



SILVER SPRING ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

March 2, 2016

County Executive Isiah Leggett
Executive Office Building

[Delivered via e-mail]

ADVICE RE FY17 OPERATING BUDGET

Dear County Executive Leggett:

I am writing on behalf of the Silver Spring Arts & Entertainment District Advisory Committee to express our support for funding improvements to the streetscape and physical environment of the Silver Spring A&E District/Urban District in the next fiscal year's budget. We appreciate the attention that you and your staff paid to this issue last year, but we would again like to request **dedicated funding to improve the success of the A&E District.**

For the past few years, Maryland's Department of Commerce has produced a study entitled "Maryland's Arts and Entertainment Districts Impact Analysis" which identified the overall economic and fiscal impact of Silver Spring as the best in the state. While we are pleased that Silver Spring is doing so well, we are afraid that if we don't take steps to maintain and **improve the streetscape and visual branding of Silver Spring as an arts district**, our visitors and tourism will begin to rapidly decline.

- ***In light of its proximity to an abundance of A&E alternatives in the District of Columbia, the committee requests the development of a visual branding/streetscape master plan as an essential first step to protect the district's appeal given the intensely competitive and constantly evolving National Capital Region A&E environment.***

The Silver Spring Advisory Committee would like the A&E district to be recognizable as an arts and entertainment district to people on the street. This goal would manifest itself in **signage that identifies the arts district, increased public art and visual arts branding, a clean and safe streetscape, and in general a more walkable and welcoming environment.**

The Silver Spring A&E Committee supports the Urban District's request for increased parking tax revenue to support **(a) the VanGo circulator bus around the district, (b) oversight and coordination of the Purple Line construction through a mechanism similar to the IOS system used for the Transit Center; and, (c) the clean and safe team.** The committee also supports the request for public art funding by the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County.

- **However, the A&E committee prioritizes *a request to contract with a professional consultant to conceptualize and develop a cohesive plan for the streetscape appeal and branding of Silver Spring as an arts and entertainment district, and as a distinctive destination within the greater Washington metropolitan area.***

Specific areas to address range from a broad overall improvement to the physical environment, including maintenance of streetscape and cleaner streets; to aesthetic lighting as well as lighting for pedestrian safety; street décor; crosswalk improvements; public art planning and general visual and aesthetic enhancements.

We appreciate your continued support of the A&E District and thank you in advance for considering our recommendations which are intended to help the district to keep pace within the fiercely competitive regional marketplace.

Sincerely,

RAY BARRY

Chair, Silver Spring Arts & Entertainment District Advisory Committee

cc: Committee Members
Reemberto Rodriguez (Silver Spring Regional Area Director)