

# SILVER SPRING REGIONAL AREA

Monthly Report    NOVEMBER 2018    *Reemberto Rodriguez, Director*

## [1] COMMUNITY ISSUES

### **Downtown Silver Spring Activities**

Nighttime activity in Silver Spring's downtown is certainly in the increase. While this economic development activity is certainly welcome, it comes with accompanying issues that do tax resources and increase constituent complaints. Some of these includes: Noise from roof-deck parties; late night incidents after the 'last call' and while the establishment remains open; perceived increase in homelessness (night time shelter opens Nov. 15<sup>th</sup>); more busking (street performers) around Veterans Plaza; and lack of security at Progress Place. We are participating in a series of internal and external meetings to pursue immediate, short range, and long term solutions to these issues.

This level of increased activities also demand new mobility responses and incorporating art in the landscape. We are in the process of rebranding the VanGo circulator as a unique bus; we are pursuing and 'everyone crosses' intersection at Fenton and Ellsworth (with an artistic element); The CSX total is getting new lighting to enhance safety; Garage 3 is coming online later in the year, returning over 125 parking spaces to Fenton Village; the dockless bikes pilot program is being expanded with electric bikes and scooters; an enhanced communications system will use existing poles to increase 5G capabilities; and, we are in the final stages of designing the next set of standards for streetscape fixtures (lights, benches, and sidewalks); and, the community has selected the mural to go up on Bonifant and Georgia. These different efforts will help mitigate some of the mobility issues and perceptual clutter in downtown Silver Spring.

Seldom a week goes by that there is not an announcement of new entrepreneurship or development venture in Silver Spring. Retail/restaurant turnover, commercial real-estate changes, and the apartment supply boom is a daily reality. New restaurants, a brewery, a pop-up bookstore, a new community theatre, and more have recently opened – while a couple of restaurants have closed. Launch, Inc., has announced they are rebranding the Silver Spring Innovations Center. And, apartments continue to be built at a brisk pace, with at least 1,000 units coming on-line soon and as many getting ready to begin construction. Keeping track of all these real-estate developments and maintaining readily accessible information for the community to know what is going on is difficult, but necessary to better understand how to most efficiently and holistically address their accompanying challenges.

### **Small Businesses Along the Purple Line** *(See next page for more on PL Updates)*

The issue of how the small business along the Purple Line corridor will survive construction and thrive afterwards remains an on-going concern. We are working with the businesses in Lyttonsville, Fenton Village, Long Branch, and Takoma Langley to ensure that access to their businesses is clearly maintained and clear directional signs are in place; marketing opportunities (i.e.: joint web sites) are explored; and - to the extent possible – limited financial recourse for loss revenue is provided. Together with the University of Maryland's Purple Line Corridor Coalition, Prince George's County, Maryland Transit Authority, and the Purple Line Transit Partners, we are forging ahead collaborating where possible to mitigate the negative impacts of construction and maximize the gains of the Purple Line when operational.

### **Takoma Park development**

Takoma Park also is going through a series of development processes. The community has been engaged in the proposal to more intensely develop the site where the Co-Op ("Takoma Junction") is located. Also moving forward is the construction of the Science Building in the Takoma Park / Silver Spring Campus of Montgomery College; and the move of the Adventist hospital to White Oaks, which will leave behind some components of its physical plant for repurposing and/or community use. (And, in the DC side, the project to put townhomes on the lot adjacent to the Takoma Station is also moving forward.)

## **[2] ADVISORY GROUPS**

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

Next meeting: Monday, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 7pm, in the Civic Building. (The meeting is customarily the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday, but that fall on the day Veterans Day will be observed.) On the Agenda: Living under construction: Disruptions to the public right of way. Committee meetings will be held Monday, November 26<sup>th</sup>. Agendas tentatively include: The widening of the Beltway; Conversation with Elementary School Principals; and, Libraries Workforce Programs... Also of note: The Board has completed interviews for prospective members. Five names have been submitted to County Executive Leggett to consider recommending to the County Council. It is expected these five members will be forwarded to the Council in time for the new members to join the Board for the December meeting.

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

Next meeting: Thursday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, 3:30pm, Fire Station #1. On the Agenda: Design features of the proposed cell communication units to be placed on existing poles. The SSUDAC has two new members and expects to sit a third by the November or December meeting.

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

Next meeting: Thursday, November 8<sup>th</sup>, Discovery Building. On the Agenda: Reemberto Rodriguez, Silver Spring Regional Area Director will be presenting general information regarding the Area; plus, the Department of Transportation will be presenting information on how the bike-sharing program will grow in Silver Spring and other areas of the County.... The SSCAB has recommended two new members to the SSTMD. Action for approval should be completed for the November meeting.

### **Purple Line Community Advisory Teams (CATs)**

Meetings for two of the four\* CATs in the Silver Spring Regional Area are set. \*The four CATs include: Lyttonsville & 16<sup>th</sup> St Stations; Transit Center, Library, & Dale Ave Stations (meeting held October 25<sup>th</sup> at Sligo Creek Elementary School); Manchester & Piney Branch (Meeting held October 16<sup>th</sup> at Oakview Elementary School); and, University Blvd & Takoma Langley. Main issues surfacing: Noise during construction; continuing assistance to small businesses being impacted during construction; cut-through traffic generated by drivers seeking to avoid construction areas; and, pedestrian safety throughout, particularly as the stations are approached.

### **Bus Rapid Transit Community Advisory Committees (CACs)**

Recent meeting were held: Central US29 Thursday, October 18<sup>th</sup>, 6:30pm, United Methodist Church; South US29 Tuesday, October 16<sup>th</sup>, 6:30pm, Civic Building. Main issues surfacing: cut-through traffic due to increased congestion; pedestrian safety; and station design details.... The formal, official groundbreaking for the BRT was also recently held.

### **Silver Spring Arts & Entertainment Advisory Committee**

The Committee has submitted a letter advising an artistic 'barnes dance' (crosswalk in all directions) be installed on Fenton and Ellsworth when PEPCO finishes its work there and the road is resurface... The Committee, working through a survey of the community, also selected the winning design for the mural on Bonifant and Georgia...The Annual Report to the State Arts Council was submitted.