

COMMUNITY CONCERNS

- **Vaccination:** We have re-purposed the highly successful Census Complete Count Committees to serve as Covid Community Committees with the expressed purpose to get residents in our disenfranchised communities pre-registered for when their vaccine group is called; and get those eligible for the vaccine vaccinated. (Silver Spring has its own CCC – see more below under Advisory Groups.) To get pre-registered: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19/vaccine/>
- **Access to Covid testing:** Testing remains critical even as vaccines become more available. Therefore, we continue working with the County’s Public Information Office and the Office of Community Partnership to get the word out regarding where testing is available. Key locations in Silver Spring include the Silver Spring Civic Building and the (old) Adventist Hospital in Takoma Park. For operating days and more: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19/testing.html>
- **Food insecurity:** Working with key partners, we are seeking to provide space for warehousing, sorting, and distributing food south of the Beltway in Silver Spring and Takoma Park. The concept is that these operations will augment the exiting, highly successful food hub at the Clifton Park Baptist Church and the many on-going efforts by others to get food to those in need for food and supportive services. Food resources at: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19/get-help/food.html>
- **Housing protection:** We continue working with the Department of Housing and Community Affairs, Health and Human Services, and various non-profits on aggressive efforts to inform renters of their rights, avoid evictions, and apply for grants. As of now, a moratorium on rental evictions still exists. Much more at: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19/get-help/housing-assistance.html>

ADVISORY GROUPS**Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board:**

- The SSCAB regular full board meeting in February focused conversations with (a) Council President Hucker; and, (b) Chief Administrative Officer Rich Madaleno. In March, there will be two major agenda items: (a) a conversation with Councilmember At-Large Gabe Alborno; and, (b) a conversation with 3rd Police Precinct Commander Francke.
- The SSCAB Committees remain very active on their 4th Monday of the month meetings. In February they met simultaneously, with their separate agendas. The Transportation,

Environment, and Energy Committee discussed various pedestrian issues with the Department of Transportation; the Commercial Economic Development Committee addressed the issue of how businesses can be part of the vaccine effort; and, the Neighborhood Committee met with various local stakeholders in the Long Branch area.

- The SSCAB, functioning as part of the Silver Spring Covid Community Committee, will participate in a Forum of the broader County CCC to engage the community in encouraging vaccination pre-registration and battling vaccine hesitancy. In preparation for the meeting, they will participate with the East County CAB in a special presentation by Dr. Gyles on the subject. (See below for more on the SS CCC.)

Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee:

- At the February the Committee discussed their advice on the proposed Business Improvement District for downtown Silver Spring. The SSUDAC wrote a letter of advice to the County Executive and County Council stating their advice that given so many unanswered questions the legislation be more thoroughly discussed and further consideration be paused.
- The Silver Spring Urban District Operations was instrumental in standing up and staffing two new tent-eateries in downtown Silver Spring: Veterans Plaza and Newell Street. These eateries will remain up as long as they serve the purpose of providing a safe place for restaurant customers away from the elements. The tents will be removed when the weather improves. The hiring process for the new Silver Spring Urban District Manager should be complete by the end of March, with a projected start date for the new Manager sometime in April.

Silver Spring Covid Community Committee:

- The SS CCC is charged with ensuring the County is working with the appropriate groups – and providing support – to get disenfranchised community the clear message that for all to pre-register for the Covid vaccine; and facilitate getting those eligible for the vaccine to get vaccinated. The Regional Director co-chairs the effort with a staff from the Office of Community Partnership. The SSCAB members are all invited to be full participants of the effort. The first was held in February; and the group will be meeting bi-weekly for the foreseeable future.

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 Countywide 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.)* The Group has provided valuable advice and insight to help guide some of the County's initiatives, i.e.: re-opening indoor dining with limited capacity; Economic Development Grants; and curbside pick-up options. Upcoming agendas include: The Green Bank as a resource; Example of

how to connect the community to local restaurant – as demonstrated in Long Branch; Presentation of economic data for restaurants; and more.

Silver Spring Arts & Entertainment District Working Group:

- The Silver Spring Arts & Entertainment District working groups meets weekly to address issues impacting the district which can be addressed through collaborating with other non-profit groups and the business community. This includes sharing of grant and funding resources, collaborative marketing initiatives, advocacy efforts, and information dissemination in regard to current COVID industry regulations, restrictions, and resources.
- Silver Spring Arts & Entertainment District has embarked on the process of seeking redesignation as an Arts & Entertainment District by the State of Maryland. This designation was granted to Silver Spring in 2002, was redesignated in 2012, and the current redesignation is due in the fall. This month our Arts Consultant engaged in several meetings with the Maryland State Arts Council staff to discuss current requirements for redesignation, to review economic impact reporting from last fiscal year, and to discuss requirements for upcoming annual submittal of operating grant applications in April. The redesignation application requires strategic planning that traditionally includes community surveys, public input, and meetings with key constituent and stakeholder groups.
- The arts group subsequently outlined at our weekly meeting a series of arts initiative to partner with planning on including (a) A youth summit to provide feedback on the sector plan and the A&E district feedback for our strategic plan in return for SSL hours; (b) Pursuing a grant to engage a student creative team to document their impressions of needed improvements in to include in the sector plan/the A&E district through photos and feedback; and (c) To engage student artists in producing creative content reacting to the current and imagined future district (i.e.: documentary videos.)

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 (focusing on commuter options)
 - Long Branch Partners (focusing on emergency management)
 - Chamber of Commerce Security Calls (focusing on homelessness)
 - Food Council Coordinating Calls (focusing on coordinating and delivering meals)
 - Purple Line Coordination