



SILVER SPRING CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

April 13, 2021

Marc Elrich, County Executive
Montgomery County

[Delivered via e-mail]

Advice from the Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board re:

CREATION OF A SINGLE DOCUMENT FOR ALL SILVER SPRING RELATED TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

Dear County Executive Elrich,

Over the past few years, the Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board (SSCAB) has reviewed, discussed, and largely supported many transportation, transit, and infrastructure projects within the Silver Spring Regional Service Center. These projects are diverse and range from relatively small neighborhood projects like the Dale Drive Multi-Use Path, to larger community-wide improvements like the implementation of the Bicycle Master Plan to the development of a regional BRT corridor along Colesville Road/US-29. While each project individually will provide significant benefits to Silver Spring residents and businesses, together they have an opportunity to transform the greater Silver Spring area into a more walkable, bikeable, and transit-accessible community.

- **We advise that MCDOT and related agencies create a single document that integrates all transportation projects affecting Silver Spring, in order to be ready to take advantage of forthcoming federal funding and leverage the impact of each project.**

In any time, transportation projects can be costly and therefore difficult to fund given limited resources and competing demands. Currently, widespread budget impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic make resources tighter and new transportation funding even more difficult. Fortunately, the newly installed Biden Administration has stated that they intend to increase federal funding for such multi-modal projects as the ones proposed in Silver Spring. The Biden Administration has stated that they have five important objectives for federally-funded transportation projects:

1. Improving safety, especially for vulnerable users
2. Addressing climate change
3. Improving transportation equity
4. Improving access to multi-modal systems
5. Creating jobs and economic empowerment

Many of the Capital Budget transportation plans and projects slated for or underway in Silver Spring would meet most or all stated objectives and therefore could be eligible for federal funding. However,

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currently the projects are not bundled in any meaningful way that would be conducive to applying for a larger grant to cover multiple projects. Further, without a comprehensive plan that considers all the infrastructure and transportation projects in the region it is very difficult for County budget officials or the County Council to see the bigger picture regarding how these projects fit together. Consequently, the SSCAB recommends that the County Executive and the County Council consider having the Planning Board create a Regional Transportation and Infrastructure Plan that pulls together all the currently proposed and under development projects within the region.

To be clear, we are not advising that new plans be developed – we are advising that the County develop a single document that pulls together in a summative format all projects, proposed costs, and the expected benefits. Such a document can help ensure, whether federal funding is received or not, that myriad transportation and public works projects across Silver Spring are considered in a comprehensive manner that supports and expands the Silver Spring small business community, implements the Complete Streets Concept, and ensures the success of the County's Vision Zero plan. We should also note we are deeply disappointed to see nothing in the Capital Budget Plan with regard to improvements to Georgia Avenue from Montgomery Hills to Forest Glen. We sincerely hope this oversight will be corrected.

We understand that the County will likely not be able to submit an application for the FY 2021 round of the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) discretionary grant program as applications are due now. However, the Better Utilizing Infrastructure to Leverage Development (BUILD) grants, formerly known as the TIGER grant program, will publish its FY 2022 Notice of Funding Opportunities on Monday, April 26. If the County is able to develop the regional plan rapidly it may be in a good position to apply for BUILD grants this year or INFRA grants for next year.

Listed below are the Capital Budget projects that we advise be included in such a plan. They are not in any priority order.

- Dale Drive Multiuse Path
- Forest Glen Passageway – Metro entrance under Georgia Avenue
- Implementation of the US 29 BRT Phase 2 Plan
- Implementation of the Silver Spring Green Trail
- Implementation of the Metropolitan Branch Trail
- Implementation of the Fenton Street Cycle Track
- Sidewalks on 16th Street from Georgia Avenue to East-West Highway
- Complete implementation of Bicycle Master Plan for Silver Spring
 - Funding of conversion to greenways and complete streets the bikeways and proposed bikeways on residential roads in Bicycle Master Plan for Silver Spring
 - Bicycle Pedestrian Priority Areas along the Purple Line
- Increased automated speed enforcement on Georgia Avenue and Colesville Road

Some items currently not in the Capital Budget that we would like to see included are:

- Development of Forest Glen Metro site
- Georgia Ave Improvements from Forest Glen south through Montgomery Hills
- Support for Bonifant Street small business through the Purple Line construction

All sidewalks have minimum 36" clearance (no utility poles, trash receptacles, or other objects sited in the middle of the sidewalk)

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As always, we appreciate your consideration of the advice that we send.

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