

3 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

A key element in defining this plan was input from residents, business and property owners, Village Officials and other stakeholders. Over the course of the planning process, many different forms of participation were employed.

3.1 Orientation

A public orientation/informational session was held on August 22, 2001 at the Fox Bay Cinema Grill. The primary audience for the orientation was the Silver Spring Business District Property and Business Owners, although the public was also welcome to attend. The purpose of the orientation meeting was to inform stakeholders of the planning process, means for public input and discuss issues and opportunities that face the business district.

3.2 Household Survey

A household survey was prepared by PDI and distributed by the Village in the 'Bay Leaves' newsletter. The survey process was intended to provide an opportunity, aside from public meetings, for residents to express their opinions, values and ideals regarding the issues that affect their community. In addition, the survey establishes a method to guide the recommendations of this plan and future decisions that affect the Silver Spring Business District.

5,000 surveys were distributed and 1,470 were returned, a 29% response rate. The full compilation of the responses is included in the appendices of this document. The following details some of the most notable information obtained by the household survey.

Background Information

39% of the respondents have lived in the Village for less than 10 years.

40% of respondents have lived in the Village for over 20 years.

The responses represented a reasonable geographic distribution across the Village.

Retail Business

More than 75% of respondents shop on Silver Spring each week.

There were no other shopping areas with more than a 50% shopping frequency within a week.

Oakland Ave., Bayshore Mall and Port Washington Road were the only other areas with more than 25% shopping frequency within a week.

Mayfair Mall was the most frequented distant shopping area.

94% of respondents felt that Silver Spring is a valuable part of the community.

The most desired new businesses from those listed include delicatessen, bookstore, clothing and florist

The least desired new businesses from those listed include electronics and video/music stores.

Traffic and Circulation

89% of respondents drive to Silver Spring, 72% walk and 38% bike.

About 40% of respondents find some difficulty in pedestrian crossings.

Respondents generally rated parking convenience high both east and west of Santa Monica Blvd.

Attitude Towards New Development or Redevelopment

35% of respondents favored major change, with 60% in favor of minor changed.

Only 5% of respondents favored doing nothing.

Over 50% of respondents were somewhat or very supportive of tax dollars being spent on street furnishings, landscaping, new lighting, business recruitment, facade improvement grants and pedestrian safety measures.

Respondents were more supportive than unsupportive of tax dollars being used for purchase of land/buildings for open space and public art.

3.3 Business Owner Interviews and Survey

From September to November 2001, PDI met individually with business and property owners along Silver Spring to confidentially discuss business plans and needs, business mix in the area and the future of the business district.

PDI, along with Village Staff, also conducted a formal presentation of the planning process to members of the Board of Trustees of the Masonic Lodge.

PDI also developed a written survey that was distributed to all property and business owners in the district. This survey was intended to reach those individuals who were unable to take the time to meet individually, but still wished to comment confidentially on the future of the street.

After the formation of the Community Development Authority, several CDA members also met with local stakeholders to discuss development plans.

3.5 Presentation to Business Community

On December 11, 2001, PDI presented the household survey results and preliminary planning ideas to several Silver Spring Business District stakeholders.



Participants at the December 11, 2002 presentation to business community stakeholders.

3.6 Open House

On January 22, 2002, an Open House was conducted at the Village Hall to share with the public the results of the household survey, parking study and preliminary master plan concepts. The Open House was well attended by both business district stakeholders and residents. The Open House consisted of several informational stations as well



Participants at the January 22, 2002 Open House

as an ongoing slideshow explaining the planning process and the information gathered to that point. Residents had the opportunity to make verbal as well as written comments. Written comments from the Open House are summarized in Appendix B.

3.6 Formal Public Presentation

A second, more formal, presentation of the refined master plan concepts was conducted on March 20, 2002 at Dominican High School. Ehlers and Associates also presented information regarding TIF financing to explain how the Master Plan vision could be financed. The presentation as well and the question and answer session were broadcast on local access television on several occasions during the next few months.

Written and oral comments/questions from the public presentation are included in Appendix B.



A three dimensional model was used at many public presentations to explore design options and generate discussion regarding development issues.

