

SILVER SPRING REGIONAL AREA

Monthly Report NOVEMBER 2017 *Reemberto Rodriguez, Director*

[1] COMMUNITY ISSUES

{Please refer to last month's report for some of the on-going issues}

Dockless Bikes

The Department of Transportation's pilot project introducing large number of dockless bikes in downtown Silver Spring and surrounding neighborhoods is being generally embraced as a very positive effort to provide easily accessible alternative transportation in the Regional Area. We are aggressively communicating to users the need to park the bikes in a way that they do not impede pedestrian flow or create hazards for vehicles. This is clearly a learning curve that will take sometime.

Purple Line

The Community Advisory Teams (CATs) are beginning to meet – three of four CATs in the Regional Area have already met. The last one will meet mid November. These workgroups are focusing on the hyper-local details of the construction of the Purple Line – and the inevitable disruption that this construction will cause. Issues have included helping design detours for Arliss Street closing; working with merchants and small businesses on Bonifant Street to ensure deliveries are not negatively impacted (and other business continuity issues); and, finalizing how the Talbot bridge is incorporated in the art component of the Lyttonsville Station.

The Bi-County agreement that focuses on 'beyond the tracks' is being finalized and will be signed later in November. 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.

Bus Rapid Transit System

The Community Advisory Committees (CACs) continue meeting. Recently, all three of these working groups for the US29 BRT Corridor met. Additionally, there will soon be three Open Houses that invite all in the community to learn more about this major project that will provide highly improved public transportation along Colesville Road, from Howard County to the Silver Spring Metro Station.

DACA / TPS

With the Federal Government's expressed intent to make changes to the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and possibly terminate the Temporary Protective Status (TPS) program for Central Americans, many in the community are extremely worried for their future in Montgomery County. While this is clearly a Federal issue, we continue engaging members of the community being impacted – their family and friends and service providers – to ensure that the County government remains committed to them; and we want to stay accessible to all members of the community. It is most important that all members of the community feel confident that they can call the County not only in case of emergency, but also to report questionable activities to the police non emergency number.

[2] ADVISORY GROUPS

Citizens Advisory Board

In October the Board met and heard from the neighborhood of Sligo Park Hills Civic Association. (As of last month, the SCCAB will hear from a different neighborhood as part of the routine agenda.) Then the Board hosted a robust conversation with representatives from PEPCO and other agencies regarding the pending work on Fenton Street. The Board also agreed to write a letter of advice regarding the budget now, before the process gets much further underway.

In November the Board will hear from the Purple Line Corridor Coalition and the Purple Line Partners regarding the overall alignment and demographics of the Purple Line. With the Community Advisory Teams (CATs) underway, this unique presentation offers the opportunity to provide a more general framework to the many specific hyper-local issues being discussed.

In December, the SSCAB Interview Committee will interview candidates for the Board vacancies.

Urban District Advisory Committee

In October the Committee met at Easter Seal and heard about the proposed mini-cell towers intended to increase service capacity; and, the medical marijuana dispensary under construction near the Metro station. The Committee also decided to draft a letter of advice regarding the budget before the process gets much further underway.

In November the Committee will hear about an innovative marketing approach in Fenton Village intended to get the word out that the merchants and small businesses in the area are very much 'open for business' during the PEPCO, Studio Plaza, and Purple Line construction. They will also hear about the new dockless bicycles pilot program in downtown Silver Spring. (NOTE: The Urban District will be installing new holiday banners on poles on Georgia Avenue in mid-November.)

Arts & Entertainment Advisory Committee

In December, the SSA&EC will meet to review the annual report from the Maryland Arts Council; and do a 'round table' conversation regarding what each member – and other arts organizations – are doing in downtown Silver Spring, particularly for the winter months.

Transportation Management District

In November, the Committee will hear from Gary Erenrich, MCDOT regarding the dockless bicycle pilot project being undertaken in downtown Silver Spring.

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 (working on expanding membership and more robustly engaging the board.)
- Long Branch Business Partners (scheduled to meet later in November, and reaching out to other groups dealing with safety in the area.)
- Long Branch Business League (continue working on homelessness in Long Branch)
- Silver Spring Town Center, Inc. (celebrating the Veterans Concert and many other events in the Civic Building)
- City of Takoma Park (staying connected with plans for the development of science building and related community engagement efforts; and looking forward to working with newly elected Council and re-elected Mayor.)

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