

SILVER SPRING REGIONAL AREA

Monthly Report APRIL 2016 *Reemberto Rodriguez, Director*

[1] Community Issues

Evaluation Workshops: In collaboration with the Volunteer Center, we held a workshop on non-profit evaluation. The workshop was attended by 23 organizations. Given this positive response, we are planning on doing a series of workshops addressing related topics in the next fiscal year.

Small Commercial Areas Workshop Series: In collaboration with CASA – and funded by the Center for Dispute Resolution at the University of Maryland School of Law (C-DRUM) – we completed a 6 workshops series for small businesses and entrepreneurs in the Region's six small commercial areas* on “surviving and thriving in times of change.” We began and ended by bringing together all small areas* together with service providers and others. We had three focus group meetings, each representing two of the small areas at a time. The results of the workshops are being compiled and will be available soon. (The six small areas include Takoma/Langley, Long Branch, Fenton Village, Montgomery Hills, Brookeville, and Four Corners.)

Silver Spring Recognition: In the last month, Silver Spring was recognized by TripAdvisor as one of 11 ‘urban districts’ in the United States most worth exploring. Additionally, WUSA9 held one of its morning shows on Veterans Plaza, and WTTG FOX5 will be doing their “Zip Trip” finale in downtown later in the year.

Old Silver Spring Library: As advised at the community meeting held weeks ago, we will be meeting with a stakeholders group regarding the old Silver Spring Library site before releasing the Request for Proposal to select the development team. As reported on the last monthly report, through the years the community has consistently expressed the expectation that the future use of the site incorporate a multi-generational component. The possibility of senior housing will also be explored. While the selection of the winning bidder and the subsequent development process gears up over the next couple of years, the County will temporarily and transitionally use the space as a community asset – a used bookstore. The bookstore is scheduled to open in the next few weeks.

Bus Rapid Transit and Purple Line: The BRT's Community Advisory Committees (CACs) will continue actively meeting to provide a forum for these interaction; and, the State's MTA will set up a Community Advisory Team (CAT) to provide a similar space for information flow during the critical construction phase of the Purple Line.

[2] Advisory Groups & Related Activities

Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board (Monday, April 4 and Monday, May 9)

The March meeting was 'off-site' (at the Long Branch Recreation Center.) The main agenda item was a dialogue with Councilmember Tom Hucker. In April, the SSCAB had a very successful convening with 15 area non-profits who were invited to share with the Board and each other – and do some traditional networking. In May, the SSCAB is looking to do a special gathering focusing on the history of Silver Spring to better understand today's issues. (They will also consider draft by-laws revisions.) All three SSCAB Committees plan to meet Monday, April 25. The Neighborhoods Committee will be focusing on school issues; the Commercial Economic Development's agenda is not yet defined, and the T.R.E.E. (Transportation, Environment, and Energy) Committee will be continue its focus on bicycle and pedestrian matters.

Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee (Thursday,)

In March the Committee heard from various agencies from the DC Government and discussed cross jurisdictional issues, opportunities for collaborating, and the status of the Walter Reed site redevelopment. In April, the Parks Department will present the status of various park projects in downtown.

Silver Spring Transportation Management Advisory Committee (Thursday, March 10)

In March the SSTMD had a presentation on the White Oaks Master Plan; and voted on their advice letter regarding the FY17 Operating Budget.