

October 11, 2018

Montgomery County Executive Ike Leggett
101 Monroe Street, 2nd Floor
Rockville MD 20850

Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear County Executive Leggett, Council President Riemer, and County Councilmembers:

As neighbors and supporters of Progress Place in downtown Silver Spring, we wish to express our urgent concerns regarding the safety for the staff of Progress Place; the residents, clients, and meal guests of Progress Place; and the residents, businesses, guests, and customers of the surrounding community. We are asking for your leadership in providing sufficient funding to increase and maintain security. This is approaching an emergency situation; the County must continue on its path of completing Progress Place, which includes the necessary security components.

We are alarmed by instances such as the shooting at the 7-11 on Georgia Avenue Sunday, September 23, 2018. A simple check of CrimeReports.com shows that, in the past six-month period, a significant percentage of all reported incidents in the Silver Spring urban core occurred adjacent to Progress Place.

We are also disturbed to learn that the residents, clients, and meal guests and staff of Progress Place are sometimes assaulted, verbally threatened, and threatened with weapons. This also sometimes spills out to the streets of Silver Spring.

But most shocking to us is learning that Progress Place does not have 24/7 security on-site; inside or outside of the facility.

We need additional, engaged, round-the-clock security staffing – both inside the building and on its campus, as well as in the surrounding areas - to ensure that this area is safe and secure for staff, residents, clients, and meal guests of Progress Place and the residents of the surrounding community. In addition, we need physical enhancements (such as improved lighting, security cameras, and more) to act as a deterrent and to help ensure that Silver Spring looks like what we describe it to be to incoming businesses. We are evaluating other improvements as well, in acknowledgement that while law enforcement is an essential and critical step, it is not sufficient.

One year ago, a request was made for \$180,000 to fund a large part of these needs. This request was not acted upon, and in its absence, we seem to be experiencing an increase in violent crime. This sum - \$180,000 - is an extremely small amount of the 2019 Montgomery County \$5.6 billion budget. This nominal expenditure for our community's safety and health is well-warranted.

Lastly in May 2018, leaders at Progress Place requested security cameras, yet to their knowledge, nothing has happened in five months. There are repeated incidents where the existing cameras do not provide the sight lines that are needed to record what is happening throughout the building and on the parking lot. EAI Security Systems needs approval from the County to proceed. The cost would be \$42,857.

This is an unacceptable situation in terms of quality of life, personal safety, public health, business success, and property values. County leadership must be proactive in remedying the situation and ensuring its continued success with projects such as Art Space, new apartments, new business and a thriving diverse downtown Silver Spring.

We urge you to approve supplementary budget funds to cover this immediate need, and to put needed staff and other improvements into place, now.

Each of the individual signers is willing to provide more information and discuss this further with you. To ease communication, you may send such requests to any of us individually or via Doreen Cantor Paster (community member, member of ESSCA, member of the Board of Directors of Shepherd's Table), doreencp@sunnydoor.net, 301-523-8560.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Jacki Coyle
Executive Director
Shepherd's Table

Shane Rock
CEO
Interfaith Works

Jane Redicker, IOM
President & CEO
Greater Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce

John Sery
B&O Station Rental Agent, Director At-Large
Montgomery Preservation, Inc.

Tim Haverland
President
East Silver Spring Civic Association

Justin Chappell
President
South Silver Spring Neighborhood Association

Emily Bruno
CEO/Founder
Denizens Brewing Company

David Fogel
Owner
Bump 'n Grind

Spiro Gioldasis
Owner
Pacci's Pizzeria

Raynold Mendizabal
Owner
Urban Butcher

Malede Anteneh
Owner
Balagger Restaurant

Melissa Barnwell
Property Manager
Solaire Silver Spring

James Holmes
Community Manager
The Veridian

Tammy Groth
Building Manager
Mica Condominiums
8045 at Silver Spring Metro Condominiums

Detra Clark
Senior Community Director
1155 Ripley

Brian J. Fitzgerald
President & CEO
Royco, Inc. (The World Building)

Eric Zelenko
CEO
Plaza Artist Materials

Dave Giacomini
Owner
UP Yoga LLC

Devora Kimelman-Block
Founder and CEO
KOL Foods

Cc: Reemberto Rodriguez
Director
Silver Spring Regional Center