



Text of Email Sent 4/2/2009 to the County Council Transportation,
Infrastructure, Energy, and Environment Committee with comments on
proposed legislation prohibiting the use of brick pavers

Dear Members of the Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy, and Environment
Committee, Nancy Floreen, Chair:

The Olney Town Center Advisory Committee is aware that your committee is considering legislation to prohibit the use of certain pavers from use in county projects and private projects within the county due to the impact pavers can have on the mobility of persons with disabilities. We support prohibiting the use of materials that could present a hazard, impaired mobility, or materials that are likely to create a bumping sensation while riding in a wheelchair.

However, we would like to note an important exception. Pavers that are installed and maintained to the "Bethesda streetscape standard" are a material that we want to remain an option for the Olney Town Center and throughout the county. Disallowing their use would unnecessarily limit the design options for future projects. Our understanding of the Bethesda streetscape standard is that it requires a concrete base and herringbone pattern using pavers with small bevels—only the smallest of gaps between the surface of the bricks—such as you would get with wire-cut brick.

Our committee recently heard from representatives from Potomac Valley Brick on the issue and I also spoke with a representative from the Commission on People with Disabilities. There seems to be agreement that pavers installed to the Bethesda streetscape standard can provide even less vibration than the crack in a concrete sidewalk and are easier to repair because minor damage can be addressed by replacing a few bricks instead of removing and re-pouring concrete. **Brick pavers can be part of a beautiful town center and the Olney Town Center Advisory Committee asks you to amend the pending legislation so they remain a permitted building material in paths of travel so long as they are installed and maintained up to specification.**

If you would like to contact me you can reach me at 301-774-5908 or 240-372-5580 during the day.

Thank you,

Jim Smith, Chair
Olney Town Center Advisory Committee
www.olneytowncenter.org

CC: Helene Rosenheim, OTCAC Vice-Chair
Nancy DeLalio, OTCAC Recording Secretary