

SILVER SPRING REGIONAL AREA

Monthly Report September 2017 *Reemberto Rodriguez, Director*

[1] COMMUNITY ISSUES

Downtown Street Disruption Coordinating Team

- The Silver Spring Urban District is forming a “Downtown Street Disruption Coordinating Team” with the mission to *keep a line of communication open among the many agencies and developers actively involved in disrupting streets in downtown Silver Spring*. Some of the current and eminent disruptions include WSSC on US29, PEPCO on Fenton, Bikeways, Purple Line, BRT, and at least four developments under construction and four more soon to be underway. The participants on the Team will be staff ‘on the ground’ more so than policy makers from the Urban District (convener), DOT (Streets and Ride On), DPS, Business Navigator, Purple Line, BRT, WMATA, WSSC, PEPCO, Washington Gas, Comcast, Verizon, Major developers doing work, Park and Planning.

Purple Line

- With the announcement that the Purple Line is moving to the construction phase, we are working closely internally and externally to ensure efficient communications. From Lyttonsville, through downtown, on Wayne Avenue, at Long Branch and Langley Park, there are many different aspects of the construction that will require diligent attention. We remain in close contact with the County’s Department of Transportation; MTA; the P3 group building the Line, including the arts component; the many community, merchants, and business interests along the corridor; and the Purple Line Corridor Coalition. We will be reinforcing the public messaging regarding construction via our eNewsletter and participating with the Community Advisory Teams.

United States Post Office in Silver Spring

- The USPO currently located at the Spring Shopping Center on 16th Street will close due to the Purple Line construction which will raze that shopping center. We’ve been working with local, State, and Federal officials to affirm the critical importance of the Post Office in downtown Silver Spring. Months back the USPO Administration presented to the community. Recently they have communicated that it remains their intent to keep the Post Office downtown and they are diligently working on identifying a specific site.

Bus Rapid Transit System

- The Department of Transportation has split the ‘South US29’ BRT Corridor in two groups, and is holding sessions to continue its efforts to move on the Bus Rapid Transit system in US29 (Colesville Rd.) from the Silver Spring Transit Station to Howard County. Additional meetings are set for September and are routinely listed in our eNewsletter. The SSCAB recently assigned one of its members to be on the US29 South Advisory Committee.

Homelessness Issues:

- Working with the County’s Health and Human Services, the Police Department, and the various homeless services non-profits we were able to successfully address the high concentration of homeless that were sleeping under the Library – at the future site of the Purple Line Station. Our commitment to housing the homeless remains priority number one. This longer term approach is accompanied by provision of sustained social services support to those that remain homeless – wherever they may be.... We continue exploring options to provide Progress Place clients a place to gather so they will not have to congregate on Georgia Avenue by the Fire Station; and to enhance security in the area... (Our Safety and Security Partners (who have a regular conference call every other week) met late August for their quarterly check in on this and other safety and security matters throughout downtown.)

Tracking Major County-Related Development

There are a series of development that have a significant County role which the RSC is involved. Some key ones include:

- Elizabeth Square Development (private development to include major recreational component)
- Old Library Site Repurposing (in final stages of selection before coming back to the community)
- Old Police Station (development set to start on this arts live/work space early next year)
- New Library 1st Floor (continue looking for potential tenant)
- Metropolitan Branch Trail (from the Transit Station through the College; business community in south Silver Spring has expressed concern regarding alignment at a recent meeting)
- Studio Plaza Garage (part of a new 399 unit apartment complex; continue working closely with area merchants)
- Exploring Possibility for Major New Venue (at Garages near Metro)

[2] ADVISORY GROUPS

Citizens Advisory Board

In August the Board will meet on Monday, August 21 for its annual strategic planning retreat.

Starting this month again, the Board will meet the second Monday of the Month, 7 p.m. in the Civic Building; and the Committees the fourth Monday.(I.e.: The next full SSCAB meeting will be Monday, September 11; and the Committees will meet on Monday, September 25th.) They will use the meeting to determine the priorities for the Board this coming year.

As of September, each full SSCAB meeting will include a brief Public Safety Report by the Police and/or Fire Department; and a highlight of one of many Silver Spring neighborhoods, as selected by PREZCO, the Association of Presidents of Silver Spring Associations.

Urban District Advisory Committee

The meeting in August was the Committee's annual strategic planning meeting.

Starting this month again, the Committee will meet the third Thursday of the Month, 3:30 p.m. in the Urban District Operations Conference Room at the Silver Spring Fire Station (i.e. The next full SSUDAC will be Thursday, September 21.) The tentative agenda is hearing about two Zoning Text Amendments proposals, one related to telecom towers, and the other the request for increased height for the Washington Properties development in Ripley District to include a potential grocery store.

Arts & Entertainment Advisory Committee

As of September, the SSA&EAC will meet during the day to facilitate broader participation of its members and the broader arts community. It will also begin meeting every other month on the third Wednesday of the month (I.e.: September, November, January, March, and May.) Summer meeting will be contingent on need. The focus of the meetings will remain on sharing information among major venues, updates on arts related projects, the County budget, complying with the Maryland Arts Council reporting requirements, and other issues as they may arise... The next meeting is set for Wednesday, September 20th, 4:30 p.m. in the Civic Building.)

Transportation Management District

(The RSC Director is an ex-officio member of the SSTMD) At the last meeting (July 3th) the Regional Transportation Board presented their roles and plans. An emerging issue was the omission of the County's BRT in the regional plans. (NOTE: They did not meet in August. The September meeting is set for Thursday, September 14th 8 a.m. at the Discovery Communications Building.)

Other Institutional Engagement

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

- Takoma Langley Commercial Development Authority (working on bringing more attention to the area)
- Long Branch Business Partners (hosted quarterly meeting at the Civic Building in August)
- Long Branch Business League (affirming the business association and providing technical support)
- Silver Spring Town Center, Inc. (coordinating programming efforts with other civic, private, and entrepreneur driven community celebrations)
- City of Takoma Park (staying connected with plans for the development of science building and related community engagement efforts)

NOTE: Past reports highlighting additional issues are available at:

<http://montgomerycountymd.gov/silverspring/boardscommittees/cab/index.html>