



Energized Public Spaces Additional Testimony

From: Kit Gage, Advocacy Director

Friends of Sligo Creek, advocacy@fosc.org, www.fosc.org

TO: Park and Planning, Montgomery Parks, M-NCPPC

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Dear esteemed public servants:

We have testified previously about our support for using Silver Spring for one of the Pilot Areas of the Energized Public Spaces. We understand the record has been reopened for additional comment and we feel compelled to add our voices.

Open Spaces can be made as the centers of cities are developed, with ease and little complexity. Parks can be carved out of relatively open spaces. The pattern in Montgomery County was not that process as the older suburbs were created. Instead parks were created by default where construction was difficult, along creek beds and flood plains. So now in many of our towns and cities (or functional cities), there are no Central Parks, no Grant Parks. There are playgrounds where the houses were built, sometimes, and swim clubs, but not in central business districts.

So we now have Silver Spring as a monument to concrete, brick and asphalt. All that's green are sprigs of trees and occasional median strips of grasses and flowers. Even the former artificial grass in front of the Civic Center is now virtually all paved. And that space and the Ellsworth Drive corridor adjoining are the only remaining outdoor collecting spaces.

If any area needs to be in the Pilot Area to investigate creative creation of public spaces and hopefully more green space, it is Silver Spring. If Silver Spring is not a Pilot Area, then we have lost all chances for meaningful public spaces as development is completed like a wildfire in the downtown area. We don't object to concentrated development just as we support public transit to improve air quality. But please keep Silver Spring a Pilot Area. Public spaces benefit all – developers, retailers, residents and employees – as a good quality of life and work encourage people to live and work and eat in Silver Spring or anywhere with great public spaces.

Friends of Sligo Creek is a nonprofit community organization dedicated to protecting, improving, and appreciating the ecological health of Sligo Creek Park and its surrounding watershed.