

SILVER SPRING REGIONAL AREA

Monthly Report JANUARY 2019 *Reemberto Rodriguez, Director*

Please review recent reports from links at <https://montgomerycountymd.gov/silverspring/boardscommittees/cab/index.html>

BUDGET FORUM IN SILVER SPRING SCHEDULED FOR WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16th 7pm CIVIC BUILDING

[1] COMMUNITY ISSUES

PEPCO work on Fenton Street

PEPCO has a major project that is requiring tearing up Fenton Street through downtown Silver Spring, Montgomery College, and Takoma Park. We are working closely with PEPCO to ensure the community is alerted to pending work and steps are taken to mitigate disruptions. However, recently there's been three incidents of concern. (1) While work is to be restricted to daytime non-rush hours, PEPCO had to do some emergency work at the height of rush hour. (2) While PEPCO is committed to working with immediate businesses to engage them on the details of the work, access to the Citgo Station on Fenton and Bonifant was blocked without the owner knowing about it. (3) While PEPCO had originally committed that the work was to be from north (Cameron St.) to south, they have now begun work south to north, thus causing major back up as all of Fenton St. downtown is being worked on at the same time. As we move forward, we will continue impressing upon PEPCO the severe impact that these and similar incidents have on the business community and cultural life of downtown Silver Spring. It is unclear what recourse the County has to ensure PEPCO adheres to the agreement made regarding limiting disruptions.

Purple Line Construction Updates

- The Lyttonsville Way Bridge is now partially open, after weeks of delay. The alternative route through the neighborhood is now closed.
- Talbott Bridge is also open – for pedestrians. (It was close temporarily in order to fix a structural problem.)
- The construction of the Plymouth Tunnel continues, with most of the noise generating activity completed.
- Signage to affirm that Long Branch businesses are 'open for business' are now installed, with more on the way.
- Similarly, signage to affirm that businesses on Bonifant St. will be 'open for business' during construction will be going up before the construction starts there later this year.
- Bus and pedestrian re-routing will be necessary during the construction of the Silver Spring Transit Station Purple Line Station. A plan is being developed to ensure pedestrian know how to most effectively access the Metro Station during construction.

We are working diligently with the County's Department of Transportation, the Maryland Transportation Authority, and the Purple Line Transit Partners to ensure the community is kept informed of all the change... However, even more intensive public information efforts may be warranted.

Fixing Sidewalks in the Urban District

The Silver Spring Urban District has developed a tool identifying over 200 spots where sidewalks need repair. These spots are now prioritized and mapped, with accompanying photographs. Many of these repairs will be able to be completed this Fiscal Year given the special allocation of \$300,000 for this and related urban district improvements (i.e.: completion of seasonal banners on Colesville to match those on Georgia.)

Studio Plaza (and other construction) Update

The garage is expected to open in the near future after months of delay. This delay, coupled with the elimination of street parking due to the Housing Opportunity Commission development on Thayer and Fenton further limiting the number of parking spaces; and the increasing rat problem in the area has exasperated the concerns of many merchants who continue to see declining sales. While some merchants have applied and qualified for the grant program to mitigate some of these losses, and the County has increased signage to nearby parking, opening the garage as soon as possible and cleaning the site of debris and construction clutter will go a long way towards getting things back to normal... However, the challenge remains that once Studio Plaza is completed, there are two nearby projects still under construction, along with the soon-to-begin Purple Line construction – and the on-going PEPCO work.

Oakview Neighborhood Action Team

Work continues on many of the tasks identified as part of the Oakview NAT process. Recently lights were installed on certain streets as requested; and some abandoned cars have been removed. However, work remains in other tasks identified, including more intense clean up along the creek, streets, and around bus stops. We remain in close contact with the community and the pertinent County departments to ensure all items identified through the NAT process get conclusively resolved.

[2] ADVISORY GROUPS

Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board

Next meeting: Monday, January 14th, 7 p.m. (Civic Building.) On the Agenda: A conversation with Park Police Chief McSwain; and a Board discussion on how to prepare for the Budget Forum scheduled for two days later.

Next Committees meetings: Monday, January 28th, 7 p.m. On the Agendas: Neighborhood Committee will meet in Takoma Park for a conversation with area residents; and the Transportation Committee will meet in the Civic Building to follow up with their work on pedestrian safety.

Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee

Next meeting: Thursday, January 17, 3:30 p.m. (Silver Spring Urban District Operations, 3rd floor Fire Station #1.) On the Agenda: A presentation on the proposed 5G network for downtown Silver Spring; and a Committee conversation regarding Urban District event productions.

Silver Spring Transportation Management District

Next Meeting: Thursday, January 10th, 8:00 a.m. (Discovery Communications.) On the Agenda: Bicycle Master Plan.

Other key advisory groups and initiatives relevant to Silver Spring that the RSC Director regularly monitors/attends

- Purple Line Community Advisory Teams – Next series of meeting will likely be in late winter/early spring.
- Bus Rapid Transit Community Advisory Committees – Next meeting being scheduled soon.
- Silver Spring Arts & Entertainment Advisory Committee – No meeting set at this time.
- Silver Spring Town Center, Inc. – Bi-monthly meetings set
- Safe Silver Spring – Quarterly meeting set for January.
- Greater Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce – Various meeting during the month.
- PREZCO (Presidents of Silver Spring civic associations) – Quarterly meetings.

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