



SILVER SPRING CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

February 27, 2014

Mr. Craig Rice Council President 100 Maryland Avenue Rockville, Maryland 20850	Ms. Cherri Branson 5 th District Councilmember 100 Maryland Avenue Rockville, Maryland 20850
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RE: ADVICE FOR THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Dear County Council President Rice & Councilmember Branson:

I am writing to you regarding the FY15 Capital Budget and FY15-20 Capital Improvements Program (CIP). We were gratified to see the February 6, 2014 letter that Councilmember Branson sent to her colleagues and the executive branch about three projects in our community. We incorporate her letter and add our views on these three projects to provide further updates and because we view them as bellwethers about the county government's support in our part of the county.

Old Blair Auditorium Reuse (P361113). Thanks to an outpouring of community support and to Councilwoman Branson's quick engagement and advocacy, the County Executive has found \$600,000 in capital funds to allow the design phase to move forward quickly and avoid leaving 600,000 in state bond bill funds "on the table."

But we are chagrined that the budget still puts the actual venue renovation work far into the future. We certainly support examination by DGS and MCPS of the dramatically escalated renovation cost as a way to look at cost trimming. At the same time, the alternative of more delay while the facility continues to degrade and decay is simply not a sustainable one. Thus, our community demands that this project be elevated for a plan of near time completion. When completed, the multi-use facility will be income producing for the county and supply needed space for community groups; the venue will further arts integration in the schools that is a prime method to improve academic performance, graduation rates and the lives as well of SSIMS students; and to be blunt, completion will remove a sore that has so long vexed the community.

Metropolitan Branch Trail (P501110). We echo Councilmember Branson's points about the importance of this section of the Metropolitan Branch Trail to the region's plan for bikeable and walkable work connections. The economic and health benefits of this active transportation link are measurable and well understood. The longer we delay, the further behind we fall as a community. Let us keep our county as a leader in forward-looking strategies and let us realize the above benefits by completing this project on the previously planned schedule.

Jesup Blair House Restoration (Not currently in FY15-20 CIP). Long-time residents and leaders of local civic associations have expressed that this house is one of the few historic buildings left standing in Montgomery County. To preserve this heritage, a minimum must be done to stabilize the building until further renovations can be made. This is not something that can be replaced once lost, and yes, we will lose much if we decide to neglect it much longer.

Thank you in advance for your consideration on these matters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Evan Glass". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Evan Glass, Chair, Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board

cc: County Executive Leggett

Montgomery County Council