

# PROJECT DATA

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

Project Name:

Downtown Silver Spring & Discovery Communications World Headquarters

Location: Silver Spring, MD

Owner: Public-private partnership

Project Use(s) Urban downtown and headquarters of a media conglomerate

Project Size Total Development Cost: \$400 million

Annual Operating Budget (if appropriate)

Date Initiated: April 1998 Percent Completed by December 1, 2004: 90%

Project Completion Date (if appropriate):

Attach, if you wish, a list of relevant project dates

Application submitted by:

Name: John Carter Title: Chief, Community-Based Planning

Organization: Montgomery County Department of Park & Planning, Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

Address 8787 Georgia Avenue City/State/Zip Silver Spring, MD 20910

Telephone (301)495-1304 Fax (301) 495-4575

E-mail: John.Carter@mncppc-mc.org Weekend Contact Number: 240-678-8166

Key Participants (Attach an additional sheet if needed)

Organization	Key Participant	Telephone/e-mail
Public Agencies	M-NCPPC	John.Carter@mncppc-mc.org
Architect/Designer	RTKL Associates Inc	DC-info@rtkl.com
Developer	Bryan Foulger, PFA Silver Spring LC	bfoulger@foulgerpratt.com
Professional Consultant	SmithGroup	info@smithgroup.com
Community Group	Steven Silverman Councilmember	Silverman@montgomery county.gov
Other		

Please indicate how you learned of the Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence. (Check all that apply).

Direct Mailing  Magazine Advertisement  Previous RBA entrant  Other (please specify)

Professional  Newsletter Grant announcements

Previous Selection Committee member

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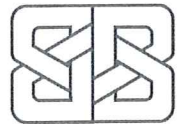
Signature

John A. Carter

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2005  
RUDY BRUNER AWARD  
ABSTRACT

RUDY  
BRUNER  
AWARD



FOR URBAN  
EXCELLENCE

# ABSTRACT

Project Name:

**Downtown Silver Spring and Discovery Communications World Headquarters**

Address: c/o John Carter, CBP, M-NCPPC, 8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20910

## 1. Give a brief overview of the project, including major project goals.

The Downtown Silver Spring project forms the nucleus of the mixed-use urban revitalization of Silver Spring, MD, located northeast of Washington, DC, inside the Capital Beltway. It has more than one million square feet of retail, office space, multi-family dwelling units, and civic space, and two public parking garages. The four reconstructed main streets feature extensive streetscape to establish a safe and attractive pedestrian environment. The retail space includes restaurants, movie theaters, a bookstore, grocery stores and several retail shops. The multi-family dwelling units, adjacent to existing stable neighborhoods of single-family houses, extend the vitality of the downtown. A new office building on Georgia Avenue and the Marriott Courtyard hotel are currently under construction.

The Discovery Communications World Headquarters, the lead office project completed in 2003, was a testimony to Downtown Silver Spring's positive entrepreneurial setting for growth companies that, in turn, provided a catalyst for business investment. Built on an unused 3.4-acre lot at the CBD's core, this \$150 million building includes 545,420 square feet of office space for over 1,500 employees. Two public open spaces and an art wall complete the project. Discovery Communication's move was inspired by the redevelopment plan for Downtown Silver Spring, and sealed by a private-public partnership.

The major objectives were to develop a revitalized CBD that served eastern Montgomery County, based on consensus among local stakeholders, using Smart Growth policies and public-private partnerships to develop a competitive business center with a healthy, diverse economy; to provide cultural and civic centers; create a safe, pedestrian-oriented downtown as a focal point of community life; plan strategically for historic preservation and a balanced mix of urban development with open spaces.

## 2. Why does the project merit the Rudy Bruner Award for Urban excellence?

The planning process, a dynamic one, has been community-centered, environmentally conscious, and market-responsive. It represents a triumph of public-partnership after many years and several plans formulated by developers and public officials to revive a blighted area, variously supported and opposed by residents. In contrast to failed plans that relied on a single large project developed with public funding, this project used an incremental approach to redevelopment, and fostered public/private partnerships through a stable public commitment. An innovative incentive-zoning tool provided density in return for high quality civic spaces, new urban streets, and preservation of unique existing buildings. Multiple tax incentives, including enterprise zones and job creation credits promoted private enterprise.

Downtown Silver Spring was recognized in 2000 by the Sierra Club as one of the 50 best Smart Growth Initiatives in the US. Its well-planned, sustainable design and development makes the downtown pedestrian-friendly and accessible to public transportation. It strikes a balance between jobs, housing, shops and open space. The landmark architecture reflects the art deco/streamline modern period of Silver Spring's heyday, and prevents homogeneity among the state-of-the-art architecture of the new constructions. The American Film Institute's Silver Theatre and Cultural Center preserves parts of two 1938 buildings: the Silver Theatre and the facade of the Silver Shopping Center. The historic Gramax Building and the Canada Dry bottling plant, each standing empty for years, are now converted into apartments, the majority of which are affordable housing units. Other affordable housing projects currently underway offer a very scarce commodity in affluent Montgomery County for low and moderate-income individuals.

Since the project began in 1998, Silver Spring has not only been revitalized, but has also become a catalyst for growth in the Washington metropolitan area, boasting more than 500 businesses and 20,000 residents. It has one of the lowest vacancy rates for businesses in the region - 8.6% in 2003. Additionally, this project is part of an eight-point Silver Spring Smart Growth Strategy that also includes the construction of luxury townhomes, expansion of Montgomery College and a Transit Center, revitalization of Fenton Village and South Silver Spring, and improvements to Jessup Blair Park.

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**2005**  
**RUDY BRUNER AWARD**  
**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**



# PROJECT DESCRIPTION

## 1. How has this project impacted the local community?

Settled in the mid-1840s, Silver Spring was one of the first commercial areas to develop in the county. It thrived as regional retail center in the 1950's and 1960's and degenerated as suburban development and shopping malls drew away residents and businesses. While other DC suburbs prospered in the 1970's and 1980's, Silver Spring became increasingly blighted. It was the last suburban center in the County to revitalize, and earlier attempts failed. This project distinguished itself as a shared vision of the community and business investment to create a downtown for Silver Spring as a focal point of community life, offering a mix of historic preservation, the arts, and public incentives.

Safety issues were addressed through the design of new parking structures, urban district patrols on bikes, police on bicycles, and horse patrols by M-NCPPC park police. The project created evening and weekend activities in such venues as the American Film Institute (AFI) multi-screen theater, Round House Theater and children's workshop and the Majestic Theaters, and through extensive programming, such as the Silver Spring Jazz Festival. It has provided a venue for community gathering and festivities such as the Magical Montgomery festival, Thanksgiving Parade and a summer outdoor concert series. The revitalized Downtown provided jobs nearby neighborhoods for the community, and increased property values significantly. Following shortly is a Transit Center that joins a train line, bike trail and local and regional bus service with the existing Metro subway station; a veterans' memorial; and an open space that will host concerts in the summer and be converted into an ice rink in winter.

## 2. Describe the underlying values of the project. What, if any, significant trade-offs were required?

The project was based on sustainable development that incorporated existing infrastructure and Smart Growth, economic health, crime reduction, street safety, pedestrian-orientation, transit-orientation, housing choices, active street life, community-serving retail, cultural diversity, citizen participation, enhancement – not replacement – of existing residences, sustained public commitment to revitalization, historic preservation, and economic feasibility

The area lost some historic resources: the Armory was demolished to accommodate project design veterans to be commemorated in a new plaza; only the façade of the historic Silver Spring Shopping Center was preserved; the Tastee Diner had to be moved from a historic location to a new one.

## 3. Describe the key elements of the development process, including community participation where appropriate.

Planners, politicians and developers worked through two failed projects with community participation to arrive at a shared vision. The process included:

- Silver Spring Central Business District Sector Plan – preceded by community participation through focus groups and public hearings, and approved by M-NCPPC Planning Board and County Council
- Urban Renewal Plan with a public hearing and Council approval
- Redevelopment Plan for the Core with a large Steering Committee and several public meetings
- Historic Preservation Commission reviews for the Armory/Silver Spring Shopping Center/Silver Theater/City Place modifications)
- Regulatory approvals by the Planning Board after public hearings for the Project Plan, Preliminary Plan, and Site Plan

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The County gave Downtown Silver Spring Enterprise Zone status, allowing businesses to earn tax credits for expansion and capital improvements. This sped up development of retail and restaurants along Georgia Avenue and Colesville Road. Silver Spring's Green Tape Zone designation provides for a County team that gives Downtown projects special priority in reviews and inspections involved in the permitting process. An Annual Growth Policy regulates traffic capacity. The "Live Near Your Work" program provides a \$3,000 cash grant to qualifying Silver Spring employees for the purchase of a home in the Silver Spring/Takoma Park Region. A new very proactive, "pro-small" and minority business program covers everything from financial assistance to networking events to special, bi-lingual seminars. The business community and the local government collaborated on the "Silver SprUng" media campaign announcing that Downtown was open for business and recreation.

**4. Describe the financing of the project. Please include all funding sources and square foot costs where applicable.**

Downtown Silver Spring project was made possible through a \$400 million public-private partnership. The County provided \$96 million of the original funding and the State \$36 million, while a private sector development team invested approximately \$189.4 million in the project. Public funding sources included a tax-exempt bond underwritten by the Montgomery County Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC); tax credits issued by the Maryland State Housing and Community Development Agency; \$4 million in County funding from the Housing Initiative Fund; and a credit enhancement for the tax-exempt bond from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Unlike previous failed attempts, this project is one that the private sector felt comfortable financing. A county partnership with the PFA group of developers has meant nearly \$1 billion in private and public investment in downtown Silver Spring. Also, Silver Spring's designation as a Neighborhood Business Development area and Smart Growth area allow the use of State funds to assist businesses, property owners and residents of the downtown.

**5. Is the project unique and /or does it address significant urban issues? Is the model adaptable to other urban settings?**

This project presented the unique challenges of a large CBD that had fallen into dilapidation for almost three decades, in which there was little interest from private sector. Moreover, it is surrounded by settled neighborhoods of single-family homes, with politically active, environmentally sensitive residents who made their priorities clear for a community focus rather than regional.

The planning model is assuredly adaptable to other urban revivals where multiple agendas and existing features have to be incorporated in a dynamic, market-oriented and community-focused process. M-NCPPC's plan stimulated appropriate development, provided market responsive land uses, zoning and plan approval processes; provided more flexible land use and zoning, responsive to the CBD's changing real estate markets; identified key major public and private development initiatives; develop implementation strategies and tools; and balanced the need for development with sensitivity to the potential negative impacts on transportation systems, historic preservation, neighborhood compatibility, and the environment.

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**2005**  
**RUDY BRUNER AWARD**  
**COMMUNITY**  
**REPRESENTATIVE**  
**PERSPECTIVE**



# COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by someone who was involved, or represents an organization that was involved, in helping the project respond to neighborhood issues.

Name STEVEN SILVERMAN Title PRESIDENT, MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL  
Organization Former Co-Chair, Silver Spring Redevelopment Steering Committee Telephone (240) 777-7960  
Address 100 MARYLAND AVE., 6<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR City/State/ZIP ROCKVILLE, MD 20850  
Fax (240) 777-7989 E-mail Councilmember.Silverman@montgomerycounty.gov

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Signature  Steven A Silverman

1. How did you, or the organization you represent, become involved in this project? What role did you play?

See Attached

2. From the community's point of view, what were the major issues concerning this project?

3. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? How did your organization participate in making them?



Rudy Brunner Award for Urban Excellence  
Community Representative Perspective

1. How did you, or the organization you represent, become involved in this project? What role did you play?

I served as Co-Chair of the Silver Spring Redevelopment Steering Committee until 1998, when I was elected to the Montgomery County Council, where I currently serve as President. As a former Chair of the Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce, I co-chaired this 31 member committee, representing a cross-section of Silver Spring's civic, business, educational, minority, and religious communities. It was convened by the County Executive in 1997 and charged with advising him on a broad range of issues facing downtown Silver Spring, including private and public proposals for the revitalization of the urban core.

2. From the community's point of view, what were the major issues concerning this project?

The major issues faced by the Steering committee regarding the revitalization of downtown Silver Spring, were to try to build community consensus in support of a specific revitalization strategy. This was a major challenge given two prior failed efforts at revitalization over the preceding ten years, the controversies arising around those prior proposals, and the lack of private sector investment in downtown Silver Spring over that period of time. A second broader issue facing the Steering Committee and its work to provide advice on redevelopment projects and policies in Silver Spring was the difficult but necessary tackling of issues of race and multiculturalism in an area undergoing significant demographic changes.

3. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? How did your organization participate in making them?

The Steering Committee exhaustively studied the private sector proposal for revitalization and redevelopment of a several block area in the downtown core. Among the issues for the Committee which involved trade-offs and compromises was acknowledgment that the success of the project might require elimination of an existing Armory. The Committee stated that if that occurred, then a new Civic Building and Veterans Memorial must be built. The Armory was demolished and funding has been provided for a new Civic Building and Memorial. Another issue faced by the Committee was the additional traffic generated by the project. Because the project was smaller in scale than previous redevelopment proposals, community concerns were somewhat ameliorated, and in addition, significant efforts have been made to promote transit, and a pedestrian friendly environment, while discouraging traffic and parking in surrounding neighborhoods. Another compromise involved support for a range of new retail tenants in the revitalized areas, but also to support assistance to existing businesses to remain or relocate in downtown Silver Spring.

4. Has this project made the community a better place to live or work? If so, how?

The Steering Committee's goal was to transform a place, but also to transform the leadership in that place. The revitalization of the urban core has transformed downtown Silver Spring, and it is well on its way to becoming a vibrant, lively, urban success story. Key elements to that success involved the relocation of the world headquarters of Discovery Communications to the urban core, resulting in hundreds of employees to eat, shop, and live in downtown Silver Spring. The revitalization of the core shopping area, highlighting and restoring many of its historic Art Deco elements, provided the stores, restaurants, and movie and live theatre entertainment drawing workers and residents alike. The restoration of the historic Silver Theatre as the new home for the American Film Institute provides a national icon and regional draw to Silver Spring. Essential civic places are on their way to fruition. Finally, and perhaps most importantly for the future of Silver Spring, a new organization has arisen, Impact Silver Spring, which provides leadership training and community empowerment opportunities to help identify and support leaders within existing and emerging communities where more traditional civic involvement may not be currently present.

5. Would you change anything about this project or the development process you went through?

The process and the substance came together because of a strong community. In hindsight, we could have used additional diversity from an economic perspective.

*Fitzbare/misc/0411/rudy brunner award for urban excellence*

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**2005**  
**RUDY BRUNER AWARD**  
**PUBLIC AGENCY**  
**PERSPECTIVE**



# PUBLIC AGENCY PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by staff representative(s) of public agency(ies) who were directly involved in the financing, design review, or public approvals that affected this project.

Name JOHN CARTER Title CHIEF, COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING  
Organization MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPT OF PARK & PLANNING, MD-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK & PLANNING COMMISSION (M-NCPPC) Telephone ( 301 ) 495-4575  
Address 8787 GEORGIA AVENUE City/State/ZIP SILVER SPRING, MD 20910  
Fax ( 301 ) 495-1304 E-mail John.Carter@mncppc-mc.org

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Signature John Carter

1. What role did your agency play in the development of this project? Describe any requirements made of this project by your agency.

The Department of Park and Planning, M-NCPPC provided the detailed staff work for this project in long-range master planning, transportation and environmental planning, zoning, demographics and other research, and community outreach. We also had regulatory responsibilities, including preliminary plans of subdivision, site and project plans, record plats, mandatory referrals, special exceptions, and technical briefings for the Montgomery County Planning Board.

M-NCPPC's first step in developing a vision and revitalization strategies for the project was to counter previous failures, recognizing its strategic location in the Washington metropolitan area and, also, that no other CBD in the county is as large, nor has experienced the same magnitude of decline. Our streamlined planning process for this project included issue-based community workshops, a phone survey of residents, public hearings and work sessions to enable community leaders, developers, residents, business owners, and public officials to articulate and confirm the fundamental needs and approaches to revitalize downtown Silver Spring. The result was M-NCPPC's Silver Spring Central Business District Sector Plan, approved by the Planning Board and County Council in 2000. The Plan recognizes the County's role as developer through the strategic siting and programming of community facilities to encourage and complement private sector development. In response to the residential and business communities' concerns that existing zones were disincentives to redevelopment, particularly in the depressed areas of the CBD, we made recommendations to alleviate existing zoning disincentives, expanding land use options in some locations where the allowed density may deter revitalization.

2. How was this project intended to benefit your city? What trade-offs and compromises were required to implement the project? How did your agency participate in making them?

M-NCPPC planned for Silver Spring to be the downtown for the east county and called for smaller projects that collectively revitalize the downtown by creating a town center atmosphere where each project is complementary to the rest.

A relatively new urban park, Kuhn Park and a parking garage built within the last 10 years were removed to accommodate a better plan. Increased traffic congestion was accepted in exchange for development. Public dollars were spent to effect desirable outcomes, such as the renovation of historic Silver Theatre to accommodate AFI's Cultural Center. Even with available assistance several and an attempt to protect local businesses, several suffered losses or closed, some replaced by national/regional chains. In response to developer needs, the Discovery building was permitted to be taller than originally approved, public art substituted for street active retail along its Colesville Road frontage, and its public open space enclosed.

## **PUBLIC AGENCY PERSPECTIVE**

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### **3. Describe the project's impact on the local community. Be as specific as possible.**

Where once there was blight, crime and malaise, Downtown Silver Spring is now a varied, attractive and active downtown utilized beyond the workday, on weekends and evenings, all year. The project brings transportation, shopping, offices and residences in one central location. Streetscapes and good urban design ensure a "human scale" in a main street environment. Of its 26 acres, 6.7 are dedicated to public use in the form of plazas, parks and walkways.

Downtown Silver Spring is often compared to nearby Bethesda CBD for its restaurants, theaters, nightclubs and promotion of the arts. Silver Spring, however, is distinguished from Bethesda by greater social and economic diversity - a place where people can live, work, and visit.

Nearly 1,700 new units of housing being developed, with nearly one-quarter of the units set aside for affordable housing. In addition, more than 1,200 units of affordable housing have been preserved through the renovation and rehabilitation of older apartment projects.

### **4. Did this project result in new models of private/public partnerships? Are there aspects of this project that would be instructive to agencies like yours in other cities?**

Downtown Silver Spring provides a prototype of how urban sprawl can be curbed with Smart Growth policies, and of private-public investments that encourage people to live and work in our existing communities.

Public-private partnerships were initiated by the state's and county's commitment of funds to various sites, removing zoning disincentives, and creating new tax incentives. A partnership with a developer group launched other business investments. Additionally, there were partnerships struck between businesses, notably between Discovery Communications and the American Film Institute. The incremental approach to development generated increasing interest in Downtown Silver Spring and other projects in the area, and further investment from the private sector.

### **5. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?**

The project, developed in accordance with transit-oriented development principles and the countywide Smart Growth policy, concentrated growth near existing transit infrastructure (Metro station, commuter rail station, and bus transfer hub), introduced a greater mix of uses and created an attractive pleasant pedestrian environment, with neighborhood stores, restaurants and movie theaters where there were either few or none. The project also provided crucial links in hiker-biker trails. The CBD's transit, trail, and transportation connections will combine in a Transit Center. As its main thoroughfares, Georgia Avenue and Colesville Road define the CBD and have the potential to the front door for each of the downtown revitalization districts. Streetscaping and redevelopment combine to create a pedestrian friendly corridor.

M-NCPPC's plan stimulated appropriate development, provided market responsive land uses, zoning and plan approval processes; provided more flexible land use and zoning, responsive to the CBD's changing real estate markets; identified key major public and private development initiatives; develop implementation strategies and tools; and balanced the need for development with sensitivity to the potential negative impacts on transportation systems, historic preservation, neighborhood compatibility, and the environment.

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**2005**  
**RUDY BRUNER AWARD**  
**DEVELOPER**  
**PERSPECTIVE**



# DEVELOPER PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by the person who took primary responsibility for project financing or is a representative of the group which did.

Name BRYANT FOLGER Title PRINCIPAL  
Organization PFA SILVER SPRING LC Telephone (240) 499-9600  
Address 9600 BLACKWELL RD, SUITE 200 City/State/ZIP ROCKVILLE, MD 20850  
Fax (240) 499-9710 E-mail bfoulger@foulgerpratt.com

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Signature Bryant Folger  
FM

1. What role did you or your organization play in the development of this project? Describe the scope of involvement.

PLEASE SEE ATTACHMENT

2. What trade-offs or compromises were required during the development of the project?

3. How was the project financed? What, if any, innovative means of financing were used?

# DEVELOPER PERSPECTIVE

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Bryant Foulger, PFA Silver Spring LC

**1. How did you, or the organization you represent, become involved in this project? What role did you play?**

PFA is a group of three partners, the Peterson Companies, Foulger-Pratt Companies, and Argo Investment Company. PFA was selected through competitive process based on experience, local knowledge, and proposed process, not economics, for developing a \$321 million downtown revitalization effort. The 26-acres project encompasses a mix of uses and dedicates 6.7 acres of the site to public use in the form of plazas, parks and walkways. We managed and developed the project including: project design and development approval process, construction, financing, leasing, and management. Worked closely with county, community to gain community support and develop a pedestrian-oriented, main street centered development that would serve both regional and local consumers with grocery stores, retail shops and restaurants. This plan was approved by Montgomery County in 1998.

Many local residents, officials and developers reportedly consider the revitalization a success, and attribute its triumph to a flourishing partnership between Montgomery County and PFA.

**2. From the community's point of view, what were the major issues concerning this project?**

The community wanted a project that served the community and not necessarily the entire region. The community wanted to have a new heart of the community – a place to go with uses and design that added to that sense of community. We owe a great debt to the fine work of the County Executive, the Silver Spring Redevelopment Steering Committee, the County Council, and the M-NCPPC in helping to prepare an outstanding land use and business plan that met stakeholders' multiple agendas. The strong response by both the tenants and the community in support of the project has been very encouraging.

**3. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? How did your organization participate in making them?**

The most pressing issue was the question of the Armory, an important civic feature in that it provided meeting space to many community groups and functions. It also was "historic," not in a technical sense but in the sense that it had been a part of the community for many years. Its location presented a problem, and relocating the building was prohibitively expensive. We proposed that the county replace the Armory with a new, state-of-the art civic building on another site within the project, providing a new civic heart. Further, we proposed that it be developed with a new, major public park, which celebrated the contribution of veterans to our nation and community. Ultimately, the community recognized the added value of the new building and plaza, and supported demolition of the Armory.

As developers, we would have preferred a clear site for the Downtown project, but the site contained the historic buildings including the Silver Theatre and Silver Spring Shopping Center. Both deserved preservation, but at significant cost. The shopping center was especially difficult to incorporate into the rest of the project from a building configuration (ceiling heights, grade changes, etc.) but we were able to very successfully incorporate it into the project.

**4. Has this project made the community a better place to live and work? If so, how?**

This is a prototypical Smart Growth project, putting density where transit services are available. It brings together different uses that are complementary to one another. The project has assuredly breathed new life into a derelict area. Our eight phases of development provided the following to the community in an incremental approach:

- 70,000 - 110,000 square feet of retail space with a private surface parking lot, and an anchor store with a 25,000 - 30,000 square foot food market;
- 240,000 square feet of retail space plus the Silver Circle Garage containing approximately 1,800 public parking spaces. This section will also include approximately 10,000 square feet of County-occupied storefront space, a movie complex (minimum of 14 full-size movie screens, with at least 3,500 seats), and a book store;
- 70,000 - 110,000 square feet of retail, restaurant and entertainment space, including the AFI-operated Silver Theater and Arts Center, and as an anchor tenant, a nationally-recognized, full-service restaurant;



## DEVELOPER PERSPECTIVE

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- 27,000 square feet of retail space, as well as the Civic Building, Town Square and Town Square Garage, with approximately 1,400 public parking spaces;
- Approximately 96,000 square feet of additional retail space included as a contingency
- A hotel with 150 - 200 rooms;
- 50,000 - 200,00 square feet of Class A office space; and
- A residential development.

The mix of development projects, office, housing, retail, entertainment generate traffic at different times of the day. The renovation of the Silver Theatre for the American Film Institute and the construction of new facilities for the Roundhouse Theatre on Colesville Road have already proven to be very popular with the community.

This project has given the office and retail market confidence in the Silver Spring CBD. The once-beleaguered suburb is enjoying a renaissance among companies looking to expand, relocate or set up shop. Vacancy rates for Silver Spring's business district that hit 30 % in the mid-1990s have plunged to single-digit levels - 9.5% last year. Insiders expect that trend to continue. The project has already served as a catalyst to future development especially housing development of over 2100 dwelling units.

**5. Would you change anything about this project or the development process you went through?**

I recommend this project and its process as a model to be emulated in other jurisdictions. The planning and development process is a dynamic process that relies on the knowledge and competence of the community members, staff and Planning Board. It is a transparent process that provides for community input and discussion.

The Plan's goal to create a thriving downtown residential community is supported by zoning incentives and redevelopment opportunities designed to emphasize townhouses and garden apartments rather than high-rise construction, while providing high-rise potential for the long term near the Transit Center. Seven themes were used for the Downtown: Transit-Oriented, Commercial, Residential, Civic, Green, and Pedestrian-friendly. The strength of downtown comes from applying these themes together. This essential interconnectedness makes a full and varied residential downtown of urban excellence; and, also, creates varied land uses, development patterns, environments, and transportation choices.