



SILVER SPRING CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

May 14, 2015

Mr. George Leventhal
County Council President
100 Maryland Ave, 6th Floor
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Advice from the Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board re:
FY2016 BUDGET

Dear Council President Leventhal and members of County Council:

As members of the Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board, we recently wrote to County Executive Leggett about our budget priorities gleaned from our public meetings throughout the year. Now that the County Executive has submitted his recommended budget, we have the following comments, grouped under the headings of our earlier letter, for your consideration as you finalize the budget for the next fiscal year.

Improve Community Policing Efforts We support the police body camera initiative yet still ask that the current police budget make room for continued de-escalation training, which includes examining alternatives to excessive force, as well as the potential development of a police advisory board that can also improve civilian trust in our law enforcement.

Maintain or Increase Transportation Funding We argued for restoration of the bicycle pedestrian priority areas program in the next fiscal year, as a key element in the “safe and efficient movement of residents, guests, and business employees”. We continue to support the Silver Spring Urban District’s requests, and ask for funding to extend free hours on Ride On buses for high school students to attend after school programs.

Maintain or Increase Funding for Affordable and Secure Living We support the County Executive’s affordable housing requests, including the currently senior living project next to the new Silver Spring Library. In addition, funding for renter and landlord education and outreach programs to better understand their **rights and responsibilities** is key to reducing costly conflicts over housing conditions. We also ask that you increase funding for assistance with affordable and secure living that helps those that want to come to, stay and serve the region socially, economically and civically.

Maintain or Increase Funding for Services for the Homeless We ask for funding for employment assistance, mental health and drug treatment facilities to decrease the number of people living on the streets, in their cars, or in homeless shelters. Further funding improves our human capital which further improves our economic development.

Fund Resources Keeping Our Regional Area Inviting to Live, Play, and Work We support the County Executive’s Community Grants fund request for nonprofits and other entities that succeed in making our Regional Area a welcoming place to live, play and work.

In spite of the budgetary shortfall, please consider these budget priorities as investments that foster the development of human capital, a positive sense of community and economic prosperity for Silver Spring and Takoma Park.

Bernice Mireku-North
Chair, Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board

cc:
County Council Members
SSCAB Members

