

SILVER SPRING REGIONAL AREA

Monthly Report OCTOBER 2016 *Reemberto Rodriguez, Director*

[1] COMMUNITY ISSUES

Long Branch Fire

- The County is joining the many non-profit organizations that remain active in the area by accompanying them as they reach out to remaining residents of Flower Branch apartment and the broader neighborhoods.
- The Community Fund set up to help the families that lost everything with emergency resources is now closed. (Over \$650,000 was received and distributed.)
- The Long Branch Business League is sponsoring a 5K Walk mid-October to continue raising awareness of the on-going needs of the community.
- The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) report explaining in more details exactly what happened is still month away (which is customary for NTSB investigations.)

Homelessness

The many agencies, non-profits, and others that work with the homeless – and the major venues downtown – continue working together on the issue of homeless (and the perceptually related issue of panhandling.) Various internal meetings have been held to ensure maximum coordination among these interested parties; and explore possibilities to more effectively help this population.

Bus Stops

The Silver Spring Urban District is working in collaboration with the Department of Transportation on a renewed effort to maintain the bus shelters throughout. This may include placing local maps and Arts & Entertainment posters in some of the shelters as space permits. This effort intends to enhance the general cleanliness of downtown.

Purple Line / BRT / Takoma Bus Station

- The US29South community advisory team (a group of 40+ members) continues to regularly meet to provide insight and advice for the Bus Rapid Transit system being developed on Colesville. The group's work is catalogued from the DOT's web site at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/BRT/
- The Purple Line Community Action Team process is on hold until further notice. However, meetings addressing specific stations continue to be held. (See below for more on the joint meeting of the Silver Spring Urban District and Transportation Management District Advisory Committees.)
- The Takoma Langley bus station (at the intersection of University Blvd and New Hampshire Ave) is scheduled to open in the near future.

Sample status of some downtown development

- Progress Place will open early next year, with services from Shepherds Table, InterFaith (Community Visions), and 21 Private Living Units.
- Studio Plaza construction site has been established, with the closing of the County's parking lot (though approximately ½ the spaces remain under private parking management.)
- Dave & Busters is scheduled to open in November, bringing additional nightlife to downtown Silver Spring.

Festivals and More

While festival season is coming to an end, the Veterans Plaza Skating Ice Rink is scheduled to be operating by late October. It will stay open as late into the season as possible, possibly through March.

NOTE: *Zombie Walk (Saturday, October 29th) takes a different twist this year, starting at the Art Walk in the south part of Silver Spring (behind Denizens Brewery.)*

[2] ADVISORY GROUPS

Citizens Advisory Board

The SSCAB regularly scheduled meeting is Monday, October 13th. On the agenda is the Board of Elections to dialogue with the community regarding the process for the next election; and, at the same time, the Board will be holding a voters registration drive.

The Board began its new year of meetings with a dialogue on the Master Planning process. At its full board meeting Monday, September 12th, they convene a panel to discuss the process in general and identify Silver Spring specific issues. Then, at its regularly scheduled Committee meeting night (Monday, September 26th) they reconvened to dialogue about these identified issues on more detail.

The process for selection of recommended applicants to serve on the Board continues. In November, the Nominating Committee will submit names to the County Executive, who in turn will submit his recommendations to the County Council. It may not be until after the holidays before the new board members are actually seated on the Board.

Urban District Advisory Committee

The SSUD Advisory Committee regularly scheduled meeting is Thursday, October 20th. On the agenda is a dialogue with the major utilities (WSSC, PEPCO, and Washington Gas) regarding their operational procedures for doing work in downtown Silver Spring; and, a presentation of the proposed hotel development at the gas station at the corner of Georgia and Colesville.

The SSUD and the SSTMD hosted a joint meeting of the two Advisory Groups Thursday, September 15th, 3:30 p.m. in the Civic Building. The agenda was to dialogue with the Maryland Transportation Authority (MTA) and the County's Department of Transportation regarding how the Purple Line intersects with the two downtown stations (Transit Center and Library.)

Arts & Entertainment Advisory Committee

The SSA&E Advisory Committee is tentatively scheduled to meet Tuesday, October 11th. On the agenda is the annual presentation by Susan Hoffmann of the major, marquee productions in Silver Spring (the Jazz Festival and Thanksgiving Parade); and, the community uses of The Fillmore.

Transportation Management District Advisory Committee

The SSTMD Advisory Committee will hold its next meeting Thursday, October 13. On the agenda is their annual review of transportation mitigation plans; and, a presentation of the proposed hotel development at the gas station at the corner of Georgia and Colesville.

(See above for note regarding the joint meeting with the SSUDAC.)