

March 23, 2017

Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Boulevard
Suite 300
Arlington, Virginia 22201
Via email: countyboard@arlingtonva.us

Committee Members
Pamela Van Hine, Chair
Eric Goldstein, Vice Chair
Ellen Armbruster
Rosemary Ciotti
Jim Feaster
Eric Goodman
Dennis Jaffe
Tom Kornis
Christine Ng
John Armstrong
Collin Weber

Chairman Fisette and members of the County Board,

I write this letter on behalf of the Pedestrian Advisory Committee in response to the County Manager's inclusion of the street light program among the possible reductions from the FY 2018 budget. Maintaining our streetlights in working order is critical to creating safe, walkable, and vibrant streets. The additions to the streetlight program proposed in the County Manager's original budget proposal are an important part of this effort.

Streetlights are a critical part of our street infrastructure. They allow pedestrians to travel safely. They allow pedestrians to see where they are walking, and allow drivers to see pedestrians. They decrease the likelihood for crime. They create a safe and pleasant environment after dark for pedestrians and cyclists of all abilities, thus encouraging their civic and social participation throughout Arlington. They also allow our business districts to create vibrant environments that encourage economic activity.

The number of streetlights the county is responsible for maintaining has grown dramatically over the past several years, without a commensurate increase in staffing. With over 7,000 streetlights and no dedicated field technicians to maintain them, repairs take too long and our streets remain unsafe. Taking a month to conduct a "minor" repair (e.g. change a light bulb) and taking over four months for larger repairs is too long for such a basic part of our County's infrastructure.

Increasing the county's streetlight program staffing is a necessary first step in getting the county's streetlights in good working order. We encourage you to include the funding for the five additional streetlight staff in your FY 2018 budget.

Sincerely,

Pamela Van Hine
Chair
Pedestrian Advisory Committee

Cc: Mark Schwartz, County Manager; Dennis Leach, Director of Transportation; Chris Slatt, Chair, Transportation Commission; Gillian Burgess, Chair, Bicycle Advisory Committee; John Carten, Chair, Transit Advisory Committee; William Staderman, Chair, Disability Advisory Commission; David Goodman, Bicycle & Pedestrian Program Manager; Pedestrian Advisory Committee Members