



SILVER SPRING CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

July 30, 2009

Silver Spring community priorities for the CIP budget Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board

Dear County Executive Leggett:

Thank you for considering the Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board's recommendations as you work on the next Capital Improvement Project (CIP) budget. Our board and many community members were glad to hear from Angela Dizelos, Bruce Johnston, Amy Wilson, and Don Scheuerman, at our June meeting when we asked them questions regarding the CIP budget.

Since then, we have had several community meetings to discuss Silver Spring issues and capital requirements. In conjunction with our letters and community input from the last year, we can report the following key capital priorities:

- **Construction and completion of a well-engineered Metropolitan Branch Trail**
 - The Metropolitan Branch Trail has been ignored for too long. When completed, it will provide a much-needed path connecting the Crescent Trail to Silver Spring, Takoma Park, and eventually back into Washington DC. It will bring valued pedestrian, bicycle, and retail traffic, and will provide recreational, retail, and commuting benefits to the county. Although DOT has started some preliminary engineering work on the Metropolitan Branch Trail, that work did not continue and the project has become inactive despite its popularity. We strongly urge increased focus and capital funding for this project.
- **A comprehensive program of pedestrian safety and traffic improvements to Dale Drive**
 - Dale Drive has suffered an increase in both traffic and speeding, and is an unsafe route for pedestrians. Piecemeal efforts and individual improvements have not been enough to help. We agree with the several civic associations that have already petitioned for a comprehensive approach to improving safety, including improved sidewalk construction, crosswalks, bus stops, additional speed enforcement, signage, traffic calming, and intersection design.
- **A major update of the traffic/pedestrian signal crossing system software**
 - Our efforts to make our community pedestrian-friendly have been stymied by DOT's reliance on out-of-date traffic signal software that makes potentially simple improvements difficult to implement. After discussing this with DOT engineers, we believe that revamping the software would make the system more accessible to DOT itself and allow for adjustments that ensure safer driving and walking.

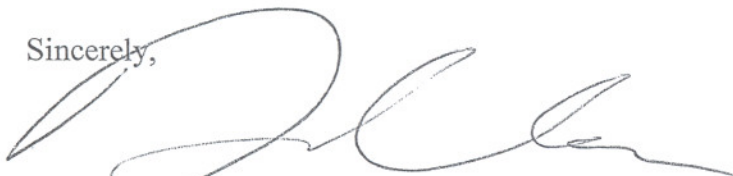
Regional Services/ Redevelopment Program

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- In a continuation of current CIP budget items, we want to ensure that full funding continue for the three major Silver Spring civic projects currently under construction or design
 - *The Silver Spring Civic Building and Veterans Plaza*
 - This project has been delayed by several uncontrollable factors. Although this project will hopefully be complete before the next CIP budget is decided, we want to be sure that any potential delays will not lead to project cuts and that all elements remain fully funded.
 - *The Silver Spring Library*
 - Although construction on this project will hopefully be underway before the next CIP budget is decided, the overall cost of this project remains in flux because design and contract building have not yet occurred. We want to ensure that this project maintains all of its needed CIP funding despite the project delays. Our board has already weighed in on this project's need for a larger program of requirements (POR), especially given its central location and expected traffic and patronage. We also oppose the construction of a pedestrian bridge as an unfortunate step backwards in sustainable urban design, as well as a narrow and expensive solution to a safety problem that would be better resolved with redesign and a safer street-level crossing. Those CIP dollars would be better-spent on other aspects of the library project.
 - *The Silver Spring/Sarbanes Transit Center*
 - This project – which will be the largest transit hub in the county and the 2nd largest transit hub in the state – has also been delayed by several uncontrollable factors. Although payment and commitments for this project will hopefully be complete before the next CIP budget is decided, we want to be sure that the project remains fully funded – including the essential elements that were added by community request – and that any potential delays will not lead to project cuts.

Again, thank you for considering community input and priorities in the CIP budget process.

Sincerely,



Darian Unger
Chair