



## WHEATON URBAN DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Isiah Leggett  
County Executive

Ana L. van Balen  
Director

April 12, 2016

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

Dear County Executive Leggett:

The WUDAC is pleased that Montgomery County applied to the Maryland Arts Council for the re-designation of Wheaton as an Arts and Entertainment District. While it is unfortunate that the designation was allowed to lapse, WUDAC hopes that the re-designation process will provide the county with an opportunity to strengthen its commitment to arts and entertainment in the Wheaton Urban District especially in light of the county's investment in the development of the Wheaton Triangle and the new Wheaton recreation center and library. Toward that end, WUDAC recommends the following for the County Executive's consideration:

1. Maximize the availability of space in county public facilities for arts and entertainment purposes: The development of Lot 13 and the Town Square will provide an important outdoor venue for arts and entertainment, but indoor venues for arts and entertainment are seriously lacking. The economic benefits of the county's arts and humanities grants program cannot be fully realized when performances are forced to take place far from the urban district due to lack of venues. WUDAC recommends that until such time as a more permanent facility can be established, the county should make space available in the new office building to incubate the development of arts and entertainment in Wheaton. WUDAC also recommends that the new county office building be used as a gallery to display visual arts.
2. Optimize the alignment of the boundaries of the Urban District with the Arts and Entertainment District: With the construction of a new library and recreation center just one block outside of the current border of the A&E District, WUDAC applauds the county's plan to request that the boundaries of the A&E District be expanded to include these new facilities. Both the library and recreation center will be important venues for the development and presentation of art and entertainment. WUDAC would like to call your attention to the fact that the county's governance of its arts and entertainment districts is delegated to its urban districts. Therefore, it may be helpful to align the geographic boundaries of the Wheaton Urban District so that it encompasses, as much as possible, the entire A&E District. WUDAC recognizes that there are potential revenue and expenditure implications that the county needs to assess, as well as public opinion. Nevertheless, with Wheaton's urban redevelopment and the potential expansion of the A&E District, this may be an appropriate time to consider whether expanding the boundaries of the urban district will strengthen the foundation for Wheaton's future development as an urban center.
3. Delegate management of the A&E District to the Wheaton Urban District: In order for the county to be consistent with its management of the county's two other A&E Districts, WUDAC recommends that

the Wheaton A&E District be managed by the Mid-County Regional Director's office. WUDAC also recommends that the county appoint a resident advisor from the Wheaton arts and entertainment community to assist the Urban District in managing the A&E District, in applying for technical assistance grants, in submitting annual reports, and in managing outreach to the Wheaton arts and entertainment community. WUDAC expects to be able to continue to provide advice to the county government, as appropriate, on A&E matters.

WUDAC hopes that you will consider these actions to strengthen the county's application for Wheaton's re-designation as an Arts and Entertainment District. Regardless of the outcome of the Arts Council's decision, these steps may improve the county's ability to encourage and coordinate the future development of arts and entertainment in the Wheaton Urban District and surrounding area.

Thank you for your consideration of these recommendations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to be 'Devala', is written over the word 'Sincerely,'.

Devala Janardan  
Chair, Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee