



## SILVER SPRING URBAN DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

January 16, 2015

Honorable Isiah Leggett  
County Executive, Montgomery County  
101 Monroe Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Rockville, MD 20850

**Re: Silver Spring Urban District FY 2016 Budget**

Mr. Leggett:

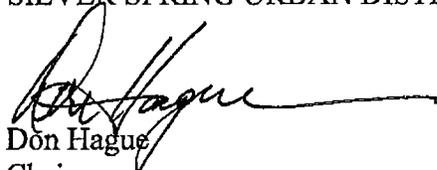
It has recently come to the attention of the Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee ("UDAC") that there has been a direction given to the Silver Spring Regional Center to reduce the FY 2016 budget of the Silver Spring Urban District by three percent (3%). We are writing to express our disappointment with this directive and our opposition to any reduction in the Silver Spring Urban District budget. In fact, as described in our November 12<sup>th</sup> letter to you commenting on the budget, we believe that the budget for the Silver Spring Urban District should be increased by at least \$575,000 in order to: 1) address unmet needs; 2) bring the available Regional Center resources more in line with the growth that has occurred in the Urban District over the last five years; and, 3) put the Urban District on more solid footing to keep the Silver Spring Central Business District ("CBD") area one of the premiere locations in Montgomery County to live, work, play and invest. This letter includes an attachment with an excerpt from the November 12<sup>th</sup> letter listing our four recommended initiatives.

The funds are available to provide for the increased expenditures described in our letter of November 12. The Parking Lot District, which is the primary source of funding for Urban District activities, has a balance of over \$15 million. This fund balance will be increased by approximately \$10 million when the sale of parking garage 21, at the corner of Spring Street and Colesville Road, to United Therapeutics closes this year. The Committee is unanimous in its belief that it is in the County's best interest to spend a portion of these monies on items including: a) much needed corrections of deferred maintenance conditions with curbs, sidewalks and the railroad bridge area over Georgia Avenue; b) increases in Red Shirts staff proportional to the increases in CBD residents and activity over the last five years; and, c) funding critical management positions in the Regional Center including an ombudsman.

The continued growth and flourishing of downtown Silver Spring is one of the great urban redevelopment success stories in the Washington metropolitan region of the last several decades. This success has been achieved through a robust public/private partnership that in many respects is a model for urban redevelopment. It is important that this success be sustained and maintained for the years ahead. To do so requires a continued commitment of resources from the County. The dividends in the form of a vibrant downtown with increasing levels of activity and private sector investment are obvious. The UDAC urges you and your staff to re-evaluate the direction given to the Regional Center staff and consider adopting the recommendations from the Committee's November letter to keep the Silver Spring CBD an attractive community for all its stakeholders.

Best wishes for the New Year.

Very truly yours,  
SILVER SPRING URBAN DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE



Don Hague  
Chair

Cc: Tom Hucker, County Councilmember  
Reemberto Rodriguez, Regional Center Director

**Attachment - Excerpt from letter of November 12, 2014 listing four recommended Urban District initiatives and associated funding estimates.**

In our letter of November 12<sup>th</sup>, the Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee recommended an increase of at least \$575,000 in the budget of the Silver Spring Urban District to fund the following four initiatives.

1. A new "ombudsman" position to work with all stakeholders in the Urban District and County and State agencies to identify and prioritize needs in the Silver Spring CBD and accomplish activities that the Urban District cannot do on its own. Estimated Cost: \$150,000.
2. Repair, rehabilitate or replace multiple heaves and uneven sections of curbs and brick sidewalk to restore a level walking surface and eliminate trip hazards. Estimated Cost: \$150,000.
3. Establish a program of welcome and seasonal banners, and a program of holiday lights at selected locations, along Georgia Avenue and Colesville Road. Estimated Cost: \$150,000.
4. Provide additional funding to compensate Urban District staff, primarily "Red Shirts", for overtime work needed to clean and maintain Veterans Plaza and other areas within the CBD after the multiple events that are held downtown throughout the year. Estimated Cost: \$125,000.