

SILVER SPRING REGIONAL AREA

Monthly Report JULY 2016 *Reemberto Rodriguez, Director*

[1] COMMUNITY ISSUES

Transportation Infrastructure Projects

It is expected that sometime in the Fall the **Purple Line** Community Advisory Teams will begin meeting, before actual construction starts. These Teams are now being formed. The potential participants have been contacted. Also, a very well attended meeting with over 250 participants was recently held in the Civic Building focusing on Wayne Avenue issues. Panelists included the County's DOT, MTA, and the newly selected private company that will build and operate the line.

The **Bus Rapid Transit** Community Advisory Committee for the southern segment of US29 is scheduled to meet July 14th and again in September.

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Areas (**BiPPA**) project is moving forward in downtown Silver Spring with the implementation of the Spring Street improvements and the installation of bicycle racks.

Small Commercial Areas – Results of Workshops and Dialogues

The report resulting from the Small Commercial Areas Workshop Series is complete and will be made available soon. In collaboration with CASA – and funded by the Center for Dispute Resolution at the University of Maryland School of Law (C-DRUM) – we completed a 6 workshops series for small businesses and entrepreneurs in the Region's six small commercial areas* on "surviving and thriving in times of change." We began and ended by bringing together all small areas* together with service providers and others. We had three focus group meetings, each representing two of the small areas at a time. (**The six small areas include Takoma/Langley, Long Branch, Fenton Village, Montgomery Hills, Brookeville, and Four Corners.*)

Congestion of activities in downtown Silver Spring

Downtown Silver Spring has gone from the days when crowds needed to be generated to enhance economic activity to today, when oftentimes we are faced with having to control crowds to improve the urban experience. Vending, busking, and panhandling activities are increasing – particularly near major venues; i.e.: in the vicinity of Veterans Plaza, and the new Library. There also seems to be an increase in the number of homeless and street people. We continue working closely with providers, HHS, the Police, County venue managers, and our own Urban District 'Red Shirts' to strategize how to address the resulting issues caused by this increasing congestion.

July Special Civic Meetings

Given that in July and August there are no regularly scheduled Advisory Group meetings, we are using the opportunity to do two special meetings:

Update on County Buildings in Downtown Silver Spring & Vicinity (Monday, July 11th 7pm) – In collaboration with the Department of General Services.

Commission for Women Listening Session (Monday, July 18th 7pm) – In collaboration with the Council For Women and the Silver Spring Town Center, Inc.

NOTE: *Last month's report highlighted the Old Silver Spring Library, the increasing presence of live music and performing arts downtown, and the pending opening of the Bus Station in Takoma / Langley.*

[2] ADVISORY GROUP ACTIVITIES

In July, there will be NO meetings of any of the Advisory Groups.

Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board

The June SSCAB meeting was held in Takoma Park. Mayor Stewart and two Councilmembers were present. The consensus was that meeting in Takoma Park at least once a year should be the norm.

The Board is planning its annual retreat for MONDAY, AUGUST 22. Beginning in September, they will return to their regular meeting schedule: Full board on the 2nd Monday (September 12), and Committee meetings on the 4th Monday (September 26.) In September, the SSCAB will focus its meetings in gaining a better understanding of the master planning process. While still in draft form, the emerging plan is to have a panel discussion at its regularly scheduled board meeting with more detailed dialogue at the committee meetings.

The SSCAB is currently advertising for at least six vacant positions. Representatives from the neighborhoods adjoining New Hampshire Avenue (south of the Beltway) and Georgia Avenue (north of downtown) are specially encouraged to apply.

Silver Spring Arts & Entertainment Advisory Committee (Tuesday, June 14)

The Committee met in June and hosted Councilmember Tom Hucker at the headquarters of Docs-in-Progress.

The SSA&E District, along with the Wheaton and Bethesda A&E Districts also participated in the annual State-wide A&E District meeting in Baltimore.

Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee (Thursday, June 16)

In June, issues surrounding the CSX RR overpass at Georgia Avenue were explored; the final version of the signage system (T.A.C.) proposed by the State for downtown parking was reviewed; and, DOT presented the status of BiPPA in downtown.

The SSUDAC will hold its annual retreat in August (exact date not yet determined), and will reconvene its regular schedule (3rd Thursday of the month) in September.

The RSC Director represents the County in various other venues, including:

Silver Spring Transportation Management District:

The SSTMD is off for the summer.

Takoma Langley Commercial Development Area:

The TLCDA is off for the summer.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Advisory Committee:

After four years representing the RSCs on this County Committee, this responsibility is now being transitioned to the Mid-County RSC. Nonetheless, since Silver Spring issues remain a consistent agenda item for this Committee, we will remain in close contact with the work of the Committee.