

# SILVER SPRING REGIONAL AREA

Monthly Report      March 2017      *Reemberto Rodriguez, Director*

## [1] COMMUNITY ISSUES

### Long Branch

We are active participants in the Long Branch Partners Network and other initiatives in the area where the community is intensely active in the many issues being impacted by changes at the federal level. Key among these is immigration. IMPACT Silver Spring, with the collaboration of CASA. Takoma Park Mobilization and others held a 'networking session' focusing on immigration recently. IMPACT will be holding a broader community input event March 30<sup>th</sup>. (The County Council will hold its own town hall meeting in the Long Branch Community center March 15<sup>th</sup>.)

### Montgomery Hills / Forest Glen Bridge

Community members have been complaining about the presence of evident homelessness, derelict activity, and malfunctioning call boxes on the pedestrian bridge across I-495 (connecting Montgomery Hills and the Forest Glen Metro Station.) The Department of Transportation is fixing these; and HHS is working through its street outreach program to assist with the homeless activity on the bridge. (Park and Planning has this area in their work program for an updated master plan in 2018.)

### Lot 3 Redevelopment (Studio Plaza)

We brought together the various interest involved in this redevelopment earlier this month. This included, among others, the County's Department of Permitting Services, the Department of Transportation, the developers, area merchants and neighbors. New parking signs are now installed – and more are on the way; a new e-mail listserv with over 50 names is now in order; and the developer has committed to a weekly status report. Still, we remain vigilant to ensure business continuity is not disrupted and nearby residents are informed of pending activity (i.e. blasting.)

### BRT & PL

The Bus Rapid Transit and Purple Line projects remain at the forefront of many formal and informal community meetings and dialogues in the Area. The Department of Transportation has scheduled three BRT Open Houses to gather input and answer questions as it moves forward to implement bus rapid transit on US29 (Colesville Road.)

The Purple Line remains in litigation. However, the State is proceeding with land acquisition and plans to begin construction is moving expediently forward in case the legal situation is settled favorably. If that occurs, construction is expected to begin very soon shortly thereafter.

NOTE: Past reports highlighting additional issues are available at:  
<http://montgomerycountymd.gov/silverspring/boardscommittees/cab/index.html>

## **[2] ADVISORY GROUPS**

### **Citizens Advisory Board**

The February meeting hosted Councilmember Reimer; and a presentation by the operators of the medical marijuana dispensary being built in the Fenton Village area of downtown. Additionally there were two Committee meetings - both of which were very well attended and informative. The Neighborhoods and Transportation Committee hosted the Friends of Sligo Creek for a dialogue on water quality - and how residents can be more engaged in monitoring. The Commercial Economic Development Committee saw a presentation by the Elizabeth Square development, the joint venture of the Housing Opportunity Commission (HOC) and the Lee Development Group (LDG) to rebuild Elizabeth House and construct a new, market rate housing tower to include a community swimming center. The development was well received by those in attendance. (The Board also finalized and sent its letter of advice to the County Executive for the FY18 Operating Budget.)

This month (Monday, March 13<sup>th</sup>) the SSCAB will engage three key staff responsible for hyper-local issues: Eric Rasch, Facility Manager for the Silver Spring Civic Building and Veterans Plaza; Richard Bingham, Operations Manager for the Silver Spring Urban District; and, Lt. McNeal, with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Police Precinct.

### **Urban District Advisory Committee**

The February meeting included a presentation by the Parks Department on the "Future of Parks"; and, a dialogue with the Montgomery County Office of Management and Budget regarding the budget process. Among the many parks issues discussed was the perceived under-utilization of Jessup Park and how this is a major county asset that could be better positioned to add more value to the community. (The Committee finalized and sent its letter of advice to the County Executive for the FY18 Operating Budget.)

This month (Thursday, March 16<sup>th</sup>) the SSUDAC will hear two development proposals updates: Elizabeth Square and a long-stay hotel at the remaining underdeveloped corner of Georgia Avenue and Colesville Road.

### **Arts & Entertainment Advisory Committee**

The Committee finalized and sent its letter of advice to the County Executive for the FY18 Operating Budget. At their next meeting, the Committee will hear from its members regarding each venue's plan for the Spring/Summer/Fall. (The date for the meeting has not yet been set.)

### **Transportation Management District**

At their January meeting (there was no meeting in February) the Committee finalized their letter of advice to the County Executive for the FY18 Operating Budget. At their next meeting (Thursday, March 9<sup>th</sup>) the Committee will receive a presentation regarding the County's Green Certification Program and an do its annual update on the Transportation Management Program reporting; and Employer Outreach Program.