



SILVER SPRING CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

January 13, 2021

Marc Elrich, County Executive
Montgomery County

[*Delivered via e-mail*]

Advice from the Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board re:

SHARED STREETS

Dear County Executive Marc Elrich:

The Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board wishes to applaud the efforts of the Department of Transportation for the ongoing implementation of the County's Shared Streets program. Under Chris Conklin's leadership – and the stewardship of Hannah Henn - we have been impressed by MCDOT's willingness to be creative and flexible in piloting the program particularly when the pandemic has added extraordinary challenges to implementation of any program, let alone a brand new one. We also wish to acknowledge the efforts of Kristy Daphnis, Peter Gray, and Alison Gillespie in working with MCDOT to make this happen; as well as the many neighborhoods that have welcomed the program.

Although the County has been working on bicycle and pedestrian plans for years, the Coronavirus pandemic has fundamentally changed road use, particularly in urban areas like Silver Spring and its surrounding neighborhoods. Far fewer commuters are driving cars on the roads, resulting in reduced congestion and volume and many more people, especially children, are walking or riding bicycles on them. Walking and biking has become critical to our well-being during the pandemic and will continue to be important if many people work from home post-pandemic, which is expected. The program has also had widespread benefits to our local economy to help restaurants and other local businesses as parking spaces become outdoor dining spaces.

We especially appreciate and support MCDOT's deployment of the Shared Streets program as a pilot and wish to see the County continue to use pilot programs to experiment with unconventional or at least less common transportation/traffic solutions. As a result of the Shared Streets success, we urge that funds are committed to expand Shared Streets and to complete the necessary permanent improvements for the County roads envisioned as Neighborhood Greenways.

We would be remiss if we did not recognize Director Conklin and his staff for their willingness to see pedestrians and bicyclists as constituents along with cars and transit vehicles. This message is clearly conveyed in the repurposing of Newell Street in South Silver Spring. We feel as though they are providing a good example for other departments.

SHARED STREETS

One dark spot in the reduced traffic on the County arterials has been a noticeable increase in speeding, and particularly racing, on these roads. We hope that Montgomery County Police might be able to provide an increase in speed enforcement on Georgia Ave and Colesville Road, especially at night. While we acknowledge the effects of the pandemic, we also strongly support the County's Vision Zero initiative and we are keenly aware of the impact of speeding on this goal.

Sincerely, on behalf of the SSCAB,

Lysette House*
Chair

Sofia Bushen*
Vice-Chair

Parliamentarian
Melanie Funder Kaye*

Secretary
Katherine Lucas McKay*

*(*Signatures on file)*

CC:

Montgomery County Council Members
Reemberto Rodriguez, Silver Spring Regional Area Director
Members of the SSCAB