

SILVER SPRING REGIONAL AREA

Monthly Report FEBRUARY 2018 *Reemberto Rodriguez, Director*

[1] COMMUNITY ISSUES

Purple Line and BRT Projects

The Purple Line Community four Advisory Teams (CATs) and the two Bus Rapid Transit System Community Advisory Committees (CACs) in the Silver Spring Regional Area are beginning to meet again. These civic engagement efforts are bringing together over 100 area resident and businesses to provide advice during the Purple Line construction and the BRT final planning phase. These meetings not only focus on interaction with the Committee and Team members, but allow for public comments as well. All meeting announcements and proceedings are documented on their respective web sites www.PurpleLineMD.com and www.MontgomeryCountyMD.gov/BRT (For Purple Line construction updates everyone is encouraged to subscribe to notices from the link at www.PurpleLineMD.com/Construction)

Dockless Bikes

The Department of Transportation, in collaboration with Council President Hans Reimer and the Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board Transportation, Energy, and Environment Committee, held a town hall meeting on the subject of dockless bikes in Silver Spring. All four vendors that have bikes out in the area were at the meeting. Over 150 people were in attendance. This issue has sparked much discussion in the various civic organizations as the number of bikes proliferate. The County is taking measures to ensure the pilot program progress more smoothly, with particular attention to limiting the number of bicycles per block and ensuring bicycles are appropriately stationed with minimal disruption to pedestrian flow. It is likely the pilot will be extended for an additional six month to see how this new transportation option functions in the Spring and Summer times.

FY19 Operating Budget Forum

Over 250 people were in attendance. More than 25 questions were asked and responded to in detail by the County Executive. Key among these included reference to the MC TP/SS Science Building; support for DACA and TPS designees and immigrant services; support for libraries and youth programming; comments about school disparity; and, environmental concern about recycling and the Dickerson Incinerator.

Homeless Dialogue

The Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board had originally scheduled to have a dialogue on homelessness at their January Board meeting. However, that meeting was cancelled due to weather. The dialogue was rescheduled and took place Monday, January 29th. with a panel of providers facilitated by Councilmember George Leventhal. Nearly 100 area residents, including homeless individuals participated in the dialogue. Key issues and suggestions that surfaced include (a) request to revisit keeping Progress Place open as a shelter year round; (b) looking into providing shuttle to Gude Dr shelter; (c) enhancing security in the vicinity of Progress Place; and, (d) intensifying efforts to connect local volunteers to local homeless services providers. We continue meeting regularly on the homeless issue as part of the Silver Spring Safety and Security bi-weekly conference calls, where we discuss and strategize immediate actions and collaborative efforts.

[2] ADVISORY GROUPS

Citizens Advisory Board

The January meeting was cancelled due to weather. (*The homeless dialogue scheduled for this Board meeting took place later. See above.*)

In February, the SSCAB will focus on issues in the immigrant community. This builds on the Neighborhoods Committee highly successful January meeting. The Board will also have an extended report from the 3rd Police District; and, continue hearing from different neighborhoods in the Area – this month it is Takoma Park.

The three SSCAB Committees will be having a joint meeting with the Department of Permitting Services to follow up on the letter of advice the Board recently sent to the County Executive regarding the construction disruptions in the area.

In December, the SSCAB Interview Committee interviewed candidates for the Board's four vacancies. It is expected that names will be submitted for the consideration of the County Executive later in February and final names be presented to County Council shortly thereafter.

Urban District Advisory Committee

In January, the Committee held a dialogue with the South Silver Spring Neighborhood Association about their concerns regarding safety in the hotels in the area; discussed their presentation at the upcoming budget forum; and they will hear a presentation about the real estate developments in downtown that have recently being built, are under construction, or approved to be built.

In February the meeting will focus on the new streetscape standards being developed for downtown Silver Spring by the Planning Department.

Arts & Entertainment Advisory Committee

In December, the SSA&EC met to review the annual report from the Maryland Arts Council; and did a 'round table' conversation regarding what each member – and other arts organizations – are doing in downtown Silver Spring, particularly for the winter months. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for March.

Transportation Management District

In December, the Committee heard from Darcy Buckley, with an update on the BRT on US29, including the proposed interface with the Transit Station. The agenda for February will focus on autonomous vehicles.

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 – The organization is going through an Executive Director transition. The new Director will be staff rather than consultant.
- Long Branch Business Partners – No date set for next meeting. Issue of TPS will be paramount.
- Long Branch Business League – Meeting monthly re Purple Line, particularly parking and access issues.
- Silver Spring Town Center, Inc. – Have begun their aggressive Winter Programming schedule.
- City of Takoma Park – New Police Chief Antonio "Tony" DeVaul is being warmly welcome. (He was the Police Chief for M-NCPP for 23 years.)