

SILVER SPRING REGIONAL AREA

Monthly Report DECEMBER 2018 *Reemberto Rodriguez, Director*

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

[1] COMMUNITY ISSUES

Progress Place Internal and Environs Security

Progress Place houses Shepherd's Table (serving three meals a day - every day - to the homeless and very low income area residents); Interfaith Works (providing social services to the homeless); a night shelter during winter months; and permanent housing for 21 previously homeless individuals. The Facility is a County facility maintained by the Department of General Services and operated by Health and Human Services Department. Service providers, the adjacent neighborhood (East Silver Spring), and the Chamber of Commerce – among others – have identified the emergency need of increased security inside the facility and vicinity (including under the CSX bridge) as a primary immediate concern. We are working with the Police and the Urban District to see what is possible with existing resources. The community is requesting a supplemental budget item be considered.

Living Under Construction

As reported in previous Monthly Reports, "living under construction" continues to be a challenge. This challenges include, among others (a) adequate provision for vehicular and pedestrian flow; (b) limiting disruption to the delivery for area businesses; (c) dealing with increased rodent population surfacing from foundation work in large developments; and, (d) parking. We continue working closely with the Department of Permitting, Department of Environmental Protection, and Department of Transportation to mitigate these concerns. For the Studio Plaza development in Fenton Village and adjoining HOC development (at Fenton and Thayer) we have set up a weekly news alert e-mail to keep all area businesses informed of progress in resolving the issues... These issues are exasperated by infrastructure construction, primarily the work by PEPCO on Fenton Street. While originally PEPCO was going to do the work block-by-block north-to-south, it has now become necessary to work at multiple locations along Fenton St., creating major slow-down middays. (PEPCO is required to have all lanes operational before 9 a.m. and by 3:00 p.m.)... This situation will be made even more challenging when the Purple Line begins construction along Wayne and Bonifant and builds the bridge across Colesville by the Transit Station bus entry. Additionally, the 'green' around the Transit Station will serve as a 'staging construction area', thus eliminating some of the existing pedestrian access points to the Station.

Pedestrian Safety

Pedestrian safety is increasingly a common issue throughout the Regional Area. Many neighborhoods have expressed concerns regarding the need to ensure a safer walking environment. While historically this issue has included safe access to schools and improved crosswalk capacity in certain streets, the increasing – and expected – developments throughout the Region (and the increased number of accidents, some fatal) have sparked renewed interest as evidenced by the efforts of neighbors on Dale Avenue, Piney Branch, Montgomery Hills, and downtown interest. Putting the issue in perspective: When the Purple Line and BRT is built, everyone living in the Region will be no further than a 22 minute walk from a major transit stop.

[2] ADVISORY GROUPS

Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board

Next meeting: Monday, December 10th, 7pm, in the Civic Building. This will be the annual meeting with State District 18 and 20 Delegations. The Board will also consider recommendations from the two recently held Committee meetings regarding the Beltway widening (Transportation Committee) and a dialogue with local school principals (Neighborhood Committee.) ... The Board will also be welcoming five new members.

In December, there will be no Committee meetings. Instead, the Board will have their Holiday Gathering at AstroLab (a new brewery in downtown Silver Spring) Friday, December 14th at 6 p.m.

Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee

Next meeting: Thursday, December 13th, 4:00 p.m. at United Therapeutic. (Note change of date, time, and location!) The Planning Department will be sharing an abridged version of their annual presentation on "What is being built in downtown Silver Spring." ... The SSUDAC has three new members joining the Committee.

Silver Spring Transportation Management District

At the last meeting on November 8th Reemberto Rodriguez, Silver Spring Regional Area Director presented general information regarding the Area; and the Department of Transportation presented information on how the bike-sharing program will grow in Silver Spring and other areas of the County to include scooters. This expansion has been met with many questions regarding the safety of both riders and pedestrian; and, the urban clutter the scooters will create. DOT is working with the vendors to mitigate these concerns before the roll out in the near future... The SSTMD has two new members appointed by the SSCAB joining the Committee.

Purple Line Community Advisory Teams (CATs)

Eight Purple Line stations are in the Silver Spring Regional Area. The four CATs engaging these communities include: Lyttonsvile & 16th St Stations; Transit Center, Library, & Dale Ave Stations; Manchester & Piney Branch; and, University Blvd & Takoma Langley. All of these CATs met recently. Main issues remain: (a) Noise during construction; (b) continuing assistance to small businesses being impacted during construction; (c) cut-through traffic generated by drivers seeking to avoid construction areas; and, (d) pedestrian safety throughout, particularly as the stations are approached... Emerging issue: Bus routing once Purple Line is operational.

Many CAT members have also expressed that procedurally it remains unclear exactly where their advice can affect change in the construction process. While MTA and the PLTC have much information on line and the CAT meetings are informative, frustration still exists when members identify issues that may be contractually beyond the project scope.

Bus Rapid Transit Community Advisory Committees (CACs)

The South US29 CAC met October 16th; and the BRT Groundbreaking took place October 18th. The next meeting will likely be in the first quarter of 2019. The plans are over 85% complete. MCDOT keeps very detailed web-site for information, including thorough meeting summaries answering many questions at www.MontgomeryCountyMD.gov/BRT

Silver Spring Arts & Entertainment Advisory Committee

The Committee, through our Arts Consultant, is following up on key actions recently taken: (a) 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; (b) Pursuing the implementation of the winning design for the mural on Bonifant and Georgia; and, (c) Reviewing the Annual Report to the State Arts Council which will be submitted soon.