



East Silver Spring Citizens' Association, Inc.

November 2019

EAST SILVER SPRING CITIZENS ASSOCIATION (ESSCA) MEETING

MEETING DATE: Thursday, November 21, 2018

MEETING LOCATION IS THE HISTORIC B&O TRAIN STATION

8100 Georgia Avenue, just south of the Fire Station

JOIN ESSCA'S LIST-SERVE: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/eastsilverspringcivic>

(Include your name and street name when you send your "join request")

JOIN ESSCA'S Facebook Group: East Silver Spring Citizens' Association

VISIT ESSCA'S NEW WEBSITE: <https://eastsilverspring.org/> EMAIL CONTACT: esscaprez@gmail.com

MEET AT-LARGE COUNTY COUNCIL MEMBER EVAN GLASS AT OUR NEXT MEETING ON THURSDAY NOVEMBER 21ST

This will be your opportunity to meet and speak with Evan Glass, now in his third year of service on the County Council. Councilmember Glass will provide a legislative update, including his most recent legislation, the Housing Impact Fairness Act, which is intended to ensure that teardown-home projects and renovations are included in county impact fees.

REPORT FROM OUR SEPTEMBER MEETING: THE UPCOMING 2020 U.S. CENSUS

Shawn Ellis, the County's 2020 Census Manager, was the guest speaker at our first ESSCA meeting of the 2019-20 season. Every 10 years, the federal government conducts a population count of everyone in the United States. The federal government allocates more than \$675 Billion in funding every year based on census data, and it's estimated that every Marylander not counted in the 2020 Census will cost the state approximately \$18,250 over 10 years.

In order to help ensure that every jurisdiction is accurately represented and that our communities get their fair share of federal funding for schools, health care, libraries and social services, the State of Maryland has budgeted \$5 million of grant money for jurisdictions to use for outreach to help get the word out about the importance of responding to the census forms. Montgomery County's share of this fund is about \$600,000 and the County has taken a regional approach to the development of their Census outreach strategy. With the establishment of five Regional Census Complete Count Subcommittees, the County's goal is to allow each Region to develop and implement awareness and education outreach strategies specially tailored to the Hardest-To-Count Census tracts in their specific communities, both geographically and by demographics (age group, country of origin, language, etc.). Mr. Ellis described Hardest-To-Count groups as children

under the age of 5, immigrant communities, people experiencing homelessness, the LGBTQ community, those less than proficient in English, renters and people who are undocumented. Montgomery County has one census tract that is 99% renters and another comprised of 78% foreign-born individuals. While Montgomery County was in the top three counties in the State with a positive response rate at 82% for the 2010, Mr. Ellis stated that the County estimates that nearly 11,000 people in the southeast portion of the County alone were probably not counted. He stressed that the Census Bureau is in the business of counting people and no one should have any fear of sharing the information requested. When asked if tenants living in a household should be counted, Mr. Ellis responded yes, though he added a tenant in this case can complete their own response if they prefer to do so.

The 2020 US Census will for the first time be conducted electronically. Understanding that non-internet users still comprise nearly 10% of the population, Mr. Ellis added that individuals can still request a paper form or ask to complete their response by telephone. He noted that every household will be sent an invitation to complete a Census response on or about March 12th and will be asked to complete it by April 1st.

You can help the County's outreach efforts by signing up to serve on a Regional Subcommittee or becoming a 2020 Census Ambassador. Interested individuals can contact Silver Spring Regional Service Center Director Reemberto Rodriguez through the Center's website at www.MontgomeryCountyMD.gov/SilverSpring/. The US Census Bureau is also still taking applications for enumerators.

Learn more about the 2020 US Census by visiting a local library, calling the county's information line at 311, or by visiting www.montgomerycountymd.gov/census/.

COUNTY D.O.T. TO RESTART FENTON STREET AND GROVE STREET STUDIES

ESSCA was pleased to learn recently that Montgomery County DOT will soon restart a study on a Fenton St. bike facility and begin a long-anticipated pilot on a new approach to making Grove St. a safer place to walk, bike and drive. Matt Johnson, Bicycle and Pedestrian Project Priority Area (BiPPA) Project Manager at MCDOT, stated that these studies could commence within the next several weeks:

"At this time [MCDOT] is working on getting a consultant on board to restart the Fenton Street Bikeway Study and the Grove Street Neighborhood Greenway Pilot. We hope to have the consultant on board by late Fall, with a public meeting in late Fall 2019 or Winter 2019/2020 to introduce the community to the projects, and get feedback on the process."

Fenton Street Bikeway Study

Johnson described the goals and process for the Fenton Street study:

"The Fenton Street Bikeway Study will look at the impacts of a potential bike facility on Fenton Street with regard to several aspects, including traffic congestion, signal timing, parking, loading, and cost. The result of the study will be a set of alternatives, with an analysis of how each impacts the community and what the tradeoffs are between the alternatives. For example, one alternative might have less impact on traffic but more impact on parking, or a different alternative might have minimal impact on traffic and parking but cost more.

These alternatives will be presented to the community at the end of the study process. That process will help MCDOT determine what the best alternative will be going forward. A No-Build alternative is a possible outcome. The study itself is not going to result in a decision to go forward with an alternative. It's only intended to provide

the information about different design options so that if the County decides to move forward, that all the necessary information will have been gathered to allow the community to make an informed decision. Any decision to move forward would happen after the completion of the study and after community involvement.”

Grove Street Neighborhood Greenway Pilot

In addition to the Fenton St. study, the County will also look at ways of implementing the Neighborhood Greenway concept on Grove St. According to Johnson:

“The Grove Street Neighborhood Greenway Pilot project will be presented to the community at the same time as the Fenton Street Bikeway Study, but it will move on a different [faster] timeframe. A neighborhood greenway is a street where the safe, comfortable movement of pedestrians and cyclists is prioritized over motor vehicle traffic.”

The idea is that we make Grove Street a comfortable street to walk and bike on by trying to reduce the speed of all vehicles and to reduce the number of vehicles traveling through the corridor. The recently-adopted Bicycle Master Plan calls for a neighborhood greenway treatment on Grove Street.”

The County envisions the pilot project having several phases:

- Phase 1: Gathering data and developing the plan for the second phase.
- Phase 2: Implementing removable/modifiable pilot treatments for several months. During this phase, the County will collect data, and compare it to the baseline data gathered in phase 1.
- Phase 3: The County may make modifications/additions/deletions to the treatments from phase 2 to create a second implementation stage to compare how the treatments are working.

At the conclusion of phase 3, the County will present their findings to the community to make a determination about whether to keep the interim treatments, make them permanent, remove them, or modify them. Throughout all phases, the County will keep the community engaged through regular meetings/updates.

There’s a System to These Things

Both the Fenton and Grove St. studies will take a systematic look at neighborhood streets and transportation modes. Mr. Johnson mentioned that the County would guard against changes on Fenton St. that might spill over onto Grove St., and changes to Grove St. that might spill over onto other neighborhood streets such as Houston St., and so on.

Grove St. Sidewalks?

Of course we can’t talk about Grove St. without

the mention of sidewalks. According to Johnson, due to the narrow width of the street and the lack of County-owned right-of-way, sidewalks as a rule would not be considered in the Grove St. neighborhood greenway pilot. The temporary treatments considered are intended to make it safe for walkers, bikers, and drivers to share the roadway safely and comfortably.

But Wait There’s More!

And if the Fenton and Grove St. studies were not enough, MCDOT is also designing improved pedestrian safety at the intersection of Fenton Street and Philadelphia/Burlington Avenues (MD 410). These improvements are intended to deal with the multiple lane crossings pedestrians have to negotiate at that intersection. The County will provide more information at the kick-off meeting for the Fenton and Grove St. studies.

And a Future Plan...

These long-anticipated studies and actions are just in time to inform another County initiative, the Pedestrian Master Plan. Community meetings are happening now through mid-November to introduce the concept, with the closest meeting being Oct. 21 at the County Planning office.

If you have questions about these studies and actions, please discuss on the ESSCA listserv and [Facebook Group](#), or send an email to Tim Haverland at esscaprez@gmail.com. ESSCA will keep you informed as these projects develop.

SLIGO AND MISSISSIPPI AVENUES

ESSCA President Tim Haverland last month submitted a County speed hump traffic study request for Mississippi Ave between Sligo Ave and Piney Branch. These study requests have to be submitted by the local Civic Association President.

Residents on the street contacted us after experiencing increased traffic volume and speeding over the last few years. We attribute this to Google maps and like apps. When some of us have gotten directions while on or near Sligo Avenue heading toward Takoma Park these apps often direct us to go down Mississippi Ave.

Some measurements the residents have made showed that they have the traffic volume that warrants action (~100 cars/hour on weekday evenings) but it will take the traffic study to determine if the level of speeding warrants action. Volume alone does not warrant speed humps. The street meets the other conditions for speed humps such as longer than 1000 ft without a stop sign, 25 or 30 mph speed limit, and houses with direct frontage on the road.

We have also heard from neighbors that Sligo Ave. can be difficult to negotiate for pedestrians

due to the lack of stop signs between Piney Branch and Fenton, a higher speed (30mph), and drivers who ignore crosswalks. ESSCA will use the upcoming Fenton/Grove studies as an opportunity to inform MCDOT about issues on Sligo Ave. and to explore possible solutions.

SILVER SPRING & THAYER AVENUE PAVING TO START SOON

The 900 blocks of the Silver Spring Avenue (between Fenton St. and Georgia Avenue) had extensive below-grade utility construction work over the last two years, leading to the current poor paving conditions of both streets. We recently heard from Aaron Lewis, construction project manager for Studio Plaza, about upcoming plans for repaving. Silver Spring Avenue is scheduled for paving operations between starting on November 4th. This work will take several weeks to complete and during this time traffic will be one way only. Once Silver Spring Ave. paving is completed the crew will shift operations to Thayer Ave. and close out the paving work with Mayors Lane. Coordination with effected property owners will be made by the General Contractor as the work progresses.

CHANGES COMING TO ELLSWORTH DRIVE

On September 16th the Peterson Companies held a community meeting to share proposed changes for the retail and restaurant development in the 900 block of Ellsworth Drive and the historic shopping center at the corner of Georgia Avenue and Colesville Road. Proposed changes include:

- Making Ellsworth Drive pedestrian-only all of the time, changing the pavement to astro-turf and introducing more outdoor seating
- Painting the building facades along Ellsworth and Fenton Streets as well as the buildings housing Whole Foods and Strosnidars (already underway)
- Removing the fountain
- Removing some of the head-in parking facing Panera and Red Lobster to increase the sidewalk width for outdoor seating
- Removing the Downtown Silver Spring sign facing the Georgia/Colesville intersection.

No changes are planned for the parking lot behind Whole Foods and Strosnidars at this time.

SUPPORT ESSCA WITH YOUR DUES!