

# SILVER SPRING REGIONAL AREA

Monthly Report    OCTOBER 2017    *Reemberto Rodriguez, Director*

## [1] COMMUNITY ISSUES

### Purple Line

- We continue reinforcing the public messaging regarding construction via our eNewsletter and participating with the Community Advisory Teams, which are expected to convene next month.
- The merchants community in Bonifant Street met with the P3 contractors - facilitated by Fenton Village, Inc. – to better understand the details for construction along the street – and discuss how to best mitigate the inevitable impacts during construction.
- The Wayne Avenue neighborhoods ‘walked’ Wayne Avenue with the P3, MTA, the County, State officials, and others to discuss how Wayne avenue can best become a ‘slow go’ zone. (The speed zone was lowered to 25 mph recently. But given the physical design of the road, this speed limit is routinely disregarded.)
- The Bi-County agreement that focuses on ‘beyond the tracks’ is being finalized to be signed soon. Under the leadership of the University of Maryland’s Smart Growth Center, and with the participation of both counties, MTA, the P3, Enterprise Corporation, and many others, this effort is addressing the Purple Line related issues of economic development, affordable housing, and placemaking along the Corridor.

### Homelessness Issues:

- The issue of homelessness is not only in downtown, but also in Long Branch, where recently there has been a marked increase in homeless leaving their life belongings in grocery carts at the intersection of Piney Branch and Flower. The Long Branch Business League has convened a meeting on this for early October... In downtown, we continue exploring options to provide Progress Place clients a place to gather so they will not have to congregate on Georgia Avenue by the Fire Station; and to enhance security in the area.

### United States Post Office in Silver Spring

- The USPO currently located at the Spring Shopping Center on 16<sup>th</sup> Street will close due to the Purple Line construction, which will raze that shopping center. It is not now known how long they will be at the current location. We understand that the USPO has every intention in remaining downtown and that they are diligently working on identifying a specific site.

### Bus Rapid Transit System

- The SSCAB has designated a new representative for the BRT’s Community Advisory Committees. The CACs met in September and will do so again in November.

### Tracking Major County-Related Development

There are a series of development that have a significant County role which the RSC is involved. Some key ones include:

- Elizabeth Square Development (private development to include major recreational component)
- Old Library Site Repurposing (held its final community presentation October 4th)
- Old Police Station (development set to start on this arts live/work space early next year)
- New Library 1<sup>st</sup> Floor (continue looking for potential tenant that can cover the cost of buildout and have mission aligned with the library and is art-centric)
- Metropolitan Branch Trail (from the Transit Station through the College; business community in south Silver Spring has expressed concern regarding alignment)
- Studio Plaza Garage (part of a new 399 unit apartment complex; continue working closely with area merchants to mitigate impact)
- Exploring Possibility for Major New Venue (at Garages near Metro)
- Old Blair Auditorium (on Wayne Avenue, at the site of the old Blair H.S. – the International School.)

## **[2] ADVISORY GROUPS**

### **Citizens Advisory Board**

In September the Board met and heard from the neighborhood of Lyttonsville. (As of last month, the SCCAB will hear from a different neighborhood as part of the routine agenda.) Then the Board hosted County Executive Ike Leggett to help frame the priorities for the coming year. Subsequently, all Committees of the Board met to chart their specific course for the year ahead.

In October the Board will host a panel on 'street disruptions in Silver Spring'. Participants invited include PEPCO, WSSC, Washington Gas, The County's DEP, DPS, and DOT, and Purple Line Partners. The intent is to strategize how to best 'live under construction'.

### **Urban District Advisory Committee**

In September the Committee met and heard about the Zoning Text Amendment requesting increased height for the Washington Properties project at the site of the old Progress Place. The Committee voted to advise support for this project and will be writing a letter indicating such.

In October the Committee will meet at the Easter Seal Facility on Spring Street. They will take a tour of this facility plus hear about a zoning text amendment regarding the proposed micro-cell towers.

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

In September the SSA&EC began meeting during the to facilitate broader participation of its members and the broader arts community. It also began meeting every other month on the third Wednesday of the month (i.e.: September, November, January, March, and May.) They heard from the Purple Line Partners regarding the art component at each station.

For November, the agenda is to be developed.

### **Transportation Management District**

In September the SSTMD met to hear from DOT's Bicycle team regarding the new bike lanes in downtown and what is planned to make downtown more bikeable.

For November, the agenda is to be developed.

### **Other Institutional Engagement**

The RSC Director represents the County in a series of other initiatives, institutions, and government sector, some of the most active includes:

- Takoma Langley Commercial Development Authority (celebrating its Diwali Festival October 15.)
- Long Branch Business Partners (scheduled to get together again in December.)
- Long Branch Business League (working on homelessness in Long Branch)
- Silver Spring Town Center, Inc. (developing fall/winter programming for inside the Civic Building)
- City of Takoma Park (staying connected with plans for the development of science building and related community engagement efforts)

NOTE: Past reports highlighting additional issues are available at:

<http://montgomerycountymd.gov/silverspring/boardscommittees/cab/index.html>