councilmember
Duchy Trachtenberg, Councilmember
Nancy Navarro, Councilmember
Phil Andrews, Councilmember
Mike Knapp, Councilmember
David Dise, Director, Department General Services