

## SILVER SPRING STREETScape STANDARDS UPDATE



### Description

Planning staff will present the Silver Spring Streetscape Standards Update for Planning Board approval.

## STUDY INFORMATION

### Briefing

Silver Spring Streetscape Standards

### Date

November 6, 2025

### Lead Planner

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### Planning Division

West County Planning

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MCPB Item #9

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## SUMMARY

Planning Staff will present the revised Silver Spring Streetscape Standards to the Planning Board. This work updates the existing 2019 *Silver Spring Streetscape Standards*. The Streetscape Standards (Standards) are a document that provides design guidance and technical specifications for streetscape elements in the right-of-way including sidewalks, street trees, lighting, furniture, and more. The document is used by regulatory staff, county agencies, and developers for streetscape improvements required by development approvals or made under a county capital project. This update aligns the Standards with recommendations from the 2022 *Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan* and contributes to achieving the Plan goals of creating a more accessible and sustainable pedestrian network in the downtown. This update to the Standards will also align the document with *Thrive Montgomery 2050* and the 2021 *Montgomery County Climate Action Plan*.

The revised Standards focus on the following goals:

- Ensure sidewalks are safe for people of all ages and abilities.
- Reduce street temperatures and urban heat island effect through streetscape design.
- Create tree planting conditions that will maximize tree survival and canopy shade cover in the downtown.
- Implement a streetscape that is easy to maintain.

To meet the goals listed above, the Standards revised several sections of the 2019 document. These include changes to sidewalk materials, increased soil volumes, improved planting methods, and guidance regarding placement of street furniture. The Standards also include an overhaul of the tree selection species list to provide more climate-resilient and disease-resistant species and increase tree survival and biodiversity. Individual street conditions such as overhead wires, shade, and planting conditions were factored into the selection of species for each block. Additional shrub and perennial planting lists are provided to support appropriate plantings in tree beds and in other areas where a tree cannot survive, but other plants may thrive.

## PROCESS

Staff designed and implemented a robust agency coordination process for the update of these Standards. An interagency working group met monthly throughout the first year of the project so that all concepts could be reviewed by the agencies that implement streetscape improvements in downtown Silver Spring. It was crucial to the Planning team that the other agencies contribute to the development of the Standards from the beginning, as they are directly involved with the implementation of streetscape improvements in the right-of-way, including their maintenance. The working group included staff from:

- Silver Spring Urban District
- Montgomery County Department of Transportation
- Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection
- Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services
- Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration.

In addition to the working group, various topic-specific groups with subject matter experts from each agency met regularly throughout the development of the Standards. All the agency participants reviewed the draft and provided comments that are reflected in the updated Standards.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff requests that the Planning Board approve this update to the Silver Spring Streetscape Standards.

## ATTACHMENT

ATTACHMENT 1: Silver Spring Streetscape Standards (2025)