

SILVER SPRING REGIONAL AREA

Monthly Report JUNE 2018 *Reemberto Rodriguez, Director*

[1] COMMUNITY ISSUES

Please see the next section - Advisory Groups – for additional community issues. Also: See previous Monthly Reports for information on: homelessness, emergency communications pole in Four Corners, and other issues.

Common issues across the Regional Area

Given the level of existing, scheduled, and proposed development and infrastructure projects in the Silver Spring Regional Area, there are five recurring, persistent issues that are increasingly common to all neighborhoods and commercial areas:

Living Under Construction: The visible signs of Purple Line construction are evident throughout the region – and increasing in intensity (pending temporary closing of Lyttonville Bridge, Bonifant Street west of Georgia Ave, and more.) PEPCO has started work on Fenton, moving next in front of Veterans Plaza for the next few weeks. WSSC has various project under construction throughout the Region. There are five developments under construction downtown, with another three breaking ground in the near future. And, the BRT is scheduled to begin construction as soon as 2020.

Survivability of small commercial hubs: There are four small commercial hubs that the Purple Line transverses: Brookville Road, Bonifant Street (downtown Silver Spring), Long Branch, and Langley Park. The two other small commercial hubs in the Region are also being impacted by proposed infrastructure projects: Montgomery Hills (SHA's Georgia Avenue improvements); and Four Corners (the Bus Rapid Transit soon to be built.) Not only are the businesses concerned about their own survival, the area residents are also concerned. Together with the Purple Line Partners and others, we are diligently working with many merchants and small business owners in these commercial hubs to ensure they not only survive the construction, but thrive with the new improvements.

Cut-Through Traffic: In part due to all the construction in the Area, the evidence of cut-through traffic is evident in almost every neighborhood to a degree not seen before. This is exasperated by GPS mapping apps that guide drivers through the shortest routes, usually through neighborhoods. This cut-through traffic problem is especially egregious when it is construction vehicles and large delivery trucks.

Pedestrian Safety and Walkability: Some examples of community concerns include ensuring children can walk to school safely (Wayne Avenue), or that new detours do overly burden the walkability of neighborhoods (Lyttonville), or improving pedestrian access to commercial areas (Montgomery Hills)

Information dissemination: While the capacity for information dissemination has vastly increased, including most recently the NextDoor app, there is a growing concern that still many Area residents are simply not aware of all the disruptions and available information resources (i.e.: the Purple Line construction notice sign up, County Press Releases, the Regional Area's eNewsletter, DOT's newsletter, etc.)

We continue relentlessly working with various agencies, many civics, and the established advisory groups to convey information in a timely manner, provide opportunities for real-time answers to community concerns, and incorporate new ideas and suggestions in the planning and implementation processes.

Neighborhood Action Teams

We have set up two NATs that continue working in areas where a series of issues can best be addressed in a coordinated approach. These two NATs are:

Safety and Security Downtown: The NAT has an established every-other-week call among managers of all County assets downtown (the Library, garages, Civic Building, Progress Place, etc.), security companies and the Police, major private development, and some of the key venues in downtown. This allows for expedient response to issues and has established an excellent network of contacts.

Oakview Neighborhood: Working with the Civic Association, at least ten issues have been identified that require action from various agencies and departments. A gathering with the community is planned for later in the summer to update what has been accomplished and what remains to be done. The process itself has proven fruitful, as some issues were able to be resolved already.

[2] ADVISORY GROUPS

Citizens Advisory Board

(The SSRSC Director is the principal staff to the Board and its three committees, Neighborhoods, Commercial Economic Development, and Transportation / Energy / Environment.)

At their last meeting, the SSCAB heard from the office of Senator Will Smith regarding resulting legislation from the last legislative session. Additionally, they discussed the 'bus tour' of Silver Spring (on Saturday, June 9th) that the Board – and some members from other Advisory Groups – will take.

At their next meeting, Monday, June 11th, the Board will have a conversation with David Petr, CEO of Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation and Kelly Groff, President and CEO, Visit Montgomery. Topics include: Update on Discovery Communications, how Silver Spring is marketed, and more.

Urban District Advisory Committee

(The SSRSC Director oversees the operations of the Urban District and directly supervises its Chief of Operations.) In May the SSUDAC heard presentation on the Gene Lynch Urban Park (the new park at the intersection of Colesville and Wayne Ave.); and had an extended conversation with the Urban District staff regarding how to most effectively and efficiently use the new \$300,000 in the FY19 budget to fix sidewalks, enhance landscape, and improve directional signage. The Committee will not meet in June or July.

Arts & Entertainment Advisory Committee

(The SSRSC Director coordinates the work of the Committee.) The A&EAC will meet again Wednesday, June 27th. On the Agenda: An update on the proposed downtown Silver Spring Business Improvement District (BID); and a report on the State A&E District meeting that took place recently.

Transportation Management District

(The SSRSC Director is a non-voting member on the Committee.) The Committee last met in March. They will meet again Thursday, June 14th. The Agenda will be an update on the bicycle plan for downtown Silver Spring; and a Purple Line update.

Other Institutional Engagement

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

- Takoma Langley Commercial Development Authority. *(The SSRSC Director is ex-officio on the Board representing Montgomery County; the TLCDA had its annual meeting in May and elected new members.)*
- Long Branch Partners. *(The SSRSC Director routinely attends this group, which includes most service providers in the area. Next meeting set for July.)*
- Long Branch Business League. *(The SSRSC Director routinely works with the LBBL on the many issues in the area; most recently, the League met the new Precinct Commander; had an update to the Purple Line construction in the Area; and began planning for their pop up art show later in June.)*
- Silver Spring Town Center, Inc. *(The SSRSC Director is ex-officio on the Board representing Montgomery County; the SSTCi is holding regular Tuesday and Wednesday ambiance events on the Plaza and is getting ready for their annual Blues Festival.)*
- Purple Line Community Advisory Teams. *(The SSRSC Director routinely attends the CATs for Lyttonsville / 16th St., Silver Spring / Wayne Avenue, Manchester / Long Branch, and Takoma Langley.)*
- Bus Rapid Transit Community Advisory Committees. *(The SSRSC routinely attends the CACs for the US29 BRT project, focusing on the Central and South Committees.)*