



WHEATON URBAN DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Marc Elrich
County Executive

Luisa Montero-Diaz
Director

March 7, 2019

Hon. Marc Elrich
Montgomery County Executive
101 Monroe Street
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear County Executive Elrich:

On behalf of the Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee (WUDAC) and the residents of Wheaton we commend and thank you for your unwavering commitment to the growth and development of Wheaton. We appreciated your attendance at the January 8th WUDAC meeting and your straightforward feedback on measures we should take to ensure Wheaton's continued success.

WUDAC and our entire community are extremely excited about what the current redevelopment will bring to Wheaton. Nonetheless, there are concerns related to this redevelopment effort which is slated to be completed by May 2020:

- We believe that with the current redevelopment edging towards completion, there is a prime opportunity to increase the marketing and promotion of Wheaton as an urban destination. How will this be done?
- After a decade of across-the-board cuts to the Urban District's budget, we are now facing the imminent opening of our long-awaited town plaza. How will the County plan, market and promote new programming at the Town Plaza, and begin to generate buzz about the renewed Wheaton? At this point, to the best of our knowledge, even some basic needs like equipment to make the stage functional have yet to be funded.
- How will our Arts and Entertainment designation be promoted, managed, and maximized?
- How will the County manage redevelopment to build on the momentum created by its investment and upgrade our commercial areas without losing Wheaton's character and diverse, locally owned businesses?

These concerns can only be addressed with adequate staff resources and funding. We recognize that there are many competing interests in the County; however, time is of the essence to maximize the \$170 million-dollar investment in Wheaton's downtown. Without intentional efforts devoted to Wheaton's downtown, the County's investment is likely to fall flat and not meet the objectives of stimulating the small business economy and creating a vibrant urban district for County residents.

WUDAC requests that the County immediately begin the requisition process to retain the services of a company to focus on the marketing and promotion of the renewed Wheaton along with the promotion of the Arts and Entertainment District.

We also ask that at least two additional full-time employees be budgeted and retained for fiscal year 2020 to focus not only on economic development, but also on marketing Wheaton, supporting local businesses and promoting the Arts and Entertainment District. We anticipate that there will be additional expenses related to the day-to-day upkeep of our new town square and we intend to solicit your support for that funding in the future; however, it is imperative that at this vital time the County make the necessary investment to ensure the success of our revitalized downtown.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William Jelen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

William Jelen, WUDAC Chair