

# SILVER SPRING REGIONAL AREA

Monthly Report    MAY 2019    *Reemberto Rodriguez, Director*

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

## **Beltway Widening Proposals**

The Silver Spring community came out in masse for a Town Hall meeting convened by Councilmember Tom Hucker on the highly sensitive issue of the State's proposed widening of the Beltway and I-270. This issue has resonated deeply in the community. It has raised numerable concerns regarding environmental impact, impact on parkland, possible private property takings, and lack of equitable focus on mass transit. We expect this issue to continue being part of the many community and neighborhood conversations for quite some time. There seems to be clear consensus that the State's proposals are not in the best interest of the Silver Spring community.

## **Montgomery Hills**

The community on both sides of the Betway in Montgomery Hills seems to be coalescing in support of a certain option for the improvement to Georgia Avenue that would improve vehicular flow, encourage and facilitate pedestrian movement and bicycles, and minimize impact to existing viable businesses. Concurrently, Park and Planning process for the Montgomery Hills Master plan has brought the community together for collective action in a way not seen in the past. These long term strategic issues are being discussed intensely while we continue addressing topical issues such as the homeless encampment on the State Highway Administration land at 16<sup>th</sup> Street and Georgia Avenue.

## **Future of Adventist Hospital Physical Plant in Takoma Park**

Adventist Hospital in White Oaks will open later this summer. The future of the large physical plant in Takoma Park (where the hospital is located currently) remains uncertain. While there will be some continuing presence of the Hospital, most of the buildings and land will be vacant. Many discussion are being held and possibilities being examined to determine how to most effectively use this property to build community.

## **Opportunity Zones**

Most of downtown Silver Spring and Long Branch are part of the newly federally created "Opportunity Zones". Opportunity Zones are census tracts generally composed of economically distressed communities that qualify for the Opportunity Zone program, according to criteria outlined in 2017's Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. The Opportunity Zone program was created to stimulate private investment in Opportunity Zone communities in exchange for capital gain tax incentives. Exactly what this new development tool can accomplish and how it can be most equitably used remains to be worked out. More will follow as it develops.

## **Small Business and Entrepreneurship Support**

The Silver Spring Urban District is collaborating with partners in the community to make two special events happen that affirm the value of our entrepreneur and small business sectors. On Saturday, May 18<sup>th</sup> form 10 – 4 p.m. we will b unveiling the new Beacon Market, a craft market on East / West Highway as we work with that part of downtown to do innovative placemaking. The

next day, on Sunday, May 19<sup>th</sup>, noon – 5 p.m. the DMV's largest 'restaurant crawl', Taste the World in Fenon Village will take place this will be the 9<sup>th</sup> year of this community driven, unique 'taste' event. There are over 30 restaurants participating and there will be live entertainment, raffles, children games on Bonifant Street, and much more. And, on Wednesday, May 22<sup>nd</sup> we will be having our 4Business Listening Session with County Executive Elrich and County Councilmember Katz (in the Civic Building, 7 p.m.)

## **Purple Line Update**

The Purple Line construction activities are picking up at a brisk pace. Every station location is seeing construction activity, some more than others. To see latest updates, visit: <https://www.purplelinemd.com/construction/construction-updates> Among some of the highlights for the Regional Area: The Talbot Bridge is now taken down; the 16<sup>th</sup> Street shopping centers are now construction staging zones; the Silver Spring Metro Station 'green' will also soon become a construction staging zone; work continues at the SS International School, the Plymouth Street Tunnel; and Arliss Street will remain close for the duration of the construction. Definitive dates for the start of construction on the streets to lay down the track is not yet firm.

## **Living Under Construction**

There will be a community meeting with PEPCO on Tuesday, May 14<sup>th</sup> (9:30 a.m. in the Silver Spring Library) focusing on the work on Fenton and its impact on area businesses. PEPCO will not resurface the street until most of the project is completed, at least a year away. This disruption, coupled with the various residential developments under construction or set to begin construction soon in the area makes for a near constant state of 'living under construction'. We continue staying in touch with the community – and pertinent agencies - through various means to mitigate some of the impacts of these disruptions.

## **[2] PRIMARY ADVISORY GROUPS**

### **Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board**

Next meeting: Monday, May 13<sup>th</sup>, 7 p.m. – (Silver Spring Civic Building.) On the Agenda: A conversation various agencies regarding accessibility issues for all pedestrians; and, letter of advice regarding the Capital Improvement Projects Forum held last month.

### **Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee**

Next meeting: Thursday, May 16<sup>th</sup>, 3:30 p.m. (Silver Spring Urban District Operations, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor Fire Station #1.) On the Agenda: Update on the Purple Line; and a Conversation with Health and Human Services regarding the inspections of restaurants.

### **Silver Spring Transportation Management District**

Next Meeting: Thursday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 8:00 a.m. (Silver Spring Civic Building.) On the Agenda: Bicycle Master Plan