Clarion

January 2020 Circulation 3500

Greater Colesville Citizens Association, PO Box 4087, Colesville, MD 20914

www.GreaterColesville.org

President's Message

Happy 2020, Everyone!

First, a reminder that our monthly GCCA meetings are open to everyone. They provide a means to learn what is going on, how you can help in our community, and an opportunity to express your opinion on issues we discuss. I encourage you to attend.

To balance our budget, I continue to ask people to become paid members, which is still only \$10 per person, per year. If possible, please donate an additional \$25, \$50 or more to help GCCA pay for the cost of producing and mailing this newsletter.

I received a copy of a press release from the county that shows the results of a residential survey. Overall, the results were positive with 80-90% of the responses. Interestingly though, only 57% support the direction that the county is taking. Apparently the few negative areas are a priority for people. The main negative areas were transportation, affordable housing, and affordable child care. From many other things I have heard, I'm sure the results vary substantially depending upon where one lives in the county. I think the perception is worse in Eastern Montgomery County. I often hear that people feel that our area has been neglected for a long time.

There are a number of us who live here who have been working to improve the area. In past Clarions we have had articles about adding a variety of jobs (many well-paid) with the White Oak Medical Center and the planned Viva White Oak development. We have talked about Bus Rapid Transit, improved local bus and a number of road, bikeway and walkway improvements. This Clarion has several articles about ongoing construction at the hospital and transportation in Hillandale.

While we have not said much about it, the county has improved the services in our area, especially for low income residents.

Continued on page 3

GCCA Officers and Chairs: President Dan Wilhelm, Vice President Marguerite Raaen, Treasurer Mark Pankow, Recording Secretary David Michaels, Clarion Editor Nancy Laich

Upcoming Events Calendar

January

- **14 GCCA Board Mtg.,** 7:30 pm (see directions below)
- 20 Martin Luther King Day

February

- 2 Groundhog Day
- **11 GCCA Board Mtg.**, 7:30 pm (see directions below)
- 17 Presidents' Day
- 26 Ash Wednesday

March

- 8 Daylight Saving Time begins
 Turn clocks one hour forward
- **10 GCCA Board Mtg.,** 7:30 pm (see directions below)
- 19 First Day of Spring



Upcoming GCCA Board meetings will be held at 7:30 pm at the Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration, 13925 New Hampshire Ave. Meetings are in the room under the sanctuary and are open to the public. For information contact GCCA President Dan Wilhelm 301-384-2698 or email address djwilhelm@verizon.net

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President's Message

One often hears that the median household income in the county is \$99,000. We don't hear as much about the 127,000 adult residents who face obstacles related to low income. Did you know that less than 50% of black and Hispanic families earn a living wage? There is a pocket of low income families in our area east of US29 (the map that follows shows the median income by census tract). The county indicates that approximately 1 in 7 adults struggle with low literacy skills, with the ability to read and speak English being the primary one. There are two articles dealing with this subject: adult education (pg. 4), and services available at the east county government center (pg.3).

There is also an article about the county tax revenue falling (pg. 4). Growth in low income jobs compared to good paying jobs is likely the primary reason for this. The Council has recently adopted a strategy to address this situation, called the Economic Development Platform, which is also discussed on pg. 6.

Over 50% of the county taxes pay for education. We often question how well MCPS is using those funds. MCPS just completed a system wide analysis that looked at three issues. Two of these related to the use of taxes: building utilization and proximity (percentage of students not assigned to the nearest school). The third issue relates to diversity (low income and racial). Other studies have shown that children learn better when there is a good mix of students in both race and income. The recent MCPS study results are summarized in an article on page 5.

Median Income by Census Tract in Eastern Montgomery County

(To some extent, tract boundaries are along US29, New Hampshire Ave and E Randolph)

Population	Median Household Income	◆ MC INSIGHTS + Find address or place - Capaba - Capaba	□ □	Population	Median Household Income
2117	120,644			2792	96,262
1868	141,389	○ Supplement	Buttom/lb	1329	125,694
1749	123,164	Silveria Grid	2/3/30	1617	67,478
-		edomb Ran		1131	53,308
2396	102,841	Total State of the	1	2667	81,809
1768	126,705		Galverion Beltsville	1122	110,714
2142	115,208				·
2579	85,799			2457	103,105
2317	54,417	Layer List	* u ×	3091	74,621
				1516	57,885

East County Government Center Services.

Over the last few years, a number of services have been added at the East County Government Center, located at 3300 Briggs Chaney Road, just east of US29. The services include the following:

- MobileMed Clinic: for underinsured adults
- Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS): includes access to health, food, utility, emergency, literacy, immigrant and senior services
- Montgomery County Bar Foundation Pro Bono Legal Clinic
- Sheppard Pratt (formally Family Services): Helps access to other services, especially DHHS services
- Charles Gilchrist Immigrant Resource Center
- Montgomery College: Offers education and workforce development classes, etc. A number of community members are working to expand this effort.
- WorkSource Montgomery: Includes the "Helping Individuals Reach Employment (HIRE) Center"
- **Manna Food Center: food distribution.** They recently opened a new location on Tech Rd at Old Columbia Pike.

Montgomery County Tax Revenue Forecast Falls

The County ended FY19 (ie June 2019) with fewer resources than forecast in March. The result is that FY20 began with \$60.1 million less in reserves than approved. FY21 revenues are estimated to decrease by 0.2% from FY20. The County's total revenues for FY21 are expected to be \$99.8 million less than the June approved fiscal plan. Department of Finance (DOF) projections for FY22-FY25 show that the revenue estimates are increasingly negative compared with the prior estimates. These estimates will next be updated in March, which is when the council starts taking up the FY21 budget.

The negative estimates are new to the Council and Executive, but reflect what a number of people have been saying for a number of years. Last May the county balanced the budget by underfunding retiree health care payments, which the rating agencies criticized, and thus this tactic cannot be used again if the county wants to retain its AAA credit rating. The forecast means that the county has two possible choices, both bad: increase taxes or reduce the amount spent on services. We have seen reports that show that the job growth has been poor and that many of the increase in total jobs are low wage ones, which pay little if any taxes. The second item is that the Executive branch has failed to actively address the need for economic development in East County, especially good paying jobs. (The council is supportive.)

We have been pushing for non-residential development in East County for the better part of the last decade, but the Executive Branch has been making decisions that keep putting roadblocks in the way. We have been able to overcome them so far but each such effort takes many months. As a result, a number of good opportunities have been missed. The major issue that remains is the high cost of impact taxes and cost of required transportation improvements. Just these costs and the cost to obtain Planning Board approval can exceed \$100,000 for a single family house in our area or about 20% the typical price of a house here. By comparison the cost in Bethesda is much lower – closer to \$50,000- which according to Google has a median price of \$1,140,000 (around 4% the typical price). This same situation applies to non-residential development. That high cost often means the cost to develop here is not justified compared to other locations.

Adult English Education.

A good number of foreign born adults living in the area actually have college level training but they are not able to find good paying jobs. There are two primary reasons: limited ability with reading and speaking English and employers' readiness to accept foreign education certificates. (About 1/3 of the adults county-wide are foreign born and about 40% speak other than English as their primary language.)

The Montgomery County Coalition for Adult English Literacy (MCAEL) offers a number of classes throughout the County in English and on other support topics. Most classes are free or charge a small fee. More information can be found at www.mcael.org

The next issue of the Clarion will be mailed in March 2020. The deadline for submitting news and photographs is Friday, February 21, 2020.

Contact Editor Nancy Laich at 301-412-5301, or nmkurgan@aol.com

For inquiries about advertising in the Clarion, please email Dave Michaels at <a href="mailto:emailto:

Northeast Consortium Boundary Study

The boundary analysis on pg. 5 is a good piece of data for an actual boundary study, which GCCA and the PTA's in our area have been encouraging MCPS to undertake for the last year. We have contended that MCPS needs to develop a plan to accommodate students from planned developments, especially for Viva White Oak, which would otherwise overwhelm some schools using the current assignments.

In addition, many of the schools need renovation because the buildings are old. MCPS has not yet committed to the study. The Viva White Oak developer has agreed to work with MCPS on this effort.

Mont. Public Schools Conduct Analysis of School Boundaries

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) hired a consultant to collect data relative to three major issues for each of the 208 public schools in the county: utilization, diversity, and proximity of the assigned school to where people live. The purpose of the study is NOT to redraw school or cluster boundaries. MCPS is having six community meetings to present the data from Phase 1, which they provided in a 53 page handout. Phase 2 will extend into spring 2020, and test ideas for metrics. The Phase 1 handout and other information can be found at https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/de-partments/publicinfo/boundary-analysis/.60

Following are several things we learned at one of the meetings and from the handout.

General: MCPS currently has 208 schools. In 1972 there were almost as many schools (203), but 60 were closed in the 1972-1983 period due to a baby bust when the MCPS population fell sharply. Four additional schools will be built or reopened by 2025. While not stated at the meeting, the objective peak population per school is higher today than it was in 1972.

Utilization: MCPS strives for the student population to be between 80-100% of school capacity.

Number of East County scl	nools shown in	(# EC).
---------------------------	----------------	----------

	<u><80%</u>	<u>80-100%</u>	<u>100-120%</u>	<u>>120%</u>	
ES	16 (1 EC)	46 (3 <i>EC</i>)	51 (<i>5 EC</i>)	22 (6 EC)	
MS HS	3	23 (2 EC)	12 (3 <i>EC</i>)	2	
HS	0	12 (2 EC)	11 (<i>1 EC</i>)	2	

Schools above 120% are placed in moratorium for new development unless some measure is planned to bring the student population down. It should be noted that many of the over-fill students do not come from new development, but from turn-over of existing houses.

Diversity: The study is looking at socio-economic and racial measures, but only the former was included in the booklet. The study used Free and Reduced Meals (FARMs) as the measure. Many of the families receiving FARMs are black and Hispanic. Some 1/3 of the residents in our area are foreign born, and many of them are on FARMs. It should be realized that a good number of blacks are foreign born, from Africa or elsewhere.

	<u><20%</u>	<u>20-40%</u>	<u>40-60%</u>	<u>60-80%</u>	<u>>80%</u>
ES	33	37 (3 <i>EC</i>)	18 (3 <i>EC</i>)	28 (7 <i>EC</i>)	19 (2 <i>EC</i>)
MS	7	10	7 (1 EC)	11 (2 EC)	5 (2 EC)
HS	5	4	7 (1 EC)	7 (2 EC)	2

Proximity: This indicates the percentage of students not assigned to the nearest school, not considering consortium selection in high schools. Data was not provided as to the extra distance or time students must travel per school. Traveling an extra minute is one thing but traveling an extra half hour is something else.

	<u><25%</u>	<u>25-50%</u>	<u>50-75%</u>	<u>>75%</u>	Average & Range (% of students)
ES	45 (8 <i>EC</i>)	51 (5 EC)	20	13 (2 <i>EC</i>)	37 (94 to 0)
MS	12	3 (1 EC)	12 (2 EC)	3 (1 <i>EC</i>)	45 (100 to 0)*
HS	8	10 (1 EC)	6 (1 EC)	1 (1 <i>EC</i>)	38 (76 to 38)

Montgomery Co. Council Economic Development Platform

In November the council passed a resolution supporting an Economic Development Platform that is focused on business development, housing, transportation and workforce development. The Economic Development Platform Resolution is a guiding document that identifies a thriving and diversified economy, greater innovation, racial equity and social justice, and environmental sustainability as desired outcomes. The goal of the resolution is to institutionalize a strategic economic framework that enables a focused and disciplined implementation of the County's economic initiatives. The framework is illustrated below. The Council must now turn the different aspects of the framework into real legislation.



Thrive Montgomery 2050 - General Plan.

The Planning Department is updating the 1964 General Plan, which they are calling Thrive Montgomery 2050. The overriding question is how to plan for a future Montgomery County, with anticipated growth of more than 200,000 people within the next 25-30 years. The goal is that the county will be a thriving place with a strong economy, fairness and opportunity for a dynamic and very diverse population, and environmental resiliency to address the threats of climate change.

It is important to recognize that the footprint of development in the county is largely in place. Most of the land is already built upon, is already planned for development, or is part of our critical open space – including parkland, the Agricultural Reserve and environmentally sensitive areas. There are few vacant and greenfield properties remaining.

The Planning Department framework consists of three main themes or outcomes: economic health, community equity and environmental resilience. The proposed issues, which overlap and relate to these three primary outcomes are organized into eight categories:

- 1. Complete Communities
- 2. Connectedness
- 3. Diverse Economies
- 4. Safe and Efficient Travel

- 5. Affordability
- 6. Healthy and Sustainable Environment
- 7. Diverse and Adaptable Growth
- 8. Culture and Design

The Staff provided the Planning Board on 12/12 with a report, which includes many of the issues we have been trying to address for a number of years. The report can be found at https://montgomeryplanningboard.org/agenda-item/december-12-2019/. The next step is for the staff to draft polices that address the issues.

FDA Science Update

FDA approved on Nov 15 the first duodenoscope with a sterile disposable elevator component that will reduce the number of parts that need to be cleaned and disinfected between uses. It has been difficult to clean such equipment and to know that it was adequately cleaned. By replacing this part, the risk of infection will be lowered. It is difficult to adequately clean a number of devices, and to address this issue, FDA and White Oak Medical Center have been collaborating to find solutions.

FDA approved on Nov 25 a new medicine for the treatment of sickle cell disease, a debilitating inherited blood disorder in which red blood cells are abnormally shaped and thus restrict the blood flow and limit the oxygen delivery to the body's tissues.

FDA approved on Oct 21 Trikafta as the first triple combination therapy to treat patients with the most common type of cystic fibrosis mutation. Cystic fibrosis is a progressive, life-threatening disease that results in the formation of thick mucus that builds up in the lungs, digestive tract, and other parts of the body. This is the first treatment available to some cystic fibrosis patients.

A Phase 3 study is underway for a new drug to treat advance prostate cancer. Positive results so far point to a second quarter 2020 new drug application submission to FDA.

White Oak Medical Center

Construction activities in addition to the completed hospital are:

- Within the hospital proper construction is underway to provide 10 behavioral health care beds in the south tower on the fifth floor. This should be complete in the late February timeframe.
- The doctors' office building shell is complete and the inside is expected to be complete in the April-May timeframe.
- Construction is getting underway to provide 42 rehabilitation beds by completing the 6th and 7th floors of the hospital building. Today that part of the hospital building has 5 floors. This is expected to be complete in the Oct-Nov 2020 timeframe.
- Work is progressing on the path and landscaping around the pond.

2020 Census

The census is taken every 10 years and the results impact us in many ways. One way is that it directly determines the amount of federal funding the State of Maryland will receive over the next decade. It is predicted that each person who is not counted will mean \$16,398 less in federal funding. The census results also form the basis of election redistricting (federal, state and local). The census strives to count all residents, both citizens and non-citizens.

When it is time to respond, most households will receive an invitation in the mail (expect this March 12-20). You can respond online (best for our area), by mail, or by phone. The initial invitation and reminders in March and April will not contain the questionnaire – it is available on line.

For those who have not responded initially, a paper questionnaire will be sent and eventually a follow up will occur in person. More information is available at

https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/census/. Also see the link for whom to count on your census (there are a number of situations that affect many of us, such as college students and people in health care facilities).

Hillandale Transportation Issues

There were several transportation issues with the County Department of Transportation (DOT) related to the Local Area Transportation Improvement Program (LATIP) projects that the developer would fund and build. Shane Pollin of the Duffie Company resolved issues concerning the design of the expansion of Powder Mill Rd on the west side of New Hampshire Ave.

Dan Wilhelm clarified with them about the LATIP credits and relationship to the DOT review of subdivision plans, which would also apply to Viva White Oak and other projects in the area. In addition DOT has been undertaking an additional study in the Hillandale area for the last year. DOT indicates the results will be available in early January for review.

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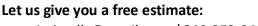
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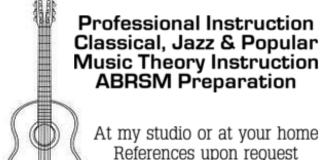
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(3 representatives per area)

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1	Fred Pulliam	144 Bonifant Rd.	602-0825	19	Mark Pankow	908 Hobbs Dr. 7	03-851-1315					
1	Deborah Pulliam	144 Bonifant Rd. 240	-440-1758	20	Chris Naughten	800 Midland Rd	758-3633					
2	Open			21	Jay Hagler	1325 Crockett Ln 2	40-994-8993					
3	Marguerite Raaen	14404 Sandy Ridge 24	0-938-0523	21	Benedict Eng	1205 Crockett Ln 2	40-388-6263					
3	Fred Stichnoth	14105 Cricket Ln	706-6828	22	Open							
4	Henry Morrow	13812 Mills Avenue	384-0827	23	Dan Wilhelm	904 Cannon Rd.	384-2698					
5	Open			24	Open							
6	Bill Backof	13814 Shannon Drive	384-7354	25	Ed Weiler	1008 Mondrian Terr.	236-5956					
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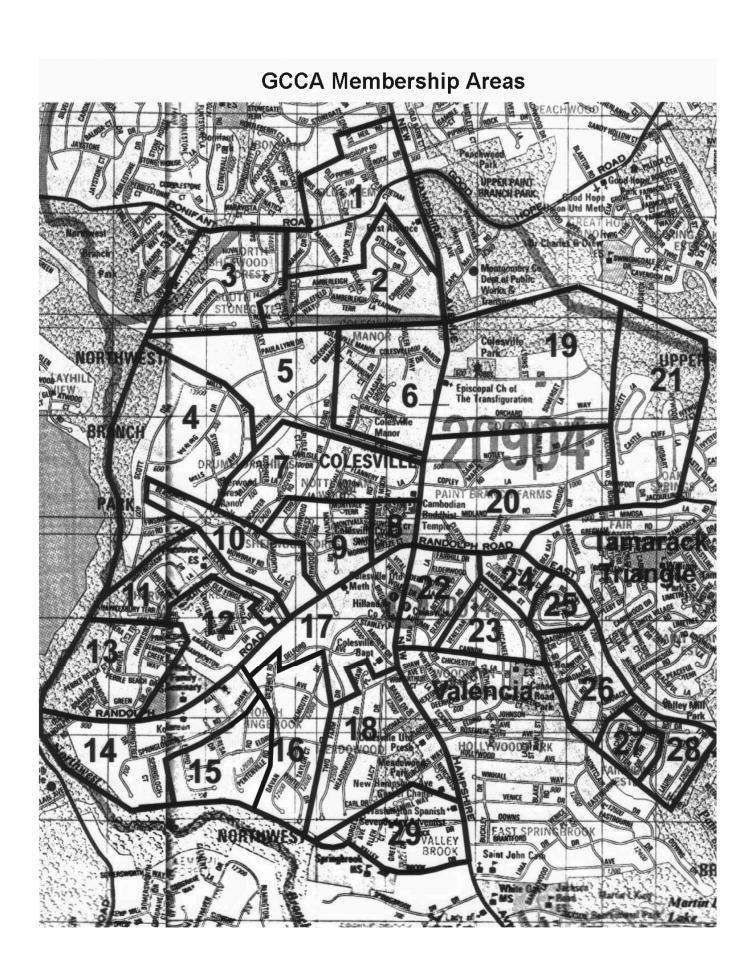
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Note: Dues paid in May 2019 will be applied to the 2019 - 2020 fiscal year.

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