

SILVER SPRING REGIONAL AREA

Monthly Report June 2017 *Reemberto Rodriguez, Director*

[1] COMMUNITY ISSUES

Pedestrian Safety: We met recently with the community near the intersection of US29 and Sligo Parkway, the State Highway Administration, and representatives from the County's Department of Transportation. The intersection will be improved with simple restriping, brighter lights, and enhanced enforcement in the near future. This will improve pedestrian safety of this busy intersection, which is used extensively by school-age children.

College Conversations: The plans to build a science building in the Takoma Park / Silver Spring campus of Montgomery College on the Takoma Avenue side is meeting with mixed results. The College has held three community conversations recently. All three were very well attended. The College is committed to continuing seeking input throughout the remaining planning process, design, and construction. However, some in the community continue expressing the opinion that the new building is best located on the parking lot adjacent to the Cultural Arts Center, off Georgia Avenue.

USPO relocation: The United States Post Office has been informed by the Maryland Transportation Authority (MTA) that they must vacate their existing location at the 16th St. shopping center by early Fall. The USPO has initiated the aggressive search for a location in downtown Silver Spring; and is holding a public notice hearing on the matter. Given the current level of development in downtown, finding a space is challenging. The District 20 State Delegation and the federal congressional representative and senators were notified about the situation. Having the only post office downtown leave would be a functional – and perceptual – loss to downtown Silver Spring.

Homelessness Issues: We now have an additional Street Outreach staff provided by Bethesda Cares to provide services for the homeless. Also, the County just unveiled its new "Inside (not Outside)" initiative to provide housing for the chronically homeless. However, the issue of large number of homeless congregating in certain spots (Georgia Avenue, outside Progress Place; and at Chick-Fil-A by Veterans Plaza), plus the increasing number of panhandlers is proving to be a challenging issue. Concerns about harassment and criminality have been reported by some area residents and businesses. We are working with the Police, HHS, Progress Place non-profits, the faith community and others to manage the situation and develop creative solutions.

Studio Plaza Redevelopment and Parking in Fenton Village: We continue monitoring the Lot 3 Redevelopment (Studio Plaza in Fenton Village) and working with the developers, County agencies, and the adjacent business community. In the next few weeks the alley will be rebuilt, causing disruption to deliveries. Strong coordination will be required to minimize impacts. Nearby Garage 4 is being repainted, causing a limited number of parking spaces to be temporarily unavailable. Working with DOT, this activity is being scheduled to minimize impact. We have also reviewed – and made some time duration changes – to some metered spaces; and relocated others spaces reserved for County vehicles, freeing up more parking for the businesses. However, community education and public messaging regarding where to park remains a continuing need.

Long Branch Activities: Activities in Long Branch continue at a brisk pace, highlighting the Area's efforts to build community. Some of these include: The Flower Avenue Apartments new tenant association; the Long Branch Partners (a group of area non-profits) are developing a community emergency plan; the Long Branch Business League has initiated a speakers program; and, the Silver Spring Senior Village is holding 'story telling lunches' so area residents can get to know the restaurateurs in the area.

[2] ADVISORY GROUPS

Citizens Advisory Board

In May the SSCAB meeting included a conversation with Councilmember Berliner; and the State District 20 Delegation. The June meeting will be busy. The agenda includes a presentation by the United States Post Office regarding their pending move from their current location on 16th St.; a presentation by Leadership Montgomery; and, the annual election of officers. The Committee meetings (the fourth Monday of the month – June 26th) will be replaced this month by the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Public Forum to be sponsored by the SSCAB.

NOTE: The SSCAB and Prezco (the area association of civic association presidents) are working together to hold occasional joint meetings in the future.

Urban District Advisory Committee

Last month (Thursday, May 18th) the SSUDAC featured a presentation regarding The Blairs redevelopment; and a discussion regarding the new State law that enables the creation of Business Improvement Districts. Lily Qi from the County Executive Office and Melanie Wagner, Liaison to the State legislators were in attendance. This month (June 16th) PEPCO will be presenting their plans to do major work along Fenton Street; and the Committee will continue their discussion regarding holiday banners.

Arts & Entertainment Advisory Committee

The Committee will meet Tuesday, May 16th. On the Agenda was the updates from all Committee members on their Spring/Summer schedule for their respective venues; and a tour of the host agency, Levine Music.

Early June the Regional Director participated in the State's annual gathering of all Arts & Entertainment Districts (held in Berlin, MD), where Wheaton was honored as the A&E District of the year.

Transportation Management District

(The RSC Director is an ex-officio member of the SSTMD) At the last meeting (Thursday, May 11th) Jose Thommana, Parking Lot District Director, provided an update on various issues regarding parking in downtown Silver Spring, highlighting the challenges with maintaining evenings and weekends free. The Committee firmly expressed their advice that the current arrangement be kept as long as possible. At the June 8 meeting, Park and Planning will present the Bicycle Master Plan.

Takoma Langley Commercial Development Authority

(The RSC Director represents Montgomery County on the TLCDA.) In May the TLCDA held its Annual Meeting. Highlights included updates on the banner program, reminders regarding upcoming activities such as the night market, and plans to do a Diwali Festival again this year.

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

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM PUBLIC FORUM Monday, June 26th 7pm Civic Building