

COMMUNITY CONCERNS

COVID RELATED

- **Food insecurity:** We are pursuing potential satellite sites to augment the new Clifton Park Food & Service Hub. These sites would serve additional areas in Silver Spring; and would work in collaboration with various other groups. The Hub network complements and works with the many other food distribution and social service delivery efforts in the Region, including efforts sponsored by existing faith communities and non-profits. Much of this information is readily available at the now bilingual weblink <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19/get-help/food.html>
- **Access to Covid testing:** The Silver Spring Civic Building continues doing testing three days a week. This complements the many other efforts throughout the Region where testing is also available. A list of all available sites doing testing is available at <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19/testing.html> We are moving forward planning for the deployment of vaccines and expect this task to be a major part of our work in the months to come.
- **Housing protection:** The moratorium on rental evictions due to Covid-related situations is extended through January. The County continues providing support for various forms of rent relief. We continue working with the Department of Housing and Community Affairs and other to disseminate information regarding opportunities for renters to mitigate their rent burden. This is particularly critical in the Silver Spring Region with the large concentration of rental communities. For the homeless population, we continue servicing the four port-a-toilets located throughout downtown; and have improved security at Progress Place. With winter upon us, the Health and Human Services Department is working to ensure no one sleeps outside – particularly during the colder nights. Assistance is best accessible on the link <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19/get-help/housing-assistance.html>

NON-COVID

- **Purple Line:** The work to build the Purple Line has restarted in certain sections under the auspices of the Maryland Department of Transportation and a revamped agreement with part of the original private partners. The Community Advisory Teams have also begun meeting again, most recently the Long Branch CAT and Lyttonsville CAT met. Others are schedule to meet in the near future. Increasing disruption to traffic flow is expected in the weeks to come. Major pending situations include the closing of the Spring St bridge, extensive work on Bonifant St, Wayne Ave, and University Blvd.

- **Downtown Silver Spring and Adjoining Communities Master Plan.** The Planning Department continues making presentations to community organizations, advisory groups, and others to gain input as they prepare the new Downtown Silver Spring and Adjoining Communities Master Plan. Most recently, a presentation was made to many of the art groups in the Silver Spring Arts and Entertainment District. An emerging issue is how the downtown area transitions to the non-commercial, more residential areas.
- **Presentation on Development.** We are working with the Planning Department to do a community presentation that highlights major real estate development activity recently completed, under construction, and approved. We usually do this in December, but given Covid it is delayed. (For example, the ArtSpace project at the old Sligo Police Station site is now partially opened. Artists are starting to move in to the apartments; and, the eleven townhomes – four of which will be income restricted – are under construction. Also, the Peterson Company refresh of Ellsworth Drive has begun.)
- **Oakview Neighborhood Action Team*.** We will be following up with concerns expressed by some residents in the Oakview neighborhood regarding overcrowding, affordable housing, and parking restriction enforcement. A community conversation will be scheduled soon. (*The work on two other NATs – Progress Place and Environs, and Downtown Safety and Security - is reported elsewhere in this report.)

ADVISORY GROUPS

Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board:

- The SSCAB regular full board meeting hosted its annual Legislative Meeting with the State Delegations from District 18 and 20. Every member of the Delegations attended. The Board also welcomed four new members: Lene Tsegay, Vanesa Pinto, Kenneth Lemberg, and Jeremy Dickey. In January, the Board will have a conversation with Council President Tom Hucker on Council priorities for his term as they pertain to Silver Spring; and a conversation on homelessness and related issues with at-large Councilmember Jawando.

Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee:

- At the December meeting, the SSUDAC heard a presentation on the proposed Silver Spring Urban District. The meeting was held as a joint meeting with the Silver Spring Citizens Advisory meeting. In January, the Committee will have an in-depth presentation on the operations of the Urban District.
- The Silver Spring Urban District Operations assisted with snow-cleaning and related work during the brief snow event; managed the removal of street pole and across the street banners; continued its work with the street eateries in downtown Silver Spring. Much of the Georgia Ave StreetDINE was removed as winter approaches as a response to the adjacent restaurants who asked for more curb-side pick up spaces. The eatery on Bonifant was also removed. However, in January two new eateries will be installed: One on Ellsworth Drive,

adjacent to Veterans Plaza; and the other on the Shared Street, Newell Street. Use of the eateries will be monitored to adjust time and resources. The hiring process for the new Silver Spring Urban District Manager should be complete by February, with a projected start date for the new Manager of March 1st.

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. Major attention is being paid to how venues can access some of the new Federal resources that have become available. Also beginning to be under discussion is how to transition out of the Covid pandemic and begin a return to pre-Covid level of activity later this year.

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.) The Group has provided valuable advice and insight to help guide some of the County's initiatives; i.e.: providing tents, tables, chairs, lights, and heaters to cluster of restaurants to help them survive the winter outdoors. Two eateries are being put in place downtown; and two others are being pursued (in Long Branch and Takoma Park.)

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