

MEMORANDUM

March 17, 2022

TO: Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee

FROM: Pamela Dunn, Senior Legislative Analyst
Livhu Ndou, Legislative Attorney
Carlos Camacho, former Legislative Analyst

SUBJECT: Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan

PURPOSE: Worksession to develop recommendations for Council consideration

Expected Participants:

Casey Anderson, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board
Gwen Wright, Director, Montgomery Planning Department
Elza Hisel-McCoy, Down County Chief, Planning Department
Larissa Klevan, Master Plan Supervisor, Planning Department
Atara Margolies, Planner Coordinator, Planning Department
Cristina Sassaki, Parks Planner Coordinator, Parks Department

This is the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee's third worksession on the Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan. The first worksession covered the introduction to the Plan and four of eight districts that make up the Plan area. The staff report for the second worksession covered the remaining four districts; however, there was only time available to review the Falklands and South Silver Spring districts. This worksession will cover the Fenton Village District, the Adjacent Communities, and zoning recommendations for two parcels in the Downtown North District which were not covered during that review. This worksession will also cover Plan-wide recommendations on housing, parks, trails, and public spaces. The fourth worksession will cover the Plan-wide recommendations for transportation and school infrastructure, land use and zoning, economic growth, and urban design. And the last scheduled worksession will address any remaining Plan-wide recommendations, other community facilities, historic resources, and Plan implementation. Testimony is attached on © 1-23¹.

¹ Testimony provided in reference to Fenton Village and the Adjacent Communities attached to the staff report for March 14 is not copied again here but is still relevant to the review of Adjacent Communities and Plan-wide Housing recommendations. That staff report can be found here:

https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/cm/2022/20220314/20220314_PHED3.pdf

Councilmembers may wish to bring their copy of the Plan to the meeting.

A link to the Planning Board Draft for those wishing to access the Plan online is here:

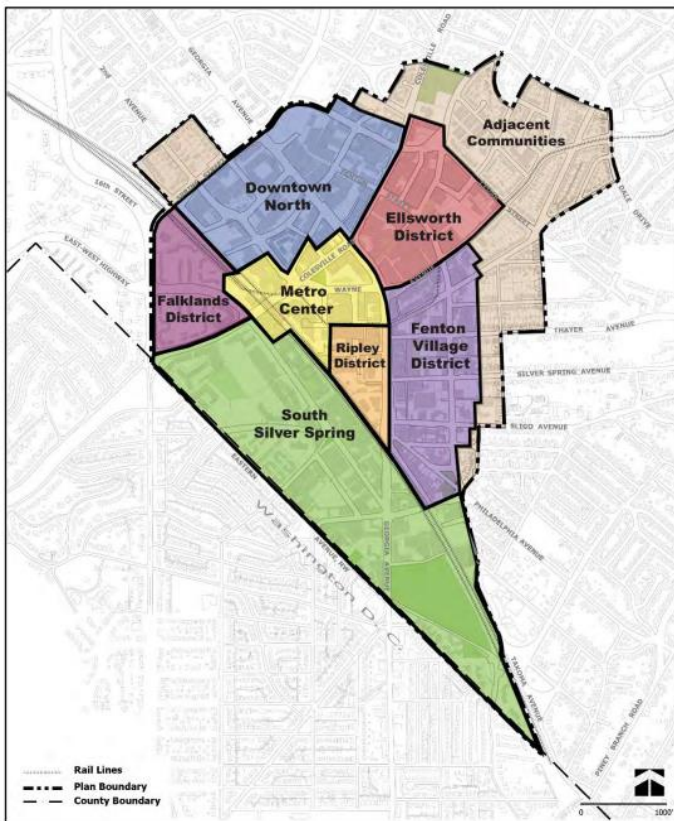
<https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/SSDAC-Planning-Board-Draft-FINAL-FOR-WEB-reduced2.pdf>

As noted in prior staff reports, Silver Spring is renowned for its uniqueness and diversity, as well as for its abundance of locally owned and ethnically diverse small businesses. The revitalization of Silver Spring was spurred by the 2000 Silver Spring Central Business District Sector Plan and related initiatives by the public and private sector. The resulting development of the downtown area, including the Civic Building, Veteran's Plaza, and Ellsworth Place, has been tremendously successful and has brought people from all over the region to work, live, play, and enjoy Silver Spring.

The Plan envisions a Silver Spring of the future as a great place to work, do business, and enjoy the arts. Home to small independent businesses, cutting-edge science, research and tech companies, educational institutions, and arts organizations. A place that remains unique, affordable, and attractive to people of all ages and backgrounds with new open spaces that are better connected and characterized by green, climate-resilient, and safe walkable streets.

To achieve this goal, the Plan lays out Plan-wide goals and recommendations (which will be covered by a future worksession). The Plan also establishes eight districts within the Plan area, reinforcing the identity of each district with goals and recommendations specific to each district. Below is a review of the recommendations for the Fenton Village District, and the Adjacent Communities.

This map illustrates the districts that make up Downtown Silver Spring and the Adjacent Communities:



DISTRICT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Fenton Village District

Vision:

Fenton Village will build on and sustain its diversity with new community open space, new development at an appropriate scale to support small businesses, and an expanded presence for the arts.

Goals:

- Maintain zoning that provides low-rise development on Georgia Avenue and Fenton Street, and taller development in the middle of the block.
- Provide a compatible transition in building form and height from Fenton Village to East Silver Spring.
- Redevelop opportunity sites with mixed-use development with retail or commercial spaces on the ground floor appropriate for local and independent retailers.
- Enhance Fenton Street as the main street for the district by preserving and improving opportunities for active retail.
- Retain a full-service grocery store in the district.
- Promote the redevelopment of public parking lots and garages in collaboration with the Parking Lot District's goals.
- Encourage residential development that provides a mix of unit types and sizes for people of all ages, levels of income and household size.
- Provide new outdoor community gathering space in Fenton Village and link this new open space to the Green Loop segment along Fenton Street.

- Build on relationships with nearby Artspace Silver Spring and Montgomery College to further expand opportunities for public art and arts-related uses.

Testimony: The Council received testimony from Ms. Faul-Zeitler expressing concern with the lack of attention to the role of the arts, culture, entertainment, and night-time economy of Silver Spring throughout the Plan. An excerpt from her testimony:

“Numerous arts and cultural venues (theaters, concert halls, studio spaces etc....) in Silver Spring have matured as cultural assets over the past 20 years; professionals in the visual and performing arts – as well as retirees and volunteers --have contributed their time and talent to the arts; and events such as the *2019 Downtown Jazz Festival* have generated millions of dollars in revenue and tax dollars. Arts, entertainment, and the night-time economy can help grow the Downtown by attracting new employers, new businesses and new residents including families. There are more arts and entertainment assets (buildings/venues), in Silver Spring than virtually any other Urban District in Montgomery County.”²

Ms. Faul-Zeitler provides several suggested places in the Plan where additional text referencing the arts could enhance its prominence and better support its contribution to the identity of Silver Spring. Most of these suggestions occur in the Plan-wide recommendations; however, there is an opportunity in each district to consider adding a goal and/or recommendations related to arts, culture, entertainment and/or the night-time economy.

For the Fenton Village District, the goal related to preserving and improving retail could be expanded to include the arts.

- Enhance Fenton Street as the main street for the district by preserving and improving opportunities for active retail, and arts and entertainment venues.

² Her full testimony is on © pages 1-10.



Figure 13. Fenton Village: Illustrative Diagram

Recommendations:

Urban Design

- Consistent with the Fenton Village Overlay Zone, buildings should step back above the base to maintain a low-rise character along the street.
- Retail bays should be small enough to house small local retailers to preserve the economic diversity typical of Fenton Village.
- New development interior to the blocks between Fenton Street and Georgia Avenue should be composed of buildings that are divided into smaller components, instead of one large, monolithic structure.
- Transform Bonifant Street into a pedestrian-friendly retail corridor along the Purple Line, with sidewalk cafes and street trees.
- Implement the Green Loop on Fenton Street.

- Provide public through-block connections throughout the district to enhance walkability and connectivity within long or large blocks.

Council Staff supports the Urban Design recommendations for the Fenton Village District; however, if the Committee supports adding a recommendation related to arts and entertainment, Council Staff will work with Planning Staff on draft language.

Parks and Public Spaces

- Expand the existing Fenton Street Urban Park into a cohesive neighborhood gateway park that is directly connected to the Green Loop.
- Provide a ½-acre green public space along Fenton Street with any redevelopment of Public Parking Garage 4.

Council Staff supports the intent of both recommendations; however, the expansion of Fenton Street Park would require acquisition of 4-5 privately owned properties in the light industrial area of the Plan. The Plan also includes a Plan-wide goal to “maintain existing light industrial zoning to support community-serving auto repair and related small businesses”. **Staff suggests adding to the park recommendation the phrase, “should property in this area become available.” Which would signal to these property owners and community that redevelopment under a light industrial use or acquisition for parkland are both appropriate for this area and both uses support the goals of this Plan.**

The map below shows the light industrial properties impacted by the Parks recommendation.



With respect to the 1/2-acre public green space associated with Parking Lot 4, there is a more detailed recommendation under Opportunity Sites below. Council Staff’s recommendation is provided in the next section.

Opportunity Sites

- **Public Garage 4:** Encourage the redevelopment of Parking Garage 4 and surrounding properties through a public-private partnership with the Parking Lot District. The Plan recommends that this large block be divided via a new north-south connection that aligns with the north-south connection at the block to the north. This connection could provide loading and service connections for the new development. In addition, the Plan recommends an east-west through-block pedestrian connection as part of any redevelopment of the garage parcel. A ½-acre green community-focused open space should be located at this site, fronting on Fenton Street. This open space could be an opportunity to celebrate local artists and the diversity of Fenton Village. This site is also large enough that it may provide a unique opportunity to consider urban agriculture facilities, either at the ground or as part of a green roof concept.

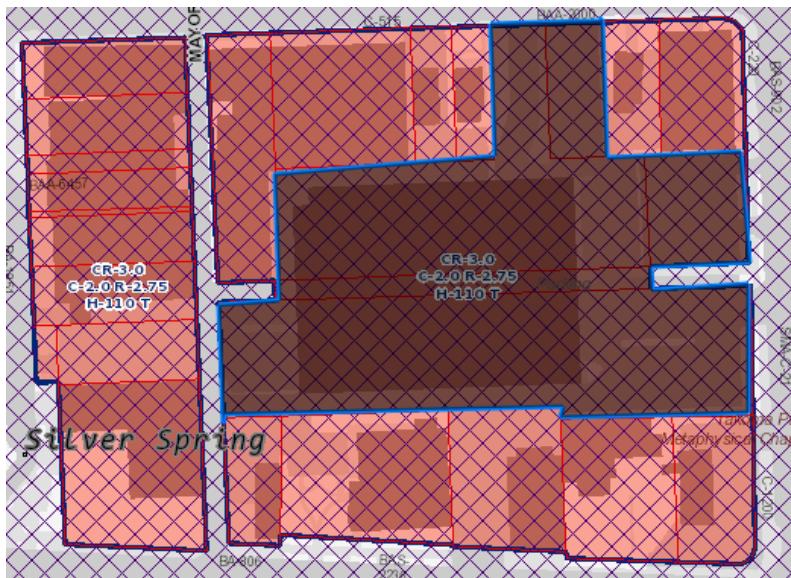
Below is a more detailed view from the Fenton Village Illustrative Diagram.



Executive Branch Comments: Council Staff received a letter from the Montgomery County Department General Services regarding Parking Garage 4. It includes the following comment in reference to redevelopment of the garage:

“Garage 4: Due to the nature of Parking Lot District obligations and the County’s desire to maximize affordable housing in Silver Spring, the County is requesting flexibility for the redevelopment of Garage 4. The Plan proposes a new north-south street, a new east-west pedestrian connection, and new open space on this site. These connections and open space are all important elements, but current draft language severely limits the design and is too prescriptive.”

Below the property owned by the County is outlined in blue.



While the Plan does make several relatively specific recommendations for the potential redevelopment of Garage 4, the green loop connector, the new north-south connection that ties-into the block to the north, and the provision of public open space, work together as a whole to support several Plan goals. **Staff suggests the recommendation could be modified, similar to language in the Westbard Plan where site constraints were anticipated, to read “A [$\frac{1}{2}$ -acre] green community-focused open space of approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ acre, but no less than $\frac{1}{3}$ acre, should be located at this site, fronting on Fenton Street.** This would provide slightly more flexibility in siting and use of the remaining property, including for the provision of affordable housing.

- County Parking Lot 29: The Plan recommends redevelopment of this surface parking lot with a mix of uses compatible with the adjacent residential development.
- Safeway grocery site and adjacent parcels: The Plan recommends the redevelopment of the existing Safeway grocery site and the adjoining sites including County Parking Lot 38 for mixed-use development. Maintaining a full-size grocery store in Fenton Village is very important for access to food. For any redevelopment, vehicular access to the site for parking and/or loading should not be from Fenton Street; the frontage along Fenton Street should have active ground-floor uses. A new north-south street that aligns with the north-south connection at the block to the south is recommended for this site.

Council Staff supports the other Opportunity Site recommendations.

Zoning

- Revise the Fenton Village Overlay Zone with minor updates as presented in the Implementation section. These include zoning text changes proposed to support small businesses.
- Maintain zoning pattern that allows for a transition between the commercial corridor of Fenton Street and the residential neighborhood of East Silver Spring.

Below is the proposed zoning map for the Fenton Village District. The table that follows lists current and proposed zoning for each numbered property/block.



Map 8. Proposed Fenton Village Zoning

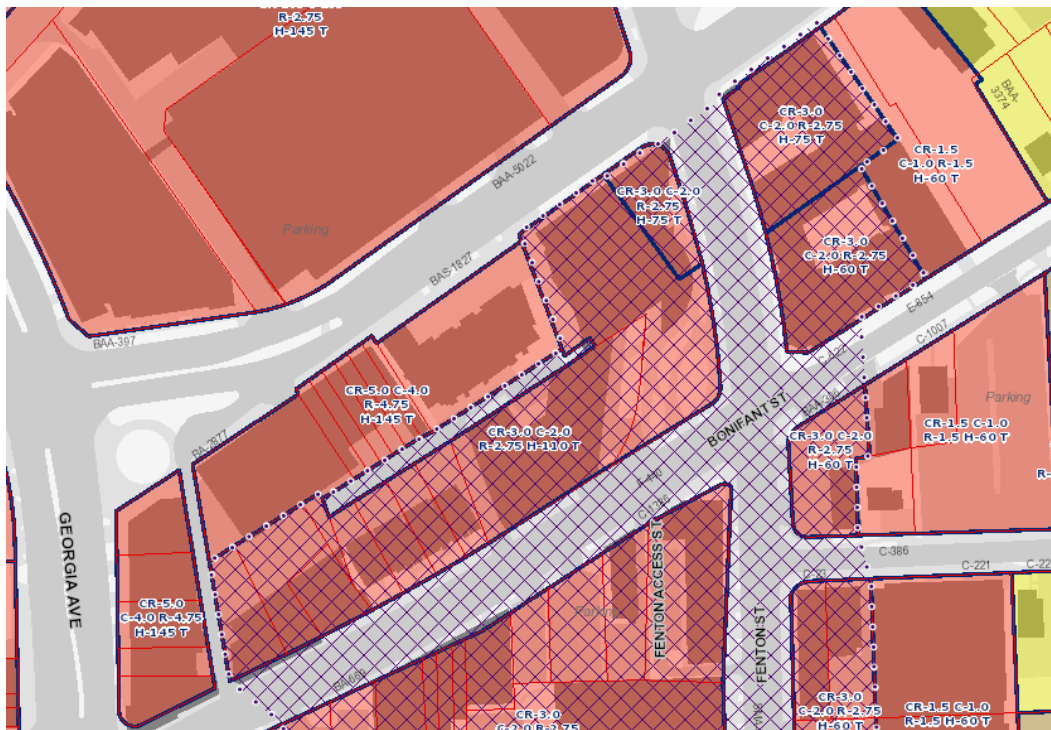
Table 2. Proposed Fenton Village Zoning

Map Number	Existing Zoning	Proposed Zoning	Justification
7	CR-5.0 C-4.0 R-4.75 H-145 T	CR-5.0 C-5.0 R-5.0 H-175	Increase flexibility for future mixed-use development.
8A	CR-5.0 C-4.0 R-4.75 H-145 T	CR-7.0 C-7.0 R-7.0 H-175	Proposed zoning brings parcel into conformance.
8B	CR-5.0 C-4.0 R-4.75 H-145 T	CR-5.0 C-5.0 R-5.0 H-175	Increase flexibility for future mixed-use development.
8C	CR-5.0 C-4.0 R-4.75 H-145 T	CR-7.0 C-7.0 R-7.0 H-175	Proposed zoning brings parcel into conformance.
8D	CR-3.0 C-2.0 R-2.75 H-110 T	CR-3.0 C-3.0 R-3.0 H-130	Increase flexibility for future mixed-use development.
8E	CR-3.0 C-2.0 R-2.75 H-110 T	CR-3.0 C-3.0 R-3.0 H-130	Increase flexibility for future mixed-use development.
9A	CR-3.0 C-2.0 R-2.75 H-75 T	CR-3.0 C-3.0 R-3.0 H-90	Increase flexibility for future mixed-use development.
9B	CR-1.5 C-1.0 R-1.5 H-60 T	CR-3.0 C-3.0 R-3.0 H-70	Increase flexibility for future mixed-use development.
10A	CR-5.0 C-4.0 R-4.75 H-145 T	CR-5.0 C-5.0 R-5.0 H-175	Increase flexibility for future mixed-use development.
10B	CR-3.0 C-2.0 R-2.75 H-110 T	CR-3.0 C-3.0 R-3.0 H-130	Increase flexibility for future mixed-use development.
11A	CR-1.5 C-1.0 R-1.5 H-60 T	CR-3.0 C-3.0 R-3.0 H-70	Increase allowable density proximate to high-capacity transit.
11B	CR-3.0 C-2.0 R-2.75 H-60 T	CR-3.0 C-3.0 R-3.0 H-70	Increase flexibility for future mixed-use development.
12A	CR-3.0 C-2.0 R-2.75 H-60 T	CR-3.0 C-3.0 R-3.0 H-70	Increase flexibility for future mixed-use development.
12B	CR-1.5 C-1.0 R-1.5 H-60 T	CR-1.5 C-1.5 R-1.5 H-70	Increase zoning flexibility. Silver Spring Tower remains non-conforming.
13A	CR-5.0 C-4.0 R-4.75 H-145 T	CR-5.0 C-5.0 R-5.0 H-175	Increase flexibility for future mixed-use development.
13B	CR-3.0 C-2.0 R-2.75 H-110 T	CR-3.0 C-3.0 R-3.0 H-130	Increase flexibility for future mixed-use development.
14	CR-3.0 C-2.0 R-2.75 H-110 T	CR-3.0 C-3.0 R-3.0 H-130	Increase flexibility for future mixed-use development.
15A	CR-3.0 C-2.0 R-2.75 H-60 T	CR-3.0 C-3.0 R-3.0 H-70	Increase flexibility for future mixed-use development.
15B	CR-1.5 C-1.0 R-1.5 H-60 T	CR-1.5 C-1.5 R-1.5 H-70	Increase flexibility for future mixed-use development.

16A	CR-3.0 C-2.0 R-2.75 H-60 T	CR-3.0 C-3.0 R-3.0 H-70	Increase flexibility for future mixed-use development.
16B	CR-1.5 C-1.0 R-1.5 H-60 T	CR-1.5 C-1.5 R-1.5 H-70	Increase flexibility for future mixed-use development.
17	CR-3.0 C-2.0 R-2.75 H-110 T	CR-3.0 C-3.0 R-3.0 H-130	Increase flexibility for future mixed-use development.
18	CR-3.0 C-2.0 R-2.75 H-110 T	CR-3.0 C-3.0 R-3.0 H-130	Increase flexibility for future mixed-use development.
19A	CR-3.0 C-2.0 R-2.75 H-60 T	CR-3.0 C-3.0 R-3.0 H-70	Increase flexibility for future mixed-use development.
19B	CR-1.5 C-1.0 R-1.5 H-60 T	CR-1.5 C-1.5 R-1.5 H-70	Increase flexibility for future mixed-use development.
20A	CR-3.0 C-2.0 R-2.75 H-60 T	CR-3.0 C-3.0 R-3.0 H-70	Increase flexibility for future mixed-use development.
20B	CR-1.5 C-1.0 R-1.5 H-60 T	CR-1.5 C-1.5 R-1.5 H-70	Increase flexibility for future mixed-use development.
21	CR-3.0 C-2.0 R-2.75 H-110 T	CR-3.0 C-3.0 R-3.0 H-130	Increase flexibility for future mixed-use development.
22	CR-3.0 C-2.0 R-2.75 H-60 T	CR-3.0 C-3.0 R-3.0 H-70	Increase flexibility for future mixed-use development.
23	CR-3.0 C-2.0 R-2.75 H-110 T	CR-3.0 C-3.0 R-3.0 H-130	Increase flexibility for future mixed-use development.
24	IL-1.0 H-50	IL-1.0 H-50	Confirm existing zoning.

Corrections: There are three errors on Map 8. One is related to Map Numbers 7 and 8E. The current zoning map below shows the block with Map Number 7 as have one zoning classification, not two as Map 8 and Map Number 8E indicate. The current zoning map below also shows the area covered by Map Number 8D as having two zoning classification not one. One matches the classification for Map Number 8D in Table 2, CR-3.0 C-2.0 R-2.75 H-110 T; however, the second area, at the northeast corner of the zoning block, has a zoning classification of CR-3.0 C-2.0 R-2.75 H-75 T- which should be labelled 8E and added to Table 2.

The third error is related to Map Number 9A. Map 8 shows this area as having one zoning classification when it actually has two. The one listed in Table 2 for Map Number 9A, CR-3.0 C-2.0 R-2.75 H-75 T, is accurate for the northern portion of Map Number 9A; however, the second area, at the southwest corner of the zoning block, has a zoning classification of CR-3.0 C-2.0 R-2.75 H-60 T- which should be corrected on Map 8 as Map Number 9C and added to Table 2.



In addition to the map corrections, Table 2 should read:

Map Number	Existing Zoning	Proposed Zoning	Justification
8E	CR-3.0 C-2.0 R-2.75 H-75 T	CR-3.0 C-3.0 R-3.0 H-90	Increase flexibility for future mixed-use development.
9A	CR-3.0 C-2.0 R-2.75 H-75 T	CR-3.0 C-3.0 R-3.0 H-130	Increase flexibility for future mixed-use development.
9B	CR-1.5 C-1.0 R-1.5 H-60 T	CR-3.0 C-3.0 R-3.0 H-70	Increase flexibility for future mixed-use development.
9C	CR-3.0 C-2.0 R-2.75 H-60 T	CR-3.0 C-3.0 R-3.0 H-70	Increase flexibility for future mixed-use development.

Council Staff otherwise supports the zoning recommendations for the Fenton Village District.

2. *Adjacent Communities*

Vision: Consistent with the recommendations of the Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative, the Adjacent Communities can include a greater variety of housing types, fully integrated into the existing fabric, to allow a wider range of residents to enjoy the valued proximity to the downtown.

Goals:

- Maintain these neighborhoods as primarily residential and preserve the mature tree canopy found along many streets.
- Encourage a greater diversity of housing types as recommended by the proposed Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative.
- Preserve existing market-rate affordable housing in this District.



Figure 26. Adjacent Communities Illustrative Diagram

Testimony- Slightly more than half the testimony the Council received on the Silver Spring and Adjacent Communities Plan was directed at the Adjacent Communities. The vast majority of those who reached out to the Council were concerned with potential recommendations in the Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative (AHSI) currently being worked on by the Planning Department, and the impact of these recommendations on their neighborhoods.

Both the Vision and Goals for the Adjacent Communities refer to recommendations in the AHSI study. The AHSI study and related recommendations have not been delivered to Council and are not scheduled to be reviewed prior to approval of this Plan. **Council Staff sees three options:**

1. **Revise the Vision and Goals to remove all references to AHSI. Below are possible edits to the text.**

Vision: [Consistent with the recommendations of the Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative,] The Adjacent Communities may [can] include a greater variety of housing types, fully integrated into the existing neighborhood character and fabric, to allow a wider range of residents to enjoy the valued proximity to the downtown and nearby transit options.

Goals:

- Maintain these neighborhoods as primarily residential and preserve the mature tree canopy found along many streets.
- [Encourage] Support a greater diversity of housing types. [as recommended by the proposed Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative.]
- Preserve existing market-rate affordable housing in this District.

These edits retain the idea that a variety of housing types are envisioned for the Adjacent Communities. This would likely still support future recommendations for development that rely on consistency with the master plan. In other words, future changes to the zoning code could allow a variety of housing types in certain locations, or under certain conditions, or “where consistent with the master plan”. And the revised language above, for the adjacent communities, would support changes to the code as consistent with the master plan.

2. Revise the Vision and Goals to remove all references to the AHSI *and* diversity of housing types.

The Vision for the Adjacent Communities would need to be rewritten and the second goal for the district would be deleted. These changes would address the concerns related to the AHSI and the potential impact of changes in housing types throughout the adjacent communities. However, it would also be inconsistent with proposed changes for blocks that also contain properties in the Fenton Village District.

3. Revise the Vision and Goals to remove all references to AHSI as suggested under Option 1 and redraw the Plan boundary to exclude most of the R-60 properties.

The new boundary would include R-60 blocks that confront or abut a property in the RT-12.5 zone, or Senior Facility³. Map Numbers 75A, 76A, 78, 79, and 99 would contain the only R-60 properties within the new boundary for the Adjacent Communities district. Map Numbers 71-74, 77, 80-87, 89, 91, and 93 would be outside the Plan boundary.

Recommendations:

Urban Design

- Refer to Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative on building form and relationship to street for new permitted housing types.
- All new buildings in these neighborhoods should be compatible in scale with the surrounding development, regardless of building type.
- Maintain mature tree canopy by continuing to plant and replace street trees as needed.
- Implement as many Green Loop elements as possible along the following streets that will be Green Loop Connectors into the downtown:
 - 2nd Avenue,
 - Ellsworth Drive, and
 - Bonifant Street.

Council Staff suggests eliminating the first bullet consistent with removal of other references to the Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative. Council Staff supports the other Urban Design recommendations.

³ Map Number 79.

Parks and Public Spaces

- Ellsworth Urban Park will continue to serve as a key destination in this district; the Plan recommends renovating this park, particularly along the frontage on Colesville Road.

Council Staff supports the Parks and Public Spaces recommendation.

Opportunity Site

- Block including 8505 Springvale and 620 Pershing Drive: This site currently includes a facility for seniors. The Plan proposes a rezoning from R-60 to CRT to support the potential future redevelopment of the full site for multifamily housing.

Council Staff supports the Opportunity Site recommendation.

Zoning

- Confirm all zoning with the exception of the mapped areas shown and described in the table below.
- Convert parcels zoned EOF to CR as shown in the map and the table.
- Convert parcels zoned RT-12.5 to THD as shown in the map and the table.
- Rezone R-60 parcels on blocks in East Silver Spring that include CR parcels in Fenton Village to CRN-0.75 C-0 R-0.75 H-40 as shown in the map and described in the table. This includes the block south of Wayne Avenue and north of Bonifant Street.
- 8901 Colesville Road (former Silver Spring Library site): The current zoning is R-60 with a project currently approved for this site. If the approved project is not realized on this site, this location could be considered for an alternate use and would be appropriate for a Commercial/Residential floating zone. Any potential future use beyond what is currently approved should align and coordinate with the adjacent park.
- Block including 8505 Springvale Road and 620 Pershing Drive: This block currently includes a senior housing facility. Proposed rezoning to CRT for future flexibility for multi-family and/or senior housing.

Below is the proposed zoning map for the Adjacent Communities. The table that follows lists current and proposed zoning for each numbered property/block.



0 500 Feet



0 500 Feet

Map 14. Proposed Adjacent Communities Zoning

Table 8. Proposed Adjacent Communities Zoning

Map Number	Existing Zoning	Proposed Zoning	Justification
71	R-60	R-60	Confirm existing zoning.
72	R-60	R-60	Confirm existing zoning.
73	R-60	R-60	Confirm existing zoning.
74	R-60	R-60	Confirm existing zoning.
75A	R-60	R-60	Confirm existing zoning.
75B	RT-12.5	THD	Update to THD from pre-2014 zone.
76A	R-60	R-60	Confirm existing zoning.
76B	RT-12.5	THD	Update to THD from pre-2014 zone.
77	R-60	R-60	Confirm existing zoning.
77	R-60	R-60	Confirm existing zoning.
79	R-60	CRT-1.5 C-0 R-1.5 H-65	Rezone to allow increased flexibility for multifamily development.
80	R-60	R-60	Confirm existing zoning.
81	R-60	R-60	Confirm existing zoning.
82	R-60	R-60	Confirm existing zoning.
83	R-60	R-60	Confirm existing zoning.
84	R-60	R-60	Confirm existing zoning.
85	R-60	R-60	Confirm existing zoning.
86	R-60	R-60	Confirm existing zoning.
87	R-60	R-60	Confirm existing zoning.
88A	R-60	CRN-0.75 C-0 R-0.75 H-40	Rezone to CRN to allow increased residential density.
88B	R-60	CR-3.0 C-3.0 R-3.0 H-70	Rezone to CR for flexibility for future mixed-use development.
89	R-60	R-60	Confirm existing zoning.
90A	R-30	CRN-0.75 C-0 R-0.75 H-40	Rezone to CRN to allow increased residential density.
90B	R-60	CRN-0.75 C-0 R-0.75 H-40	Rezone to CRN to allow increased residential density.
90C	CRN-0.5 C-0.5 R-0.25 H-35	CRN-0.75 C-0 R-0.75 H-40	Rezone to match adjacent CRN parcels.
91	R-60	R-60	Confirm existing zoning.
92A	R-60	CRN-0.75 C-0 R-0.75 H-40	Rezone to CRN to allow increased residential density.
92B	R-20	CRN-0.75 C-0 R-0.75 H-40	Rezone to CRN to allow increased residential density.
93	R-60	R-60	Confirm existing zoning.
94A	R-20	CRN-0.75 C-0 R-0.75 H-40	Rezone to CRN to allow increased residential density.

94B	R-60	CRN-0.75 C-0 R-0.75 H-40	Rezone to CRN to allow increased residential density.
95	R-60	CRN-0.75 C-0 R-0.75 H-40	Rezone to CRN to allow increased residential density.
96	R-60	CRN-0.75 C-0 R-0.75 H-40	Rezone to CRN to allow increased residential density.
97	CRNF-1.25 C-0.25 R-1.0 H-65	CRN-1.25 C-0.25 R-1.0 H-65	Confirm existing zoning.
98	R-60	CRN-0.75 C-0 R-0.75 H-40	Rezone to CRN to allow increased residential density.
99	R-60	R-60	Confirm existing zoning.

Corrections: Map Number 90C has a current zoning classification of CRN-0.5 C-0.5 R-0.25 H-35. The Plan recommends a new zoning classification to match the proposed zoning classification of Map Number 90A (an abutting property), CRN-0.75 C-0.0 R-0.75 H-35. The proposed zoning classification removes the ability for nonresidential development on this property; however, the current primary use of this property is office – which the current CRN zoning classification allows. **Council Staff suggests supporting the proposed zoning classification for Map Number 90C with the exception of the Commercial (C) FAR, making it C-0.5 instead of C-0.0.** Below is the current zoning map for this property and a portion of the tax assessment record.

Property Info	
Location:	Latitude: 38.9942 Longitude: -77.0229
ACCT #:	01041153
Parcel, Lot, Block:	N/A, P6, U
Address:	809 EASLEY ST SILVER SPRING, 20910
Legal Description:	SILVER SPRING PARK
Landuse:	Office
WSSC Grid:	210NW01
Zoning Info	
Zone:	CRN-0.5 C-0.5 R-0.25 H-35

Account Identifier:

District - 13 Account Number - 01041153

Owner Information

Owner Name:

RED ROCK FILMS INC

Use:

COMMERCIAL

Principal Residence:

NO

Council Staff supports the other zoning recommendations, noting that the Committee's recommendation related to the boundary of the Adjacent Communities could result in further changes to Map 14 and Table 8.

In reviewing testimony regarding the Adjacent Communities, Council staff discovered testimony on two properties in the Downtown North District and an error in the zoning table.

[illegible]

Testimony: The Council received testimony from the neighboring homeowners objecting to the proposed rezoning with a height of 100 feet. As is evident in the map above, the lot line for one of these parcels is extremely close to an abutting home.

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property, height cannot exceed that of a detached house in the abutting zone, and can only increase at a 45-degree angle (one foot increase in height per one foot increase in setback) on the subject property.

For the closest neighboring property, 100 feet in height would be reached about where the blue line stops as shown in the map below (at approximately 85 feet from the neighboring property).

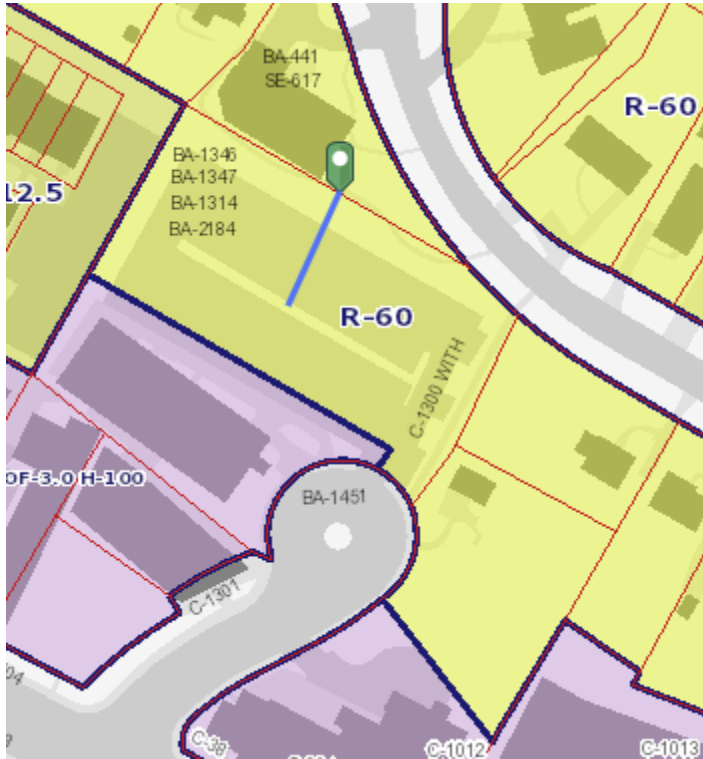


Table 6 should read as follows, unless the Committee believes a lower height is appropriate for the current R-60 parcels recommended for CR-3.0 C-3.0 R-3.0 H-100.

Table 2: Proposed Fenton Village District Zoning			
Map Number	Existing Zoning	Proposed Zoning	Justification
65E	CR-3.0 C-2.0 R-2.75 H-90 T	CR-3.0 C-3.0 R-3.0 H-110	Increase flexibility for future mixed-use development.
66A	EOF-3.0 H-100	CR-3.0 C-3.0 R-3.0 H-100	Update to CR zone from pre-2014 EOF zone.
66B	R-60	CR-3.0 C-3.0 R-3.0 H-100	Consolidate split zoned properties under one zone.

PLAN-WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Housing

In 2019, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) established regional housing targets to address a growing supply gap and affordability issues in the region.⁴ That same year, the

⁴ The 2019 COG report, “Future of Housing in Greater Washington”, can be found here: <https://www.mwcog.org/documents/2019/09/10/the-future-of-housing-in-greater-washington/>

County Council approved a Resolution to Support Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' (MWCOC) Regional Housing Targets for Montgomery County, that committed to adding an additional 10,000 housing units by 2030 to meet the County's housing goals and obligations, including meeting future housing demand from population and job growth.⁵

The Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan allows for the creation of 11,000 multi-family units downtown, building upon the recommendations of the 2000 Plan, which emphasized high density housing downtown and the importance of a thriving residential community in a successful mixed-use urban area. The Plan is described as the first opportunity to implement the vision for housing laid out in Thrive Montgomery 2050. Those housing recommendations include a wide range of policies to help make housing more attainable, including increasing housing production and preserving existing affordable and attainable housing. The Plan references the vision laid out in Thrive Montgomery 2050 as consistent with the Housing Element of 2011 and one that builds upon a foundation of progressive housing policy laid out in several previous master plans, including the Bethesda Downtown Plan, the Veirs Mill Corridor Master Plan, and the Forest Glen Montgomery Hills Sector Plan.⁶

The Plan continues with:

“In implementing the recommendations of *Thrive Montgomery 2050* in the *Silver Spring and Adjacent Communities Plan*, this Plan becomes the first Sector Plan to acknowledge and begins to address the deep disparities in wealth and homeownership that were shaped by a legacy of discriminatory lending practices, restrictive covenants, and single-family zoning and its secondary impacts on neighborhoods that is still being felt today. This Plan supports strategic alignment with the recommendations in the Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative to begin to address decades of inequities to create more equitable, mixed-income neighborhoods and ensure that exclusively single-family zoning is not a barrier to development in an area like Silver Spring, with its many amenities and transit and employment accessibility. This alignment with Attainable Housing Strategies also helps to provide a transition from the downtown commercial uses to the surrounding residential neighborhoods and introduces the potential for new housing typologies in the adjacent communities in the plan area. These parcels would be appropriate for housing types like duplexes and triplexes.”

The Plan also recommends prioritizing providing a range of unit types for a diversity of households, including families, seniors, and persons with disabilities, to allow more diverse households to take advantage of Silver Spring's amenities. Noting that the existing rental units in the downtown are predominately smaller bedroom units. Within the downtown area are more than thirty-five multi-unit residential buildings containing more than 12,000 units. Approximately 43 percent of all units in multi-unit residential buildings are currently market-rate affordable, meaning they are affordable to households earning incomes below 80 percent of the Washington, D.C. metropolitan region's area median income (AMI). At 80 percent AMI in 2020, these units would be affordable to households of three earning around \$90,720 a year. This Plan aims to balance the preservation of existing market-rate affordable housing with the production of new housing, which will result in the production of MPDUs.

⁵ Resolution to Support Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' Regional Housing Targets for Montgomery County, November 2019,

https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/col/2019/20191105/20191105_2B.pdf

⁶ The Housing Element of 2011 was an update to the General Plan, that described the county's housing goals for all types of housing for all ranges of household income. It can be found here:

https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/resources/files/res/2011/20110329_17-78.pdf.

According to the Plan, this preservation and production strategy seeks to retain the existing zoning on many existing market-rate properties, and to rezone select properties to maximize density near transit.

Council Staff recommends removing all references to Thrive Montgomery 2050 and the Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative. Thrive Montgomery 2050 has not yet been passed by this Council, and the AHSI study and related recommendations have not been delivered to Council and are not scheduled to be reviewed prior to approval of this Plan. The text on pages 86-87 of the Plan will need to be revised.

Goals:

The housing goals for the plan are guided by the following policies and practices found in previous and ongoing plans including Thrive Montgomery 2050, the Housing Element of 2011, and previous master plans. The intent of this Plan is to ensure that this Plan is consistent and in sync with current best practices in planning and housing policy. The goals include:

- Expand opportunities to increase residential density, especially along major corridors and in locations where additional housing can assist in the development of Complete Communities.
- Facilitate the development of a variety of housing types in every part of the county but especially in areas near transit, employment, and educational opportunities.
- Support creative housing options including single-room occupancy units (SROs); “missing middle” housing types such as tiny houses, cottages, duplexes, multiplexes, and small apartment buildings; shared housing, cohousing, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), social housing, and cooperative housing to help meet housing needs and diversify housing options.
 - Increase the number of income-restricted affordable housing units, especially for low-income households.
- Prioritize use of public land for co-location of housing and other uses, particularly where government agencies design new facilities or dispose of real property.
- Calibrate the applicability of the Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) program and other affordable housing programs to provide price-regulated units appropriate for income levels ranging from deeply affordable to workforce.

Council Staff recommends removing the reference to Thrive Montgomery 2050 in the introduction of this Goals section.

Recommendations

- Require all Optional Method of Development projects to provide a minimum of 15 percent moderately priced dwelling units (MPDUs) or other DHCA-equivalent affordable housing.
- Preserve existing, market-rate affordable housing where possible, striving for no net loss of affordable housing.
- Publicly owned properties should be encouraged to provide up to 30 percent MPDUs, with 15 percent affordable to households earning at the standard MPDU level of 65-70 percent or less of Area Median Income (AMI) and 15 percent affordable to households earning less than 50 percent of AMI.
- Provide a range of unit types for a diversity of households, including families, seniors, and persons with disabilities.
- Support partnerships among public, private, and philanthropic institutions, when possible, to assist in the development of affordable housing.
- The Plan also recognizes the need and supports development of permanent supportive housing for the homeless in the Plan area.

Council Staff supports the above Plan-wide Housing recommendations.

- Increase infill housing opportunities in office buildings with high vacancy rates and other underused properties by setting Commercial and Residential densities the same in CR zones.

Council Staff supports this recommendation. However, Council Staff notes that the PHED Committee has raised concerns with whether “setting Commercial and Residential densities the same in CR zones” goes far enough to encourage commercial development, given the trend towards building residential development instead. This recommendation to use vacant commercial space to create additional housing should be weighed against the economic development policies of the County.

- The Council should take action on Attainable Housing Strategies and adopt a countywide Zoning Text Amendment to allow duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes by-right with conformance with a pattern book in the Adjacent Communities.
- If there is no action on Attainable Housing Strategies, the relevant recommendations to allow duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes by-right with conformance with a pattern book in the R-60 zone should be adopted in the Adjacent Communities through a Zoning Text Amendment.

Council Staff still recommends removing all references to the AHSI. Council Staff also recommends removing reference to the pattern book and a future ZTA. The revision could read:

- [The Council should take action on Attainable Housing Strategies and adopt a countywide Zoning Text Amendment to allow duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes by-right with conformance with a pattern book in the Adjacent Communities.]
- [If there is no action on Attainable Housing Strategies, the relevant recommendations to allow] Allow duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes [by-right with conformance] that conform with certain design guidelines [a pattern book in the R-60 zone should be adopted in] developed for the Adjacent Communities [through a Zoning Text Amendment].

Testimony: As was noted in the preceding section, the Council received numerous letters and testimony from residents concerned with the recommendations for Adjacent Communities. It should be noted that much of that correspondence and testimony applies these Housing recommendations as well. That said, the Council also received testimony in support of the Plan-wide recommendations on housing.

Council Staff also received comments from the Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) expressing the following concerns:

1. Increasing density through increased height incentivizes developers to delay development until rents or sales prices will support the costs of building at the maximum heights or densities, as was seen in Bethesda. It also creates housing above current market prices.

Council Staff recommends deferring discussion of whether increasing density through increased height leads to delayed development and higher rents until discussion of the Building Height Incentive Zone (BHIZ) at a future worksession.

2. Strengthen the goals of no net loss of market-rate affordable housing by requiring no net loss as a condition for redeveloping properties that have market-rate affordable housing.

Council Staff supports the policy of no net loss as stated in this Plan. Requiring it as a condition of approval is unnecessary. The Board is required to make a finding of consistency with the master plan for approval of all new development.

3. The goal for Adjacent Communities is to encourage a diversity of housing types and preserve existing multi-family housing that is currently affordable, but the limited rezoning of R-60 zones will not provide MPDU affordable housing because MPDU laws only apply to projects with 20 or more units. And, according to the Missing Middle study of Silver Spring, the proposed rezoning would result in units priced above market rates due to constructions costs and higher land values.

Council Staff does not recommend any changes to the Plan based on this comment.

2. Parks, Trails, and Public Spaces

The plan continues to support many of the goals found in the 2000 Silver Spring Central Business District Sector Plan, while also emphasizing the County’s commitment to mitigating climate change, creating complete communities, and advancing racial equity and social justice.

The recommendations included in the parks, trails, and open spaces section, as well as the resilient downtown section strive to address many of the issues highlighted by the community including improving pedestrian and bike infrastructure, improving, and creating more parks and playgrounds, and adding more trees within the commercial core.

Combining these two aspects, the plan envisions a Silver Spring with “new open spaces [to] promote a healthier community for all who spend time in the downtown... [that is] better connected and characterized by green, climate-resilient, walkable streets that are safe and comfortable for everyone – pedestrians, bikers, transit riders, and drivers.”

The goals of the plan, as related to parks, trails and open spaces, support the plan’s four overarching themes of 1) diversity, 2) connectivity, 3) resiliency, and 4) community health. They were developed in alignment with policy guidance from numerous previous and ongoing plans⁷ such as the 2010 Silver Spring CBD Green Space Guidelines, the 2017 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan, and the 2018 Energized Public Spaces (EPS) Functional Master Plan.

Goals:

- Encourage physical activity by providing safe and convenient access to an interconnected, multi-functional, and comfortable network of parks, public spaces, and trails connecting people to jobs, centers of activity, and nature.
- Facilitate social interaction by developing parks that offer easy opportunities for daily
- impromptu interactions with neighbors and organized social gatherings.
- Steward the environment within the urban context by creatively integrating sustainable
- strategies to adapt to and mitigate climate change and maintaining our commitment to
- environmental stewardship.
- Promote economic prosperity by creating fun and appealing park facilities and

⁷ The Plan also cites the Thrive 2050 Plan and 2022 PROS Plan; however, as these are not yet adopted by the Council they should be removed or referenced by footnote as additional unadopted resources.

- programming that energizes Silver Spring, while celebrating its rich history and vibrant culture.

Recommendations:

Equity

A fifth overarching theme that is used to guide the plan's recommendations is equity. The recommendations strive to promote a fair distribution of parks and public spaces that contribute to improving community health and are accessible to all. To increase equity in the plan area the plan recommends:

- Add additional park facilities and programs that promote physical activity, including in small spaces.
- Ensure a fair distribution of the park experiences across the various districts. Parks should be located near transit, accessible by walking and biking, and surrounded by active building frontages.
- Facilitate the creation of new and the renovation of existing parks and public spaces that accommodate multiple needs, including recreation, education, community-building, and environment stewardship within the urban context.
- Promote facilities that celebrate cultural and historic aspects of the community, serve the distinct social connection needs of seniors, teenagers, young adults, and people with disabilities, and contribute to the sense of pride and ownership of parks.
- Expand the urban tree canopy coverage and pervious surfaces in parks and public spaces, both publicly and privately owned. Promote watershed connectivity through education and best stormwater management practices.
- Engage stakeholders such as property owners, developers, non-profit groups, community members, artists, and public agencies to collaborate in delivering creative solutions and development strategies. Work with the community and schools to develop early advocacy programs and activities to encourage nature appreciation, education, and stewardship.

Council Staff supports the recommendations to further equity in Parks and Public Spaces throughout the Plan.

Green Loop Connectivity

- Implement the proposed Green Loop to connect existing and proposed parks and public spaces with other land uses inside the Plan and the surrounding region promoting walking and biking to these places with comfortable, sustainable, safe, and shaded roads, sidewalks, and trails.
- Ensure access to all parks and public spaces – including POPS – that are designed to support casual, impromptu use, and connection with nature and other land uses.
- Improve signage and wayfinding of parks, public spaces, and trails; consider partnering with future commercial/businesses organizations to create a public space map and signage for the Green Loop and the open space network in Silver Spring.
- Promote physical activity, people watching, social connections and integration of amenities and parks and public spaces with internal walking loops inside public spaces and through connections to the Green Loop, respectively.

The Plan contains an entire section on *Connecting the Districts* which includes subsections on *The Green Loop* and *Connecting Across the Rail*. Council Staff supports, in theory, the recommendations related to the Green Loop; however, details regarding the creation of the Green Loop will be reviewed with the broader transportation recommendations as several elements of the Green Loop depend on transportation infrastructure.

Creative Implementation

- Consider short-term/temporary solutions and “pop-up” programming that reflect community identity within temporary/interim parks. Consider empty lots, surface parking areas or other opportunity sites adjacent to the Green Loop as potential pilot sites.

Council Staff supports the recommendation for creative implementation of temporary parks spaces and “pop-ups”.

Equity in Park and Public Spaces Implementation

Silver Spring was identified as an implementation priority area through the mapping of Experience Improvement Areas (EIAs) of the Energized Public Spaces (EPS) Plan with an overlay of the Department’s Equity Focus Areas (EFAs).

Goal:

Address the distribution of park resources in the County’s urbanizing areas. Give a voice to underserved communities and contribute to the efforts initiated by the County Council on racial equity and social justice.

Recommendations:

- Promote a fair distribution of attractive, safe, and fun parks and public spaces as common civic spaces with facilities and programming open to all ages, race, culture, income, and abilities.
- Prioritize and identify opportunity sites and test scenarios to measure the impact of additional development on park facilities to better address distribution of parks resources.
- Utilize EFAs and EIAs as tools to prioritize funding and implementation for parks and public spaces projects.

Council Staff supports the recommendations for equitable implementation of parks and public spaces⁸.

Proposed Park Locations and Recommendations

The 2017 and 2022 PROS Plans and the 2018 EPS Plan state that each area master plan should recommend an interconnected system of parks that achieve multiple objectives. The size and functions of the park and its facilities should be directly proportional to the projected density and land use patterns of the community.

Map 21 (below) illustrates the proposed location of parks and public spaces creating an interconnected network through the Green Loop system. The designation of Civic Green, Plaza, Neighborhood Green,

⁸ However, this section more be better located following the section on Equity (pgs 96-97 in the Plan).

Proposed Parks⁹:

Civic Green - Parks and Public spaces that emphasize social gathering.

- Create: Ripley District Civic Green
Location: Ripley District
Size: 0.5 acre minimum; 1.5 acres ideal
- Create: Gene Lynch Civic Green (currently under construction)
Location: Metro Center District
Size: 0.25 acre
- Create: Blair Park/The Terrace (currently approved under the Blairs Master Plan)
Location: South Silver Spring
Size: 0.95 acre

Plaza - These spaces align with and complement the Civic Green urban parks subcategory. These spaces also emphasize social gathering.

- Create: Sonny's Park (currently approved under the Blairs Master Plan)
Location: South Silver Spring District
Size: 0.4 acre

Countywide Urban Recreational Park - Oriented to the recreational needs of surrounding neighborhoods and districts, this type of park provides space for many activities.

- Renovate: Jesup Blair Park
Location: South Silver Spring District
Size: 14.2 acres

At 14.2 acres, Jesup Blair Local Park is the largest park within the Plan area and is designated in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. Community members have stated that this park is underutilized and that it needs facilities, landscape improvements and additional recreational experiences. Access to the park presents additional challenges, as it is located away from downtown Silver Spring and is separated by physical barriers, including railroad tracks, fences, and both Georgia Avenue and Blair Road.

⁹ The current naming of proposed parks and public spaces is subject to change and will be defined during the implementation phase of each project.

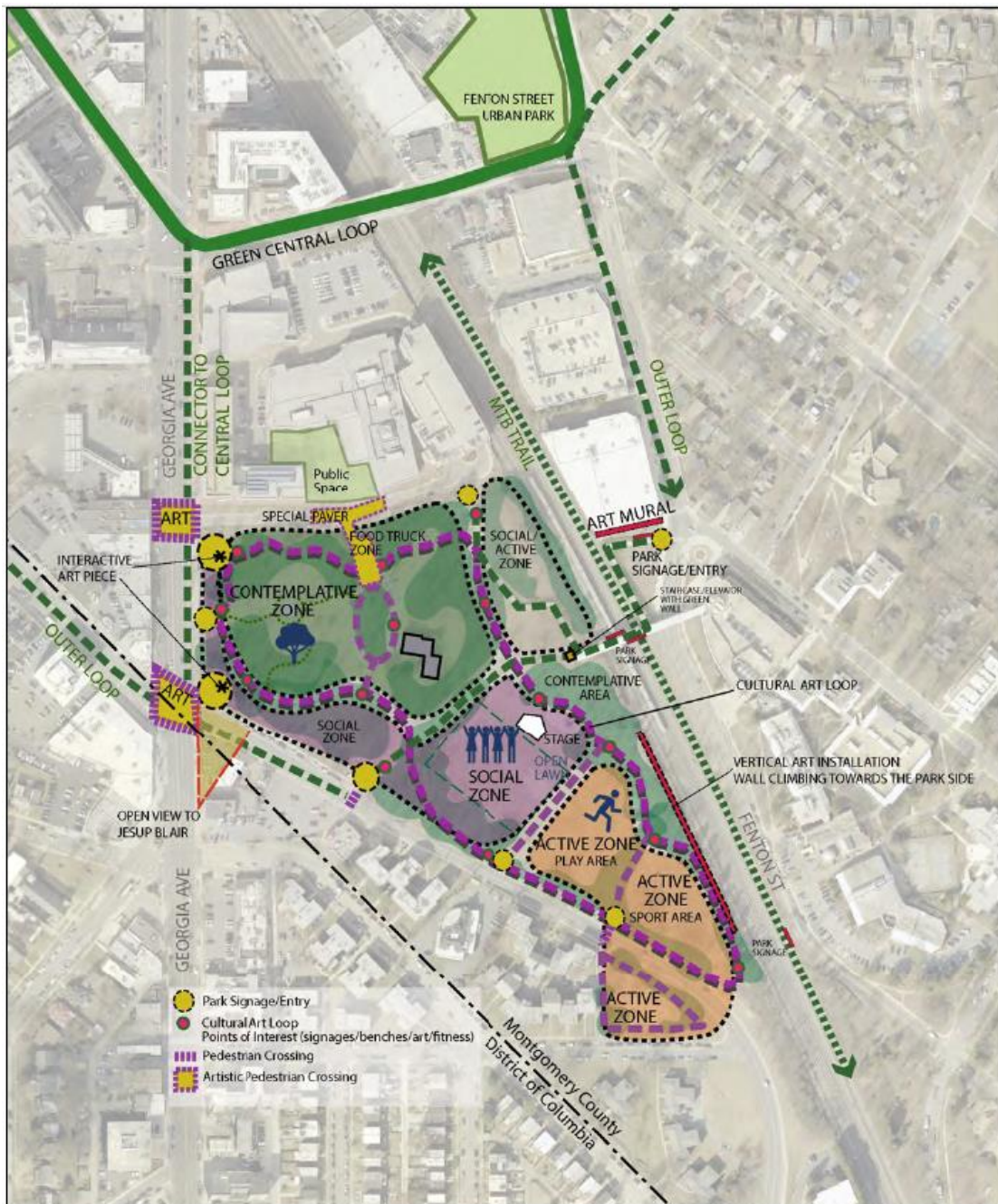


Figure 43. Illustrative Concept for Jesup Blair Urban Recreational Park

The Parks Department is currently developing a concept plan for Jesup Blair Park, concurrent with this Plan so that its analysis and design work capitalize on the feedback and outreach efforts underway.

Preliminary Concept Plan Recommendations:

- Improve physical and visual access to the park by:
 - Implementing the Green Loop
 - Expanding connectivity/visibility of the park along Georgia Avenue
 - Improving wayfinding with signage and public art along Fenton Street
 - Improving pedestrian network with improvements and traffic calming along Blair Road

- Enhancing the pedestrian crossings along Georgia Avenue with art treatments
- Considering the removal or reduction of perimeter fencing and
- Considering the potential to locate a public transit stop near the park.
- Promote social connection, diversity, community health, identity, and sense of ownership by:
 - Promoting strong programming for the park
 - Encouraging multi-use spaces such as lawns, play areas, and courts instead of specialized uses
 - Creating a variety of experience zones within the park, emphasizing active, social, and contemplative areas, making the park a destination place with many things to do for different age groups, interests, and abilities
 - Introducing opportunities for public art that celebrate cultural aspects of the community
 - Creating a signature internal active, recreational, and cultural art trail loop
 - Considering the use of a diverse palette of plant and tree species that provide different colors, form, and textures throughout all the seasons
 - Engaging the community to activate the park and
 - Considering options to extend park hours.

Testimony: The Council received testimony primarily focused on the Jesup Blair House and its potential future uses; however, where this testimony commented on the broader Jesup Park, it recommended retaining much of the park as it currently is, concerned that over activation and development of the park would limit its appeal as an open area for a variety of unprogrammed, impromptu activities.

Community Use Urban Recreational Park - These parks serve the immediate neighborhood. Physical activity is the main emphasis of this park, but social and contemplative opportunities should also be considered.

- Create: South Silver Spring Park
Location: South Silver Spring District
Size: 1.62 acres
- Create: Downtown North Park
Location: Downtown North District
Size: 0.5 acre minimum
- Create: Metro Center Park
Location: Metro Center District
Size: 0.5 acre minimum
- Create: Bonifant Park
Location: Metro Center District
Size: 0.10 acre minimum
- Create: Fitness Park (currently approved in the Blairs Master Plan)
Location: South Silver Spring
Size: 0.22 acre
- Renovate/Repurpose: Ellsworth Park
Location: Adjacent Communities
Size: 3.6 acres

Neighborhood Green - This park is very flexible and supports social connections, physical activities, and access to nature.

- Renovate/Expand: Fenton Street Park
Location: Fenton Village District

Size: 1.75 acres

- Create: Fenton Village Park
Location: Fenton Village District
Size: 0.5 minimum
- Create: Ellsworth District Park
Location: Ellsworth District
Size: 0.5 acre minimum
- Create: Rachel Carson, Blair Stomping, The Mews, and Lucy's Landing (currently approved in the Blairs Master Plan)
Location: South Silver Spring District
Size: 1 acre (all 4 parcels combined)
- Create: Falkland Park (and Connect: Falkland Stream Restoration to north parcel)
Location: Falklands District
Size: 0.5 minimum (consolidated space)

Pocket Green - This smaller park will allow for “pauses” with a landscaped setting along the streets between larger parks within the parks and public spaces network.

- Renovate: Acorn Park
Location: South Silver Spring District
Size: (missing in Plan)
- Develop: Philadelphia Park
Location: Fenton Village District
Size: 0.18 acre
- Retain: King Street Park
Location: South Silver Spring District
Size: 0.38 acre

Temporary/Interim Parks - A temporary park is a type of park created for a certain period of time in a location that is not currently planned as future public space. An interim park is a type of park created to bridge the time gap between design, funding, and construction of a permanent public space and can accommodate temporary uses until resources for permanent uses become available.

The plan specifies recommended actions for 19 parks and public spaces in the Plan area. The recommendations include the creation of 13 parks, as well as the renovation, expansion, or repurposing of four parks. The recommendations also include the development of Philadelphia Pocket Green Park in Fenton Village and the retention of a community garden in King Street Park in South Silver Spring. Planning staff indicates that the parks and open space recommendations will mainly use CIP funding for implementation.

In addition, the plan includes a recommendation for on-site public open spaces. This recommendation states that applicants for Optional Method development projects required to provide public open space on a site not recommended for a new public space in the Plan area be encouraged to contribute to the creation of new and/or improvement of existing public parks recommended by this Plan, preferably within the same district. This recommendation is intended to channel resources to create new and improve existing public parks instead of creating on-site public open spaces that are too small, fail to enhance the public realm and prevent buildings from activating the street.

Council staff supports the Park recommendations offered in the Plan.

Roberta Faul-Zeitler 8904 Colesville Road, Woodside Park, Silver Spring MD 20910
faulzeitler@verizon.net. Cell: 301-263-4248

Testimony for Montgomery County Council February 17, 2022
Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Master Plan

WHERE ARE THE ARTS IN THE DOWNTOWN SILVER SPRING MASTER PLAN?

The SSDAC is an ambitious master plan, proposing in the next 20 years to double the size of the current population (to 46,300); to double employment (to 44,000); and to create 11,000 new “multifamily” residences. (p. 76) . There are already 34 high-rise, multifamily buildings with 12,000 units built in Downtown. This plan seeks to make Silver Spring the “premier” office destination in the next 20 years (p.87) with office towers up to 300-360 feet in height (p.78)

There is a serious omission in the Master Plan that continues almost entirely throughout the 190 pages of the draft. **The arts, culture, entertainment, and nighttime economy** of Silver Spring are conspicuously absent, or without substantive information, in virtually the entirety of the SSDAC master plan text. In the Plan’s Appendices, the arts are mentioned primarily (Outreach Appendix) with random positive comments by the public as a desire to expand art, jazz, clubs and nightlife.

The SSDAC Master Plan **fails almost completely to address the role of arts and entertainment (including the night-time economy) in Downtown Silver Spring** as mainstream integral parts of the “Downtown” and certainly key to Silver Spring’s economic success (as well as the well-being of a growing local population) now and for the future. At their best the arts are transformative in shaping and improving the lives and well-being of youngsters, families, seniors, the disabled and people in under-resourced areas.

It is a shocking display of ignorance by the planners, and needs to be corrected immediately by the Planning Department and Planning Board --with research, data, metrics and recommendations added to the master plan **to integrate the arts into every aspect of the Downtown development.**

Numerous arts and cultural venues (theaters, concert halls, studio spaces etc) in Silver Spring have matured as cultural assets over the past 20 years; professionals in the visual and performing arts – as well as retirees and volunteers --have contributed their time and talent to the arts; and events such as the *2019 Downtown Jazz Festival* have generated millions of dollars in revenue and tax dollars.

Arts, entertainment and the night-time economy can help grow the Downtown by attracting new employers, new businesses and new residents including families. *There are more arts and entertainment assets (buildings/venues, in Silver Spring than virtually any other Urban District in Montgomery County.*

How is it possible that the people drafting – with Planning Board review – the Master Plan could be so willfully ignorant of the assets and potential to capture economic and community-building opportunities in their recommendations for future Downtown development?

This is a plain vanilla development plan without the enrichment that makes an urban area a great place to work, live and spend leisure time... in other words, *to thrive*.

RECOMMENDATIONS –AN INITIAL LIST

- Create a Master Plan Appendix on Arts and Entertainment for the official SSDAC Master Plan that includes research, data, metrics and supports the addition of Recommendations into the final SSDAC Master Plan
- Consolidate any/all text/recommendations on the “arts” from the current draft Master Plan into a **chapter or dedicated section that allows for public comment and for revisions and additions**
- Update the *Night-Time Economy study* from 2013 to determine the assets and potentials of night-time economy (bars, clubs, restaurants, theater, movies etc) as economic generator
- “Connecting the Districts” (see 2.2) Create a SSDAC Master Plan Map (and wayfinding system) that identifies all arts and entertainment sites, to establish connectivity and public wayfinding—for incorporation into the Master Plan and in street graphics
- Identify buildings in Fenton Village/ South Silver Spring—as well as willing building owners-- to permanently donate space (or provide space for indoor “tactical urbanism”) for arts uses; temporary spaces for classes, exhibitions, window art or murals, visual arts
- Use the Connectivity and Infrastructure Fund (p.78) to provide for development of Downtown arts and entertainment
- Establish a permanent, professional mural arts program with juried competitions for mural art that enhances public spaces in the Downtown -- alleys, byways, underpasses, permanent undeveloped/exposed walls of existing building (See Philadelphia Mural Program)
- Add a commitment to the SSDAC Master Plan (goal) for facilities and opportunities for underserved youth populations in the arts

WHAT IS MISSING FROM THE SSDAC PLAN !!

Economic Development (Section 3.5 p.87): In less than 2 pages, the Master Plan offers a limited number of goals and recommendations approved by the Planning Board for the next 20 years of development in Silver Spring: The primary goal is to “make Silver Spring into a premier office destination.”

This section focuses on the need for “policies and interactions that attract jobs to fill empty office space” before new development of commercial space can be achieved. (p.84)

The plan identifies Downtown as having “a vibrant retail market with sizeable clusters of diverse and independent retailers...” at the same time lamenting the number of vacant and underutilized spaces in several Downtown areas such as Fenton Village (p.84).

The arts are given no acknowledgment as contributors – real and projected into the future-- to bolster economic resilience and community vitality of the Silver Spring area. No metrics, no data in Appendices

“Arts and entertainment venues” are barely mentioned in Section 3.5, along with a passing mention of “civic amenities,” lacking any substantive description or depth.

Community Facilities: At 3.8 of the Downtown Master Plan (pp. 158-59) The draft plan lumps together “community facilities” such as the AFI Silver Theater, firehouse, library, farmers’ market and eldercare center as achievements over the past 20 years, plus a County Aquatic and Recreation Center now under development in a private-sector development. It skips entirely many additional facilities that serve arts and entertainment functions (*see Background & Assets subhead below, pp 5-8*).

Lumped together, the facilities listed above are hardly equivalent assets-- – given that the farmers market is an outdoor portable venue occurring on a privately owned street; and the firehouse (with emergency medical service) is an essential service, a safety net for the community.

3.8 suggests that given the wealth of new facilities over the past 20 years (firehouse, library) that few-to-no new “community” facilities should be considered. This probably also extends to assets that need updating (the Civic Center), renovation into functioning arts venues, and especially full restoration for use of Jesup Blair House, to reach their full potential in serving the public. This needs to be revised and addressed.

SSDAC MASTER PLAN PAGE BY PAGE

The Summary (Section 1.7 p. 18) No mention of the arts . Emphasis is bioscience, technology and education. Page 8: “Investment in civic spaces, the arts, and street-activating retail together with the relocation of Discovery...brought new energy and economic vitality to the CBD.”

p.26 Consider additional engaging contributions from local artists along the wall of the tunnel. (Georgia underpass)

2.3.1 Ellsworth District “New development should strengthen Civic Building and Veterans Plaza as primary center of activity and gathering...” (No arts recommendations)

2.3.2 Fenton Village “ Build on relationships with nearby Artspace SS and Montgomery College to further expand opportunities for public art and arts-related uses.” (No arts recommendations)

2.3.3 Metro Center (No arts recommendations)

2.3.4 Ripley Parks (No arts recommendations)

2.3.5 So Silver Spring “ Collaborate with Montgomery College to expand educational and science and technology programs in South SS” (No arts recommendations) . Reimagine JB Park

2.3.6 Downtown North District (No arts recommendations)

2.3.7 Falklands Historic preservation (No arts recommendations)

2.3.8 Adjacent Communities (No arts recommendations)

3.0 Planwide Recommendations (pp.7-78) No arts

3.2 Economic Growth (p.84) “It is home to arts and entertainment venues...” Goals: No arts recommendations

3.3 Housing/ 3.4 Urban design (tactical urbanism, placemaking) No arts recommendations

3.5 Parks/Trails/Public Spaces (p.94) “multi-use parks” Goals: “Promote economic prosperity by creating fun and appealing park facilities and programming that energize Silver Spring while **celebrating its rich history and vibrant culture.**”

3.5.2 Recommendations(p.96) “Celebrate SS’s Culture and History- Promote facilities that celebrate cultural and historic aspects of the community.... The proposed Cultural Arts Loop in JB Park.. a venue to celebrate more inclusive SS history. (*What about arts that do not serve an historical purpose?*)

3.5.4/C1 Renovate Jesup Blair Park. (p. 105) “Wayfinding and public art along Fenton Street.”

No reference to Montgomery College’s Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation Arts Center, in close proximity to Jesup Blair Park, for the park redevelopment.

p. 106 Art crossings for two pedestrian crossings on Georgia Avenue

p.107 “improve connectivity of the JB historic house” (*there is NO recommendation to restore and use JB House for the arts and arts outreach*)

p. 107 Cultural Art Loop: : recreational and cultural art trail loop... with fitness equipment” (???)

3.8 p. 156 Community facilities “as a result of these efforts over 20 years [library, firehouse, restoration of AFI Silver Theatre] few new community facilities are being recommended in this plan.” (**None were found**)

3.8.3 Montgomery College p. 157 “The Plan recommends working with the College to explore and develop opportunities to expand the campus program in South Silver Spring. (*Very weak statement with no supporting material*)

3.9 Historic Resources p. 166 Mentions historic buildings: Silver Spring Theatre, the Fillmore.

p. 167 Recommends adaptive use of the SS Shopping Center *parking lot* for active uses

p. 176 Recommends interpretation (street markers) of historic sites related to racial discrimination , the Ethiopian community, Roscoe Nix

Section 4.1.1 Connectivity and Infrastructure Fund (CIF)/ 4.1.2 Building Heights Incentive Zone (No arts mentioned as projects or benefits)

Section 4.1.3 Fenton Village Overlay Zone No arts recommendations

Section 4.1.4 Ripley/South SS No arts/arts facilities recommendations

Section 4.1.12 Public Benefits in CR Zones (no arts/arts facilities listed as public benefits)

Section 4.3 p. 184 Capital Improvements: Proposes park named for Rachel Carson (on private land ?)

Section 4.5 Partnerships (p. 187) “The Sector Plan supports the priorities of...the Arts and Entertainment District in their common mission **to provide public services and amenities to the members of the downtown Silver Spring Communities.**” *(Please read this several times !!)*

“Use arts and culture to celebrate the past, present and future **cultures that are part of the Silver Spring community.**” *(Arts must have wider audience than people in Downtown Communities!)*

Section 4.5.2 (pp. 188/189) Arts and Entertainment District Recommendations:

(189) “Create an Arts & Entertainment Plan that identifies sustained resources for an arts and entertainment **management entity** commensurate with SS’s potential... grow the district’s offerings, programming, activities and marketing.”

(189)“Partner with property owners to capture underutilized street-level retail spaces to create an arts incubator...”

(189) “New public art...should **represent and support the diverse communities of Silver Spring.**”

Appendices: No Arts & Entertainment Appendix

BACKGROUND & DOWNTOWN ASSETS

(Note: Some of the text below is drawn directly from arts organization web sites)

Silver Spring has more arts and entertainment facilities than any other Downcounty location in Montgomery County MD.

The Night-Time Economy: In 2013 a study of the *Night-Time Economy of Montgomery County* was conducted with Messrs Alborno, Glass, Jawando and others. There is NO reference to the night-time economy and its potential benefits anywhere in the SSDAC Master Plan. Oct 28, 2013

http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/NighttimeEconomy/Resources/Files/NETF_Final_Report.pdf

The Silver Spring Arts & Entertainment District: In 2001, The Silver Spring **Arts and Entertainment District** (SSDAC pp 188-189) was granted a State of Maryland charter with special tax abatement

privileges for (businesses) that are eligible. "In FY16, the economic impact of Silver Spring's festivals and public events generated \$118,948,287 in visitor spending [Maryland's Arts and Entertainment Districts Impact Analysis, Regional Economic Studies Institute]." (See pp 188/189 of SSDAC Plan)

<https://silverspringdowntown.com/arts-and-entertainment-district>

From the A/E website: "The benefits offered to designated districts include property tax credits for new construction or renovation of certain buildings that create live-work space for artists and/or space for arts and entertainment enterprises, an income tax subtraction modification for income derived from artistic work sold by "qualifying residing artists", and an exemption from the Admissions and Amusement tax levied by an "arts and entertainment enterprise" or "qualifying residing artist" in a district." **These are all tools that can be used for future economic and community development in every part of Downtown, but the SSDAC Plan fails to mention them at all.**

The Silver Spring Arts and Entertainment District was designated on December 31, 2001 as an Arts and Entertainment District by the State of Maryland. Maryland's Arts & Entertainment (A&E) Districts help develop and promote community involvement, tourism and business revitalization **through tax-related incentives** that attract artists, arts organizations and other creative enterprises.

Silver Spring is now home to over 50 arts and humanities organizations, popular arts venues, entertainment businesses, etc. which attract hundreds of thousands of visitors. In FY16, the economic impact of Silver Spring's festivals and public events generated \$118,948,287 in visitor spending [Maryland's Arts and Entertainment Districts Impact Analysis, Regional Economic Studies Institute].

Maryland is one of the first states in the country to develop Arts and Entertainment Districts on a statewide basis. The benefits offered to designated districts include property tax credits for new construction or renovation of certain buildings that create live-work space for artists and/or space for arts and entertainment enterprises, an income tax subtraction modification for income derived from artistic work sold by "qualifying residing artists", and an exemption from the Admissions and Amusement tax levied by an "arts and entertainment enterprise" or "qualifying residing artist" in a district. This district is supported in part by the [Maryland State Arts Council](#)

The AFI Silver Theater and Cultural Center: A designated historic building in Silver Spring, the AFI Silver was completed in April 2003 at a cost of \$20 million and includes multiple theater/event spaces and an experimental black box theater. Its main auditorium hosts the "DC Metro area's third-largest commercial movie theater screen, and the second-largest commercial movie theater screen outside of the [Smithsonian Institution](#)" Academy-Award winning actor/director Clint Eastwood was a keynote speaker at the Grand Opening April 4, 2003. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b12qHBbQqBk>

"The AFI Silver undoubtedly will become an internationally known landmark in the world of film," [said then-] Montgomery County Executive Douglas Duncan.

"The \$20 million rehab is being called the "crown jewel" of a larger \$400 million project aimed at transforming Silver Spring into an arts and entertainment destination." (*Washington Post*)

The AFI Silver is the result of a restoration project for the original Silver Theatre in Silver Spring, designed by [movie palace](#) architect [John Eberson](#) and constructed in 1938.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AFI_Silver

<https://www.bizjournals.com/washington/stories/2003/04/14/focus7.html><https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/2003/02/13/its-almost-showtime-for-new-afi-theater/d25b932b-588a-4267-86ce-d116e8726545/>

The Fillmore: In the former JC Penney Building, the structure was renovated at a cost to taxpayers of \$11.2 million, into a 2000-person stand-up club/venue approved in a lease-deal with Live Nation (the world's largest entertainment company) by the Montgomery County Executive Ike Leggett with special economic benefits to serve as a contemporary music/entertainment venue that would attract a different audience to Downtown, with a lengthy lease and annual leasing fee of \$90,000. The original lease states required use for community events and nonprofit fundraisers.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/fillmore-silver-spring-makes-splashy-entrance-on-dcs-concert-scene/2011/09/01/gIQA5DjLFK_story.html

The SS Library: Built at a cost of \$69.7 million, the Library offers additional flexible space for educational/cultural activities. Tenants have included the Levine School and formerly, the Gandhi Brigade (a youth media arts program) as tenants in the building. The Levine School continues to operate "Levine Music" as a place for a wide range of music instruction.

<https://bethesdamagazine.com/bethesda-beat/news/take-a-look-inside-the-new-silver-spring-library/#:~:text=Hundreds%20of%20people%20attended%20the,portion%20cost%20about%20%2435%20million.>

Levine Music: At its Silver Spring campus, "Levine Music students find a diverse range of musical activities, a supportive environment, and dedicated teachers to challenge their creative limits and to guide them. In addition to traditional one-on-one music education, such programs as their Summer Camp, Early Childhood and Elementary Music program, and adult Community Choruses foster musical discovery in inviting group settings. They encourage students to join in our jazz ensembles, chamber music groups, choruses, musical theatre, and rock groups, to gather with friends informally around a musical activity, and to participate in collaborative programs with other leading music and arts organizations across the National Capital region.

"Levine Music also believes that opportunities to hear great musicians, and to perform, can be important parts of a well-rounded music education. **Levine's performance series (Levine Presents) offers master classes with visiting artists of international renown and faculty performances in prominent venues.**"

<https://silverspringdowntown.com/go/levine-music>

Montgomery College in Takoma/Silver Spring: With 7800 students from 140 countries (and 100 areas of study) the College features a School of Art and Design. It has multiple active arts and cultural facilities

on Georgia Avenue in Silver Spring, open to public participation. It offers program of events, ranging from a free concert by the Baltimore Symphony (Feb 6 2022) to the Annual Marlow guitar concert series, with a paid subscription of hundreds countywide.

Montgomery College Cultural Arts Center : “Located on Montgomery College's Takoma Park/Silver Spring campus (7995 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, MD), The CAC complex was designed by The SmithGroup and opened in 2009. The complex consists of a 500 seat main multi-use concert hall & theatre space (Theatre I), a 116 seat lecture hall or laboratory theatre space (Theatre II), a dance studio (Dance Cube), the Cultural Arts Center Gallery, a film editing lab, and multiple classrooms for academic classes and workshops. All of these gathering spaces are immediately adjacent to our large main lobby, or atrium. A large marquee faces north at the intersection of Georgia Avenue and East-West Highway and informs the community about events occurring in the Cultural Arts Center.

“Through the programs of the Cultural Arts Center, we seek to improve cultural literacy, encourage cross-cultural understanding, and to build bridges between the arts, cultural studies, and all disciplines concerned with the expression of culture. We seek to acknowledge the differences and similarities between our own cultures and those surrounding us. In order to meet this mission, the CAC provides a comprehensive program focusing on the cultural intersection of the arts, sciences, humanities, and social sciences, and the influence of human culture on the natural and built environments. We examine traditional and contemporary indigenous, American, and international cultural expression through presentation of music, theatre, dance, cultural exhibitions, film, lectures, forums and cultural exhibitions. Through less formal gatherings we encourage opportunities for our students, the community, faculty, and staff to gather and engage in discussions about our own and other cultures. The programs of the CAC, and the CAC facility supports all areas of the campus including student life, academic programs of all kinds, and external community use in the form of performances, workshops and conferences. We frequently provide opportunities addressing campus and college-wide initiatives related to diversity and multiculturalism.” <https://mcblogs.montgomerycollege.edu/cac/>

The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation Arts Center (Montgomery College): The visual arts and design programs at the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus are held in the award-winning new Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation Arts Center, located right across the pedestrian bridge from the main campus.

“Situated between the 14 acres of historic Jesup Blair Park and the College's architecturally distinctive performing arts center, the facility has much to offer. You'll find spacious, modern studios and labs for ceramics, sculpture, printmaking, crafts, weaving, drawing, design, painting, as well as traditional and digital photography. A tiered lecture hall provides ample space for art history classes and presentations.

“The King Street Gallery, with its exposed infrastructure and open ceilings, offers a grand space for discovering art. A diverse and thoughtful series of art exhibitions enhances the total educational experience. Students also have the convenience of their own digital labs, art library, art supply/book store, and snack bar as they study, learn, and create inside this unique arts

facility.” <https://silverspringdowntown.com/go/montgomery-college-morris-and-gwendolyn-cafritz-art-center>

Montgomery College Black Box Theater

<https://silverspringdowntown.com/go/montcoll-at-tp-black-box-theatre>

NOAA AUDITORIUM AND SCIENCE CENTER

<https://silverspringdowntown.com/go/noaa-auditorium-and-science-center>

OTHER ASSETS There are over 50 studios, galleries, venues, black box theaters, intimate venues in the study area for concerts, music and dance instruction, major motion pictures, independent film, film festivals, literary events, media arts, and public jazz festivals. **These facilities and offerings are substantially more robust than almost any nearby location in Montgomery County MD.** Link

CARPE DIEM ARTS – “Bringing the Arts to Life” (founder Busy Graham) is one of the most prolific arts and cultural presenting organizations in Montgomery County, with strong ties to Silver Spring, and a deep commitment to underserved youth and communities. CARPE DIEM is seeking permanent residence for a multi-purpose arts facility-- in a fully restored Jesup Blair House in a fully renovated JB Park (104-110). The SSDAC Master Plan does not commit to full restoration and reuse of JB House
<https://www.carpediemarts.org/>

PEOPLE IN THE ARTS & LETTERS:

Silver Spring, including its “adjacent neighborhoods” has been the hometown or (current) residence of a variety of accomplished people in the arts and letters, as well as the entertainment field. This is historically noteworthy –given the emphasis in the SSDAC Master Plan on legacy businesses in Fenton Village and the desire to acknowledge people who, in the history of Silver Spring, have shaped national policy. These individuals from the arts, letters and entertainment fields should be recognized as part of Silver Spring history and included in an Arts & Entertainment Appendix to the SSDAC Master Plan. *[All names need to be rechecked.]*

Author and environmentalist Rachel Carson

Goldie Hawn (actress) attended Blair HS

Carl Bernstein (journalist)

Ben Stein (humorist and commentator)

George Pelecanos (author of 20 books)

David Maraniss (journalist, biographer, Pulitzer Prize winner)

Sylvester Stallone (check attended Woodlin ES and Blair HS) Father was a barber in Silver Spring

Dave Chappelle (comedian) attended Woodlin, Springbrook HS

Lewis Black (comedian)

Connie Chung (journalist, tv anchor) graduated from Blair HS

Mike Ehrmantrout (actor “Mike” on *Breaking Bad*; *Better Call Saul*)

Annie Leibovitz (photographer)

(continues on next page)

Ann McGovern Scheiner (celebrated writer of “Golden” books for children) lived in Woodside Forest
Valerie Tripp (author of American Girl book series) lives in Silver Spring
Michael Dirda (critic, writer, Pulitzer Prize winner) lives in Woodside Park

✿END✿

DHCA Comments on the Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan

The housing and affordable housing plan for Silver Spring presents a set of recommended changes which are fundamentally consistent with the Thrive Montgomery 2050 plan. The housing objectives of the Plan mirror the Thrive focus on expanding the numbers of units as the answer to affordability, projecting the recommended density changes to allow 11,000 additional units in the Plan area.

The Plan does not address the following critical issues related to the impact of increased density on the ability to retain and expand affordability.

1. Increasing density through increased height (ranging from 10 to 70 additional feet) has the effect of incentivizing developers to delay development until the rents or sales prices will support the costs of building at the maximum heights and density. The experience of Bethesda shows that creating density this way delays housing creation and produces units well above current market prices.
2. The Plan recommends preserving existing market-rate affordable housing where possible, striving for no net loss. This should be strengthened by statements that require no net loss as a condition for redeveloping properties that have market-rate affordable housing. No net loss standards need to include provisions that these redeveloped properties will give qualified existing residents priority to retain or return to an appropriately sized unit.
3. The Adjacent Communities plan sets Goals to encourage greater diversity of housing types and preserve existing multifamily housing that is currently affordable. The limited rezoning of R-60 zones on streets immediately adjacent to the CBD would support additional density without providing for MPDU affordable housing – the MPDU law applies only to projects with 20 or more units. Also, according to the Missing Middle study of Silver Spring, the proposed rezoning would generally result in units priced above current market rates for comparably sized, driven not only by the costs of construction but also by higher land values resulting from the rezoning.

Silver Spring Downtown & Adjacent Communities Plan

Testimony by George French, 2/17/22

I crafted and submitted testimony concerning this initiative to the Planning Board, 12/2/2021. I was put in one of the matrix summary boxes for comments that were completely, 100% opposite of my testimony in this regard. I stated NOT to renovate and construct more park “amenities” in Jesup Blair Park, but rather restore the Jesup Blair House and lease it to a group to further activate the Park which some people consider “underutilized.” There is an organization ready and able to activate and lease the Historic Mansion/House. That is Carpe Diem Arts run by the multitalented award winning founder and executive director, Busy Graham. They have had meetings with state and local government officials, the Parks Dept, architects, interested arts organizations and concerned individuals who would be willing to lease and program the House.

The Park is a Gem! Except for minor maintenance, let it be! Some may have the wrong impression about the recreation facilities available. There are lighted basketball courts that get no mention in the study, which gives the wrong impression of the perceived need for basketball courts. Parks sports a full size regulation soccer field which has myriad uses, jogging paths, amphitheater, and 2 tennis courts.

From the plan, staff seems as if they would turn the Historic Park into a circus park, or a carnival park or an amusement park. I am totally opposed to that concept. Please leave the Park alone. The Park is a Gem! It has 330 trees in its 15 acres; 20 of which are ancient oaks. The Park would make a wonderful Arboretum No dog park please with its attendant problems. In the Parks public dog park survey several parks were favored ahead of Jesup Blair Park; with patrons begging to receive a dog park. I believe the more requested parks were North Four Corners Park, Nolte, and one other.

Please request and read the comments that were left on the Montgomery Planning MCRReactMap website, requested by Parks and Planning offering comments on what is liked, not liked, and needs fixing about Jesup Blair Park. There are many good recommendations not collated or otherwise presented from this interactive site. Again, the BEST way to activate the Park further is to restore the Mansion and its Annex and lease to arts groups led by Carpe Diem Arts!

I am opposed to the Parks dept proposal to spend \$8 million to construct a one acre interim park at 1110 East West Hwy. A fraction of that amount could be used to restore the Jesup Blair House. Then the Plan is to spend millions more in the future, to expand this interim park by a half acre more and make it permanent. This is only 4 blocks from the Jesup Blair House and 3 blocks from Jesup Blair Park, a Park falsely perceived by many officials as “underutilized.” This begs the question of why have competing parks if you believe the established park is sparsely used. Please fix up the Mansion first before constructing the interim park. Restore the Mansion first, and then revisit the proposed new park later.

To safely access the Park and see that it has more users, set up more cross walks or enhanced cross walks on Ga. Av. and Blair Rd. for South Silver Spring patrons of the Park. The other answer is to fix up the mansion and lease to Carpe Diem Arts.

Here is the cost of the proposed Urban Park at 1110 East West Highway: \$7, 500,000 to acquire the 1 acre piece of land (from the Parks land acquisition fund) for the property. Then \$500,000 to demolish and land fill the NTB building, a useful business and the former Coca cola bottling plant, and set up an Interim park. Then spend around \$3,000,000 to \$4,000,000 (this is unspecified) for the half acre adjacent church property to expand the interim park to 1.5 acres. Other yearly costs associated with this endeavor: \$2,500 OBI (Operating Budget Impacts), initially for Interim park, expanding to \$5,000/yr for the completed park. Figures are from MOCO announcement.

George French, Takoma Park, MD

**SSDT/AC Testimony by Marcie Stickle, Silver Spring Historical Society, Advocacy Chair
County Council, Th., 2/17/2022**

Restoration of our historic Jesup Blair House [The 1850 Moorings], must swiftly be brought to fruition, and immediately re-entered into the CIP process! Our historic 15-acre Green Oasis of a Park is already active:

The CIP process noted on the Parks chart for J.B. Park needs immediately to be switched to the House Restoration as its top priority, or a co-equal House Restoration CIP Category be immediately created! In fact, SSDT/AC **P. 80** specifically refers to The Moorings: "Inside the contemplative zone consider going beyond the traditional passive uses by introducing active programs such as yoga, tai-chi, **and other activities that can benefit of [from] the natural settings of this zone including its beautiful restored historic building.**"

SSHS is poised to testify as always we have as requested by Parks Dept. in the previously active CIP process!

The Pandemic, as elsewhere in Parks, temporarily brought our House Restoration to a severe pause, a standstill, now is the time immediately to get back on track! Our House calls out now for re-activation! Our treasure, now a tight & dry shell, eagerly anticipates Restoration completion and vibrant use:
An Artful, Diverse, Multi-Cultural, Inter-Generational, Socially Just, Joyful Destination!

SSHS enthusiastically endorses the stewardship of Carpe Diem Arts, Busy Graham, Founder & Executive Director, and her superb Board, and Team, as the lead tenant, guiding light, and organizing principle enlivening the Mansion's design, activities and mission visions.

Jesup Blair House will again become Jesup Blair COMMUNITY House as it was referred to between 1934 & 1957 when it served as the S.S. Library! With Carpe Diem Arts' superb visionary Leadership, embracing, engaging all of the vibrant Arts & Humanities groups' creativities & abilities, J.B. House & its Green Oasis of Land will be a "Hub," a pro-active magnet drawing us all in to express, enjoy, share our pro-active creativity with each other & others! Carpe Diem's visionary Busy Graham, Board, Team, & Advisory Council are experienced, pro-active, nurturing leaders in their fields. <https://www.carpediemarts.org> <https://JesupBlairHouse.org>

Arts Advocate Busy Graham was bestowed the Mo Co Executive's Lifetime Impact Award 2013:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PeXOE7oN4gM>

"Graham echoed the celebratory sentiments of the evening while accepting her award for Lifetime Impact. 'Time and time again,' she stated, 'the arts and humanities have proven to be the most accessible and affordable way to celebrate what is right in the world and to give people of all ages the means to imagine and then create a better world for themselves. I believe we can rest assured that the arts and humanities will continue to thrive in Montgomery County.' "

"Arts Angel" Busy Graham receiving 2017 **Sue Hess Maryland Arts Advocate of the Year Award:**

<https://www.culturespotmc.com/stories/getting-to-know-you/arts-angel/>

<https://carpediemarts.org/blogs/busy-s-blog/posts/busy-graham-receives-2017-sue-hess-maryland-arts-advocate-of-the-year-award>

SSHS will serve as the historic roots of the House & the Park, sharing The Moorings and Downtown Silver Spring's sweeping history!

Jesup Blair House & Park, "The Moorings," "The Anchor," is "The Peoples' Park," the Community's. All will be served through visiting the SSHS Archives, sharing in a variety of historical events we will hold in the Park & in

the House, e.g., Tours of the Trees, Re-enactments, "meet Lincoln's Postmaster General Montgomery Blair," who also represented the free formerly enslaved Dred Scott before the Supreme Court 1857; FREED, Female Re-enactors of Distinction, presentations, book signings, musical performances, celebrations!

SSHS has been promoting, extolling the virtues of the historic J.B. House & Park, "The Moorings," since the 1990s, significant at national, state, county, local levels, on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation, National Register-eligible, a "public park in perpetuity," an Underground R.R. site, pre-Civil War, Civil War site, last remaining House & its surrounding Land, green oasis of 15 acres, of S.S.'s founding Blair family.

Around 2009, Parks Dept. asked us to join them in the House renovation, rehabilitation, restoration. Our vision as a partner is that the lowest level will house SSHS Archives & artifacts, once the House is restored. Upon request by Parks Cultural Division, SSHS annually testified before the County Council to assure that CIP Funding was to be provided for the historic House and other historical structures in the Parks System.

We project at least 1 Weekend Day a Month to hold an Open House for the Community. We are a completely Volunteer 501(c)3. We will also hold appointments for researchers & community members to enjoy & "imbibe" our Archives stories.

Our seeing the need for Park Grove interpretation and protection, we were honored to be asked to assist Parks in the creation of 3 "History in the Parks" Heritage Signs along the Park's walking path!

Celebrating Earth Day at The Moorings in its idyllic setting is a joy! Violet Blair Janin who bequeathed our "public park in perpetuity," wrote an eloquent Poem praising her beloved Oak Trees!

"I think of the joyous e'enings, Under our old oak trees, With the moonlight shadows moving, When Stirred by the gentle breeze."

SSHS is very excited and honored to be joining with Carpe Diem Arts & other vital Partners in the Restoration, Revitalization, Re-Activation of our Jesup Blair Community House!!

J.B. Park Discussion:

Retain Regulation Soccer Field, including retaining its moveable goal posts: Diverse, Multi-Cultural Adult Teams & Children's Teams play regularly on the Field, with their family & friends cheering them on from Park picnic tables & stone wall. Happening right now while I'm composing this Testimony! Sun. 11/28/21! When not in use for Soccer matches, Soccer practice, folks fly kites on windy days, throw Frisbees, throw balls & play baseball, do Yoga & Zumba!

Do not widen the Pedestrian Bridge into the Park, no more impermeable surfaces in the Park, No impacting the trees' critical root zones! Protecting the Trees are intrinsic to Violet's 1933 Will!

Strolling paths in the Park need to remain as such: Individuals & families stroll comfortably, some with strollers, baby buggies; runners run gently by.

Park paths do not need widening, and are not to become speeding extensions of the Metropolitan Branch Bike Trail, completely changing the nature of the Park. No more hardscape, no Skate Board Park! No Bridge widening. No Zip Line. No Dog Park! No Trenching. Without changing the footprint of the Children's Playground, adding some swings, And especially the new modern see-saws the kids love, would be so used and enjoyed! Socializing can take its natural place in a Garden in the Park. Jesup Blair Park is also an arboretum!

4.9 “Historic Preservation Resources”

We applaud the HP “Historic Preservation Resources” Diverse Analyses, especially:

4.9.3. New Sites or Districts to be Studied as future Historic Preservation Master Plan Amendment(s), PPs 133. SSHS endorses and requests that Weller’s Dry Cleaners receive Master Plan designation!

4.9.4. National Register of Historic Places, PPs 134-137.

We endorse and request these unique Heritage structures receive National Register of Historic Places Designation:

- * Medical Office Building (1111 Spring Street)**
- Metropolitan Building (8720 Georgia Avenue)**
- Montgomery Center (8630 Fenton Street)**
- Operations Research, Inc., Building (1400 Spring Street)**
- Perpetual Bank Building (8700 Georgia Avenue)**
- U.S. Industries Building (949 Bonifant Street)**
- American National Bank Building (8701 Georgia Avenue)**
- Garden and Mid-Rise Apartment District**

We respectfully request that the **Falkland North Parcel be included** within the **Garden Apartment District: Falkland North represents authentic Middle-Missing Housing** since architect Justement’s Falkland Apts’ New Deal inception in 1936, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt cutting the Blue Ribbon opening day. The North Parcel, many apartments with porches, is abundant with fragrant flowering & other significant trees, set in its green terrain with dramatic gorge, providing a natural Park setting with children’s playground & picnic tables for Falkland North residents. At that time, William Blair’s Land of the founding Blair family.

4.9.6. Cultural and Heritage Resources, especially 4.9.6 A, PPs. 137-138.

- Establish a legacy business registry to recognize the economic, cultural, and social contributions of long-standing businesses to the fabric of Silver Spring.**
- Study potential incentives to preserve local, independently owned businesses.**

In synchronicity with the Art Deco Society, we respectfully request that the historic 1938 Silver Spring Shopping Center’s parking lot and its function be preserved: It’s a legal part of the historic resource and the historic context of the Center, its existence allows a clear view of the art deco architecture of the Center from all vantage points. It reverberates with the 1930’s Park & Shop theme, serving its customers. Importantly, from a human caring perspective, the parking’s proximity to the Center makes the Center and the AFI Silver Theater more accessible to older residents, and those with disabilities than the further off parking garages on Wayne and Ellsworth.

We ask that the Adjacent Communities Plan be removed from the Downtown Silver Spring Plan.

Working Together, Equity & Reparations are best served through the Guidance and Protections of our 1967 Montgomery County Fair Housing Law, our “Open Housing Law,” signed into law 1 year before the U.S. government’s 1968 Fair Housing Law.

These results are NOT achieved through the proposed Adjacent Communities Plan.

See https://www2.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcgpportalapps/Press_Detail.aspx?Item_ID=22322

Mo Co's Open Housing Law, 7/20/1967, was proclaimed "nearly a full year before President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the federal Fair Housing Act into law on April 11, 1968."

Montgomery County Proclaims Open Housing Day For Immediate Release: Tuesday, July 31, 2018

[history of the Montgomery County Office of Human rights](https://montgomerycountymd.gov/humanrights/Resources/Files/civil_right_progress.pdf)

https://montgomerycountymd.gov/humanrights/Resources/Files/civil_right_progress.pdf

See 1965-1971, "Years of Activism" "Mo Co Open Housing Law" Passed by Mo Co Council July 20, 1967



Equity & Reparations can best be achieved rather through Already Existing Opportunities & Avenues, Including Adaptive Reuse! One golden Opportunity is the elegant mid-century modern Guardian Bank Building of glass panels and brick at Ga. & Cameron, by noted Mo Co architect Fon J. Montgomery, originally advertised to be developed for Millennials, however, nothing has happened there for years; what a wonderful superb spot for authentic Equitable, Equity Condos or Apt. Homes, for Missing Middle, for the Work Force, what a terrific vital location in DTSS!

Also, PB's 8787 Ga. Ave! Including saving many of its wonderful trees, could have been the perfect Appropriate Model Spot for Equity, Equitable "housing, homes" of many different types, single-family homes, townhouses, condos, duplexes, small apt buildings! A great location also in DTSS! **Let's put on our thinking caps to arrive at other existing Equitable solutions! Let's Work Together!**

Marcie Stickle, SSHS Advocacy Chair, 8515 Greenwood Ave., Takoma Park, MD 20912, marcipro@aol.com

SSHS MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the all volunteer 501(c)(3) Silver Spring Historical Society is to create and promote awareness and appreciation of downtown Silver Spring's heritage through sponsorship of educational activities and the preservation and protection of historical sites, structures, artifacts and archives.

See also Statements by Mo Co Taxpayers League, Mo Co Civic Federation, & Responsible Growth for Montgomery County, emphasizing Working Together to achieve "inclusiveness, diversity, prosperity."

CARPE DIEM ARTS

Bringing the Arts to Life!

*Promoting the arts and engaging communities
across generations and cultures*

Testimony: Carpe Diem Arts % Busy Graham
Public Hearing before the County Council re. DTSS/AC
February 17, 2022

Thank you Council President Alborno and Council members for the opportunity to speak about the Downtown Silver Spring and Adjacent Communities Plan—specifically with regard to the Historic Jesup Blair House.

My name is Busy Graham, and I have been a resident of Silver Spring for 36 years. I am the founder and Executive Director of Carpe Diem Arts, a Silver Spring nonprofit providing a broad range of culturally diverse visual, literary and performing arts programs to our County residents.

I am here today representing Carpe Diem Arts and several other interested nonprofits, plus numerous programming partners.

We are glad to see the DTSS Plan bring some focus to the beautiful 14.5 acre Jesup Blair Park.

Barely mentioned, however, is the Jesup Blair House which is owned by Montgomery Parks/ M-NCPPC and has been vacant for 14 years.

Located within the designated Arts and Entertainment District, the House was built in 1850 and is connected to the founding family of Silver Spring, the Underground Railroad, the Civil War, and President Abraham Lincoln's Cabinet. It also served as the Silver Spring Library from 1934-1957.

The Jesup Blair House could serve as a catalyst for drawing residents to the Park, while also serving as a vibrant center for arts, culture and education, and a venue for major outdoor festivals and other special events.

In addition, the House would provide a much-needed home for several Silver Spring and Takoma Park nonprofits, including Carpe Diem and the Silver Spring Historical Society whose valuable archives would be housed on the lower level and featured in a Period Room.

We believe our vision would revitalize both the Park and the Jesup Blair House, supporting the County's goals for South Silver Spring, while also celebrating our diversity and addressing the priority of equity, access and inclusion.

Now is the time for our County to honor the history of Silver Spring and preserve this unique public resource as a sound investment in a bright future for arts and humanities—and vital community development.

We seek your support for restoring this remarkable property—and ask you to find ways to help fund the estimated \$1.5-2 million rehabilitation.

To learn more about our collective vision, please visit JesupBlairHouse.org

Thank you for your consideration.

February 16, 2022

Montgomery County Council
Stella Werner Council Office Building
100 Maryland Ave
Rockville, MD 20850

Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan (Support)

Testimony for February 17, 2022

Jane Lyons, Maryland Advocacy Manager

Thank you, Council President Alborno and Councilmembers. My name is Jane Lyons and I'm testifying on behalf of the Coalition for Smarter Growth, the leading organization advocating for walkable, inclusive, transit-oriented communities as the most sustainable and equitable way for the DC region to grow and provide opportunities for all.

We support the draft of the Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan, although we believe there is room for improvement to think more strategically, creatively, and boldly about certain elements, such as affordable housing. In general, we are excited that the plan embraces downtown Silver Spring as the right place to grow, and to grow in a way that supports connectivity, resiliency, and health.

Silver Spring is where people want to live, and we need to take steps to make sure it is somewhere that is welcoming for everyone, and that maintains and celebrates diversity. To do this, the plan needs more concrete strategies for preserving existing income-restricted and market-rate affordable housing, creating more mixed-income housing, and supporting local businesses.

The biggest area for opportunity for affordable housing involves the redevelopment of the downtown's underutilized parking garages, and that the plan should set ambitious goals to use this public land for public good, and consider models such as a community land trust. Furthermore, as recent research from the Brookings Institution shows, diverse housing types help to create diverse neighborhoods. We urge you to allow more housing types in the adjacent communities.

We are excited about proposals to create two new pedestrian connections over the train tracks, redesigning dangerous streets, and allowing for more height and density to achieve maximum flexibility in redevelopment. However, we would like to see the plan to have specific recommendations for locating new street trees, improved stormwater management, public restrooms, bike parking, and additional lighting.

Please see below for our full, detailed comments on the Planning Board's draft plan:

- **The Green Loop (2.2.2.)**

We do not believe a loop is the best design choice, given that a grid generally is more efficient and improves connectivity better than a loop. There is no reason not to include all of Colesville Road or Georgia Avenue in this vision for green, multimodal streets. In fact, that is exactly the vision outlined for Montgomery County's arterial roads and future corridor-focused growth corridors (which includes Colesville Rd and Georgia Ave) in the current PHED committee draft of Thrive 2050.

The primary component on the Green Loop or similar idea should be protected bike lanes. Furthermore, this section of the plan would also benefit from an explanation as to how the Green Loop integrates with the already envisioned downtown Silver Spring bike network.

- **District-specific recommendations (2.3.)**

Metro Center: We strongly agree with the recommendation to have the highest intensity commercial development in the Metro Center District. This district has been underutilized for far too long. The idea to have a new landmark building at the Transit Center Development Site is especially desirable, and we concur that no parking should be provided given the site's proximity to multiple modes of high-quality transit. We would like the county to encourage, partner, and prioritize space in this future development for child care, which would be convenient not just for downtown workers but for commuters on Metro and MARC.

South Silver Spring: This is clearly the district with the most opportunity for redevelopment and positive change. Within this district, we would like to see the plan also recommend making the Newell Street closure permanent and redesigning the intersection of East-West Highway, Georgia Avenue, and Burlington Avenue to prioritize the safety of pedestrians and cyclists. Newell Street's closure has reactivated Acorn Urban Park as a place for people to gather and socialize, and this is at-risk of being lost if the street is to return vehicular traffic. Finally, the specifics of The Blairs Master Plan are unclear, but should include the continued service of a full-sized grocery store for this important location.

Adjacent communities: The built form of the adjacent communities does not allow for a step-down transition with the high-rise buildings in the CBD and would benefit from gentle density, such as with three to five story buildings, connecting the CBD to lower density neighborhoods. We applaud the planners for considering allowing different housing types, but this underlying issue will not be addressed by only allowing buildings that are "compatible with the surrounding development" in terms of height and massing. These properties are appropriate for more than just house-scale duplexes and triplexes. The plan's own Housing Appendix points to the efficacy of six-plexes as a good option for lower cost multifamily housing.

Also, this plan should not rely on the Attainable Housing Strategies guidelines for downtown Silver Spring's adjacent communities because it is unclear when, and if, those recommendations will be

formally adopted. Furthermore, the AHS recommendations encourage consideration of medium-scale (three to four stories) and large-scale (four to five stories) attainable housing in master plans, such as this. Silver Spring offers one of the best opportunities for the County Council to creatively test incorporation of medium-scale housing as a transition from a downtown and as a means to offer more attainable housing options.

Finally, we strongly support the goal to maintain a mature tree canopy in the adjacent communities and would like to see more details on standards for how this should be achieved.

- **Economic Growth (3.2.)**

To celebrate and maintain the diversity of Silver Spring, it is important that its businesses continue to serve a diverse and evolving clientele. We believe this plan should include more incentives and programs that would help to develop businesses for and from within the existing community.

The recommendation from Fenton Village to ensure buildings are divided into smaller components, instead of one large, monolithic structure, should be true of the whole plan area to allow for small businesses to thrive.

- **Affordable Housing (3.3.)**

We urge you to revert to the public hearing draft's original proposal to require 15 percent moderately priced dwelling units (MPDUs) or other DHCA-equivalent affordable housing for all residential projects, rather than just Optional Method projects.

In addition, the biggest opportunity for affordable housing in the plan area are the many county-owned parking garages and lots. Any county-owned land that is redeveloped should prioritize mixed-income housing with inclusion of a high percentage of deeply affordable and affordable units (30% or more). In addition to this, publicly owned properties such as these are also a unique opportunity to try out new models for affordable housing, such as a community land trust. This goal should be restated throughout the document whenever discussing the redevelopment of public parking garages or lots.

The plan falls short in identifying where existing affordable housing should be preserved. The plan should use the department's housing preservation study, which includes a focus on this plan area, to identify which properties are most at-risk and which tools would be most helpful to preserve those units/properties.

Additionally, the plan also misses the mark on the goal to facilitate the development of a variety of housing types. If all that is allowed are large apartment buildings in the CBD and 1-3 unit homes in the adjacent communities, then the plan area will not achieve this goal. We recommend allowing more medium-scale attainable housing types in the adjacent communities.

Finally, we would like to see the plan explore potential incentives for condominium development to create more homeownership opportunities.

- **Urban Design (3.4.)**

We do not support the plan's recommendation for a Design Advisory Panel. These types of panels too often end up prioritizing subjective design opinions of a small set of residents and can lead to slower progress on redevelopment projects that are beneficial for the community at-large. We recommend creating urban design guidelines to ensure that new construction in Silver Spring achieves high-quality design standards.

- **Parks (3.5.4.)**

We strongly support a permanent closure of Newell Street to vehicular traffic and expand Acorn Urban Park, and recommend its inclusion in the plan. Even with the new plan for a South Silver Spring Urban Recreational Parklet, an expanded Acorn Park is desirable for this rapidly growing neighborhood. We are glad to see the draft recommend that Newell Street continue to function as a temporary park until the proposed South Silver Spring Park project gets implemented, but urge the Newell Street closure to be permanent.

- **Transportation (3.6.)**

Bicycle Parking: We are glad to see the plan talk about bicycle parking, but more needs to be done to identify where more bike parking is needed.

Pedestrian Network: Similarly, we are glad to see the plan recommend increasing and improving the quality of pedestrian-scale lighting, but would like to see the plan go further by identifying where increased and improved lighting is needed throughout the plan boundary.

Transportation Demand Management: We encourage a more ambitious goal for Non-Auto Driver Mode Share than 60 percent, given that a NADMS of 54 percent has already been achieved. Our recommendation is 70 percent.

Parking and Loading: Downtown Silver Spring should not have minimum parking requirements. These are costly requirements that are not aligned with climate goals. The plan should also recommend the unbundling of parking leases from commercial and residential leases so that residents can see the true cost of parking. Removing parking minimums and unbundling parking prices would help reduce the demand for parking, which in turn would help reduce the cost of construction for new housing.

- **3.8 Community Facilities**

Over the next 20 years, downtown Silver Spring should strive to be more welcoming by offering public restrooms across the plan area. This plan should recommend a strategy for identifying locations and operational options.

Conclusion: We hope that the Council will consider and include our recommended amendments.



DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES

Marc Elrich
County Executive

David Dise
Director

MEMORANDUM

February 10, 2022

TO: Meredith Wellington, Land Use Planning Policy Analyst
Office of the County Executive

FROM: Greg Ossont, Deputy Director *GO*
Department of General Services

SUBJECT: Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Master Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Winter 2022 Planning Board Draft of the Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan. Our comment relates to the Plan recommendations for a redevelopment of the County's Parking Garage 4 and surrounding properties through a public-private partnership with the Parking Lot District. Due to the nature of Parking Lot District obligations and the County's desire to maximize affordable housing in Silver Spring, the County is requesting flexibility for the redevelopment of Garage 4. The Plan proposes a new north-south street, a new east-west pedestrian connection, and new open space on this site. These connections and open space are all important elements, but current draft language severely limits the design and is too prescriptive.

Thank you for your consideration. Please contact me directly if you have any questions.

cc: Claire Iseli, CEX
Kara Olsen Salazar, OPD