

# SILVER SPRING REGIONAL AREA

Monthly Report    DECEMBER 2015    *Reemberto Rodriguez, Director*

## [1] Community Issues

### **Construction in Silver Spring's downtown**

Almost every corner of Silver Spring's downtown has at least one project under construction. Residential developments are most evident: The Central (on Georgia Avenue just north of Colesville) just broke ground; Washington Properties has cleared the site at the southwest corner of Georgia and Bonifant Street; The Core (at the old Baptist Church site on Wayne and Fenton) digging for the foundation; The Bonifant affordable senior housing (next to the new library) and a repurposed office building being redone as condominium (at 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and Fenwick) are set to open in the Spring... In the non-residential front, Ellsworth Place continues its renovation, with new stores opening through the winter – most recently T.J. Maxx - and Dave and Busters is set to open in the summer. Peterson Co.'s is proposing to 'open up with outdoor eating' unto the sidewalk and parking area at the corner of Georgia and Colesville (maintaining handicap parking and valet); and three new food markets have recently opened in Fenton Village. Lastly, the redevelopment of the old 3<sup>rd</sup> Police Station (on Sligo Avenue) as an artist live-work space and townhomes is well underway, having recently gone through the rezoning process.

### **Silver Spring Civic Building and Veterans Plaza Use and Users**

The facility keeps getting used extensively by private interests and community groups. Most every Sunday – and many Saturdays – are already scheduled for community celebrations for 2016. Weeknight evening use is brisk, including an increasing number of civic gatherings. We continue working with other agencies, the Police Department, and private and non-profit interests to ensure the area remains welcoming and safe for users and visitors. Improvements continue being made to the facility, most recently the wall in the back of the building was reconstructed; and, two new information 'message board' panels were installed. Not yet half way through the Fiscal Year, nearly 30 applications have been reviewed for use of the facility through the Community Access Program.

### **Purple Line Light Rail Project**

As the Purple Line Light Rail project comes closer to reality (i.e.: beginning construction – potentially in 2016) we – jointly with DOT, MTA, and others - continue working with many of the communities along the corridor for neighborhood specific issues, including: Lyttonsville and the Brookville commercial hub; Bonifant, Long Branch, and Takoma Langley businesses; residents and others interests on Wayne Avenue and vicinity near the Dale Avenue station; Arliss Street townhomes; and others.

### **The Penguins WILL be back!**

We are working with DGS and others to ensure the Penguin mural returns to its original spot on Colesville at the WMATA overpass before the end of the winter.

## **[2] Advisory Groups & Related Activities**

### **Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board (Monday, December 14<sup>th</sup> 7pm)**

In November, the SSCAB hosted an information session on Silver Spring's major transportation projects (the Purple Line Light Rail and the Rapid Transit Bus System) focused on bringing newcomers up-to-speed. The SSCAB will four new members at the December meeting, Jay Elvove, Abdurahman Mohammed, Abraham Saffer, and Monica Thammarath. The December meeting will be the Board's annual 'potluck dinner', an informal opportunity for members of the community, the Board, and elected officials share holiday greetings.

### **Silver Spring Arts & Entertainment Advisory Committee (Tuesday, December 15th)**

The next meeting is set for December 15th. The Committee will share the winter programming plans of its members and guests. Updates will be provided regarding State and National arts initiatives as well as local opportunities for art groups.

### **Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee (Thursday, December 17th)**

In November, the SSUDAC heard from the two advertising companies that are introducing new opportunities in downtown Silver Spring via the new message board on Ellsworth Place and on the Ride-On buses. In December, they will hold an information session on Silver Spring's major transportation projects (the Purple Line Light Rail and the Rapid Transit Bus System); and, get an update on the status of the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Circle.

### **Silver Spring Transportation Management Advisory Committee (No meeting in December)**

In November the TMD held its information session on Silver Spring's major transportation projects (the Purple Line Light Rail and the Rapid Transit Bus System.) The next meeting will be in January.

### **The Regional Center also follows and/or participates in other related community efforts:**

- Youth Advisory Committee - composition being determined now.
- Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Advisory Committee - recent meeting heard from MC311.
- Takoma Langley Crossroads Development Authority – recently celebrated a new mural; and making plans for the opening of the new MTA bus station in the area.
- Long Branch Business League – working with WAU and others to activate the area through arts.
- Long Branch Partners – no meetings recently.
- Impact Silver Spring Networking Nights – routinely meeting in apartments in the area.
- Rapid Transit System (BRT) Community Advisory Groups for “29 South” (Colesville Rd and New Hampshire Ave) – held its regularly scheduled meeting recently; will not meet again till February.
- Purple Line Community Advisory Teams - to be formed in the near future.
- Georgia Avenue Improvements (from 16<sup>th</sup> St. to Forest Glen) – recently the stakeholder group met to hear the refinements to the alternatives being considered.
- Lyttonsville Master Plan process – held its major community engagement session recently.
- Silver Spring Town Center Inc. – now planning for its Spring, Summer, Fall schedule; plus continuing to offer programming during the winter.