

Montgomery Planning

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan, Briefing

MCPB
Item No. 6
Date: 02/18/2021



Atara Margolies, Planner Coordinator, DownCounty, Atara.Margolies@montgomeryplanning.org, 301.495.4558



Leslye Howerton, Master Plan Supervisor, DownCounty, Leslye.Howerton@montgomeryplanning.org, 301.495.4566



Elza Hisel-McCoy, Chief, DownCounty, Elza.Hisel-McCoy@montgomeryplanning.org, 301.495.2115

Completed: 02.10.21

Description

Overview of existing conditions data gathering and analysis work for the *Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan*.

Staff Recommendation

Provide guidance and feedback.

Summary

The *Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Sector Plan* is an update to the *2000 Silver Spring Central Business District Sector Plan*. The scope of work and plan boundary were approved by the Planning Board on June 4, 2020. Since that time, the planning team has been conducting a thorough analysis of the existing conditions in the plan area. The summary presentation collects the highlights and main takeaways from the team's work over the last seven months.

Existing conditions tasks included:

- Research and interviews to compile a more complete and inclusive history of Silver Spring
- Understanding of demographics of the study area and the plan area
- Analysis of existing development, including land use, zoning and density
- Urban design analysis and characterization of the various districts in the downtown and the adjacent residential blocks included in the plan area. This includes studying the edge conditions between the downtown and the adjacent residential blocks.
- An analysis of parks and public spaces using the methodology outlined in the 2018 *Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan*.
- Study of the current transit networks, road networks, traffic conditions, pedestrian and bike infrastructure, parking facilities and micromobility activities within the plan area, and in some cases, the study area as well.
- An environment analysis featuring new data-based tools allowing for a qualitative and quantitative study of heat island effect, existing tree canopy and stormwater facilities.
- Housing analysis focused on existing affordable and "missing middle" housing in the plan area.
- Study and analysis of the existing retail and office markets in downtown Silver Spring. This work was supported by an in-depth study completed by retail and office consultant Partners in Economic Solutions (PES) as part of this planning effort. This work was also coordinated with the

ongoing countywide *Retail in Diverse Communities* study.

- Collection of data on existing community resources, and analysis of existing MCPS data regarding schools who draw students from the plan area.
- Review of properties currently listed on the Locational Atlas, as well as sites already included in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. The historic preservation work for this plan has an expanded scope due to the boundary that was approved in June and the equity in planning initiatives that are ongoing. Their work will continue in the coming months with architectural survey work, exploration of the existing historic markers in downtown Silver Spring, and the continued research for the more complete and inclusive history of Silver Spring mentioned above.

In the coming weeks, there will be two presentations to the Planning Board that are part of the existing conditions phase of work:

- Partners in Economic Solutions (PES) will present the *Downtown Silver Spring Retail and Office Market Conditions* report ;
- Planning Staff will present a *Missing Middle Market Study* that is focused on the conditions surrounding implementation of certain types of “missing middle” housing given today’s market conditions in the plan area.

Anticipated Schedule/Next Steps

With this presentation to the Planning Board, the existing conditions phase of the plan ends, and in mid-March the visioning phase will begin. The overall plan schedule is as follows:

- Scope of Work: approved June 2020
- Existing Conditions: June 2020 – February 2021
- Visioning: March 2021 – September 2021
- Working Draft: October 2021
- Public Hearing / Worksessions / Planning Board Draft: October 2021 – Spring 2022
- County Council Public Hearing / PHED Review & Worksessions: Spring 2022 – Summer 2022
- Council Approval: Summer 2022
- Sectional Map Amendment: Fall 2022