

COMMUNITY CONCERNS

COVID FOCUSED

- **Food insecurity:** The new food Hub at Clifton Road Baptist Church is up and running – and growing. A Coordinator has been hired and infrastructure improvements to the space have begun. Partners are being identified and introduced to the Hub concept. As reported before, CPBC is on Piney Branch Road, in the Long Branch area of Silver Spring. It is the first food hub south of the Beltway. Thanks to the efforts of the Health and Human Services Department and the collaboration of the area’s non-profit network, this Hub will be serving some of the highest need communities in the County. The Hub is in the middle of a high concentration of apartment communities and is also easily accessible to the broader Silver Spring and Takoma Park. Additionally, thanks to the Montgomery Food Council, we continue helping get the word out on the many other opportunities for providing food. Some of these have recently included the Salvadoran Consulate, Jesus House DC, and Adventist Social Services. All locations also distributed Census information and renters information as well.
- **Access to Covid testing:** In collaboration with HHS and the Latino Health Initiatives, we are helping get the word out and at times helping with logistics for Covid testing sites. Some of these have included the Salvadoran Consulate (in partnership with the Mary Center), and the City of Takoma Park.(The Silver Spring Civic Building will now return to serving as a testing site at least twice a week after serving as a voting location the last two weeks before the Election.
- **Housing protection:** The efforts to disseminate information regarding opportunities for renters to mitigate their rent burden continues. In collaboration with DHCA and partners like the Renters Alliance, there’s been broad distribution of information regarding eviction moratorium and available assistance for renters. We continue getting information to the “naturally occurring affordable housing” (NOAHs) particularly in zip code 20910 where we have concentrated the message signs.
- **Homelessness:** The established shelters in downtown, Long Branch, and Lyttonsville continue serving at capacity. Evidence of homelessness is more apparent, particularly in downtown areas where there are much less people walking around because of the absence of workers, thus increasing the visibility of the homeless. We have located four port-a-johns in strategic locations in downtown Silver Spring to reduce the growing problem of public urination and defecation. We are also exploring other options, including building permanent toilets in key locations.
- **Economic survival:** With the coming of the end of Fall and the beginning of winter, we continue supporting the various street eateries in downtown Silver Spring. The tables and

seating at Veterans Plaza have been received with great enthusiasm. Peterson Company has also added tables on Ellsworth Drive, west of Fenton. Taste the World in Fenton Village – an innovative month long celebration of mostly locally owned ethnic restaurants was a great success, culminating in raffling a scooter. The entry in the raffle was predicated in eating in or ordering from at least four restaurants in Fenton Village during the month of October. We are also working with the Office of Economic Development to get the word out regarding a grant program providing up to \$5,000 for businesses investing in re-opening improvements (tents, heaters, on-line improvement, etc.)

NON COVID

- **Purple Line:** The work to build the Purple Line is scheduled to restart again under the auspices of the Maryland Department of Transportation. In various meeting with State representatives and elected officials, they have expressed confidence that the work will proceed expediently. However, businesses have expressed concerns that construction operations will not adhere to prior agreements to maintain access to business and have a single-point of contact for situations that require immediate attention.
- **Census:** Working under the leadership of the Office of Community Partnership and the volunteer efforts of the Silver Spring Census Complete Count Committee, we did one final Census Blitz before the end of the Census sign-up deadline. Silver Spring Complete Census Count Committee, which includes the members of the Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board, once again held three simultaneous events on a Saturday. Census information was distributed at a food ‘grab-and-go’ at Jesus House DC; posters were distributed throughout downtown Silver Spring in collaboration with the Renter’s Alliance; and, a Census Caravan drove through various apartment complexes and small commercial areas.
- **Murals:** Thanks to the Arts & Humanities, we located three “Get Out The Vote” murals throughout Silver Spring – two downtown and one in Long Branch. These were received extremely well. And while they are intended to be temporary, at least one will remain up for the foreseeable future.

ADVISORY GROUPS

Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board:

- The SSCAB regular full board meeting discussed the pending eviction crisis; held three different Committee meeting focusing on the Purple Line, small businesses, and school; then later in the month the Board hosted the County Executive’s Capital Improvement Program Budget Forum. This month’s full Board meeting with focus on early childhood education and childcare. Guest include BB Otero, Special Assistant to the County Executive; and, Karla Silvestre, Board of Education member.

Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee:

- At the October meeting, the SSUDAC held a conversation with Council VP Hucker regarding Progress Place to explore possibilities of enhancing coordination and improving delivery of services. This month they will have a conversation with Chief Administrative Officer Rich Madelanao focusing on the budget and COVID updates.
- The Silver Spring Urban District continues their support of businesses as they experiment with re-opening techniques. Most recently they helped set up Astro Lab Brewery for their outdoor space. They also continue coordinating with WSSC and PEPCO to minimize disruption in their work downtown, particularly now that the Purple Line is scheduled to again begin construction. The SSUD was instrumental in helping set up and assist in a food distribution event (Jesus House); COVID testing sites (Salvadoran Consulate); distributing Census information; and, working with the Police, HHS, and others they cleaned up a homeless encampment that unfortunately burned down.

Silver Spring Arts & Entertainment District Working Group:

- The group continues to meet weekly bringing together some of the key art groups in the District to share their experience during the pandemic and explore possibilities of working together in various projects. They are focusing on maximizing opportunities for re-opening, pending the County's framework with the guidelines provided by the State. Recently the group held a diversity, equity, and inclusion discussion where they shared how they are bringing DEI into their core mission operation. Additionally, the A&E District is working on safety and promotional marketing material via social media campaigns. These campaigns promote mask wearing, art education day camps, classes, and more. Recently, fresh new professional photographs were taken of how the community is adapting to the reality of Covid. Lastly, we are working with the Community Use of Public Facility on a ribbon installation for the roof of the skate pavilion to celebrate the holiday season.

County's Retail & Restaurant Re-Opening Work Group:

- In collaboration with the other work groups engaged in the re-opening efforts, the Director for the Silver Spring Region is leading the Retail & Restaurant Work Group. The group meets every other week, bringing together small businesses, the various chambers, and County officials to address the current issues regarding re-opening safely. With the pending roll back of some of the re-opening regulations, it will be critical for the community to support their local retailers and restaurateurs to help make it through these challenging times, particularly as Winter approaches.

Other Advisory Groups and Efforts:

- There are many other internal and external efforts in which the SSRSC and the SSUD are involved, providing input and establishing collaboration. Some of these include:
 - Silver Spring Transportation Management District
 - Long Branch Partners
 - Chamber of Commerce Security Calls
 - Food Council Coordinating Calls

