



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

TOM HUCKER
COUNCILMEMBER
DISTRICT 5

MEMORANDUM

TO: Councilmember Roger Berliner, Chair, T&E Committee
Councilmember Nancy Floreen, member, T&E Committee

FROM: Councilmember Tom Hucker

SUBJECT: Silver Spring Parking Lot District

DATE: April 25, 2017

Evening parking is critical to the health of our businesses and consumers. The current balance represented by existing parking rates and hours not only maintains the financial health of the Silver Spring Parking Lot District and provides most of the funding for the Silver Spring Urban District, it is a necessary incentive to support our fragile restaurants and retail stores.

The proposal to change parking rates and hours is a terrible idea at this time for several reasons:

1. As you know, the entire retail industry is significantly struggling. Recent headlines have covered major retailers like Macy's and Sears losing revenue and closing individual locations. Downtown Silver Spring's retail economy is not immune from national trends. The County government should be supporting our vulnerable local retailers and should not give any of our residents an additional incentive to stay home and shop online.
2. The Council has expressed in multiple ways recently our concern for small business and our desire to increase support services, especially to help serve fragile, new small businesses through microlending, navigator services and other necessary initiatives. Why would we undermine this goal by creating a new disincentive to retail shopping?
3. The Council has emphasized the importance of our nighttime economy, even going so far as to convene an official Night Time Economy Task Force under the leadership of CM Riemer and embracing its recommendations. We invest a lot in programming, marketing, police presence and other approaches to enliven downtown Silver Spring. We should not undercut the progress we've made in this area by giving people more incentive to stay home.
4. At a time when we are excited about our new DLC Director, Bob Dorfman, and the reforms he's making to force the DLC to be more responsive to our licensees, why would we make his efforts more difficult by discouraging people from patronizing our Silver

Spring bars and restaurants?

5. The Silver Spring PLD consists of over 11,500 spaces -- one-third more spaces than the Bethesda PLD, and over ten times as many spaces as the Wheaton PLD. With so many spaces, any change to rates or hours can have a significant impact on the entire Silver Spring community.

For all these reasons, we need to avoid the unintended consequences of this ill-conceived PLD proposal, which does not prioritize our protect our fragile retail economy.

Instead, I ask DOT to come back with a revised resolution that preserves the current schedule of free weekday parking hours. I hope you'll join me in supporting our local Silver Spring business community.