



## SILVER SPRING URBAN DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

May 27, 2014

Hon. Isaiah Leggett  
County Executive  
101 Monroe Street, Second Floor  
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: State Highway Administration Project in Silver Spring

Mr. Leggett:

The State Highway Administration has been working since last fall to resurface Georgia Avenue from the 16<sup>th</sup> Street intersection in Montgomery Hills through the central business district to Washington D.C. Road repair and resurfacing were badly needed in this stretch of Georgia Avenue. Named The MD 97 (Georgia Avenue) Safety and Resurfacing Project, it also involves ADA ramps and concrete bus pads. The Urban District soon identified troubling aspects of contractor workmanship and initiated attempts to work with SHA.

Despite Urban District Manager and Regional Center Director efforts to communicate, clarify issues, and coordinate with SHA the Advisory Committee understands that the results have not been useful. They reached out to SHA's District 3 Engineer and Administrator. Nevertheless SHA staff members were repeatedly unable to attend monthly meetings of the Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee to provide an update on SHA work and plans, to report on whether problems that had been brought to SHA's attention would be fixed, to listen to our observations, to discuss, or to try to improve communications.

Continuing doubts about effectiveness of coordination cause concern for whether SHA will address deteriorated conditions of pedestrian underpasses and skywalk at the Georgia Avenue railroad bridge, repair broken curbs, or return to remove and reinstall sections of sidewalk that were not installed properly when ADA ramp work was done last fall. The Advisory Committee is concerned that the SHA project might run out of funds and leave Silver Spring sidewalks in worse shape than before, with brick that was awkwardly re-laid and is falling apart in less than one season, and an unstable, hazardous walking surface in areas where pedestrian travel is heaviest.

At its May 15 meeting the Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee voted to advise that the situation would benefit from County Executive communication with the Governor. The committee would like to have effective communication with SHA. Above all, the committee would like assurance that SHA will correct the improperly installed ADA ramps and brick sidewalks in order that the expense of doing it right will not fall to the Urban District.

Sincerely,



Melvin Tull, Chairman



## SILVER SPRING URBAN DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

May 27, 2014

Hon. Isaiah Leggett  
County Executive  
101 Monroe Street, Second Floor  
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: Silver Spring Streetscape Plan

Mr. Leggett:

For many decades brick sidewalks have been required by the Planning Board as part of the Silver Spring Streetscape Plan for optional method development in the Central Business District. During that time there has been continuing controversy over the brick surface.

MCDOT's construction specifications have improved since DHCA first rebuilt sidewalks along Georgia Avenue and Colesville Road with interlocking pavers in the early 1980s. Red brick has become the preferred surface, the tree pit requirement expanded, and ADA ramps have been incorporated. Nevertheless, many pedestrians have found, and continue to report, that the brick surface is problematic to walk on with women's narrow heels that slip into gaps and beveled edges, or to roll across with a wheelchair. In addition, the Urban District has observed that utilities, and even SHA, do not rebuild brick sidewalks properly after they dig. Just last year an SHA contractor installing ADA ramps re-laid disturbed bricks in such a jumble that the work had to be dug up and redone, and still needs to be redone again.

Complaints about the Streetscape Plan are sometimes combined with suggestions that the sidewalk standard should be improved based on decades of experience with agencies and utilities that do not provide necessary bricklaying skills. The primary recommendation seems to be that a new design should revive basic concrete sidewalk construction while invoking highlights of brick trim. In fact, a few years ago DHCA used a brick trim design to rebuild several blocks of concrete sidewalk along Fenton Street.

At its May 15 meeting the Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee voted to advise that the Planning Board should be requested to review the Silver Spring Streetscape Plan for ways to improve sidewalk design.

Sincerely,

Melvin Tull, Chairman

cc: Council President Rice



## SILVER SPRING URBAN DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

May 23, 2014

Council President Craig Rice  
Montgomery County Council  
100 Maryland Avenue, Sixth Floor  
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: Silver Spring Urban District

Dear Council President Rice:

As the Council finalizes the FY 15 Operating Budget, the Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee would like to reiterate the success of Silver Spring and its importance to the County. This is a time to thank Councilmembers for their efforts to make Silver Spring a better place to be.

The Committee followed the FY 15 budget discussion and voted to advise of our support for Council actions to (1) begin to expand the operating hours of Silver Spring circulator bus service beyond the original commuter service hours and into active evening and weekend periods; (2) extend the hours of maintenance and cleaning for parking facilities to more closely match evening and weekend use.

The Committee supports these Silver Spring Parking District budget measures because most of the funds the Council appropriates for the Urban District are drawn from the Silver Spring Parking District Fund. Because a healthy Parking District is essential to the Urban District we strongly supported Council efforts to avoid sending Silver Spring Parking District funds into the General Fund.

The Silver Spring experience for many visitors begins and ends in a parking facility. We believe a fiscally strong PLD will be able to plan for and provide clean, safe, well lighted, well maintained facilities that create good first, and last, impressions that give people a comfortable feeling about returning to Silver Spring.

Over the past several months our Committee has worked to help Councilmembers realize that Silver Spring continues to attract a growing number of events, visitors, and new residential development that brings more residents. The challenge for the Urban District is to keep up with Silver Spring's continuing success – its growth in popularity as a place to live, visit, and be.

On behalf of the members of the Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee, thank you for understanding the growing needs of Silver Spring and for making decisions in the FY 15 Budget that protect the integrity of the Silver Spring Parking District so that it can continue to make Silver Spring strong.

Sincerely,

Melvin Tull, Chairman  
cc: County Executive Leggett



## SILVER SPRING URBAN DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

May 27, 2014

Council President Craig Rice  
Montgomery County Council  
100 Maryland Avenue, Sixth Floor  
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: Silver Spring Streetscape Plan

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Complaints about the Streetscape Plan are sometimes combined with suggestions that the sidewalk standard should be improved based on decades of experience with agencies and utilities that do not provide for the necessary brick laying skill. The primary recommendation seems to be that a new design should revive basic concrete sidewalk construction but invoke highlights of brick trim. In fact, a few years ago DHCA used a brick trim design to rebuild several blocks of old concrete sidewalk along Fenton Street.

At its May 15 meeting the Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee voted to advise the Council to include review of the Silver Spring Streetscape Plan in the next Planning Board work plan.

Sincerely,

  
Melvin Tull, Chairman

cc: County Executive Leggett