

Barrio de Langley Park

A neighborhood planning newsletter published by Action Langley Park
20 October 2011

PURPLE LINE MOVES FORWARD STILL NO PROTECTION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Federal Transit Administration has just authorized and provided the funding for detailed engineering for the Purple Line. As most people know, this is the 16-mile light-rail line that will run from Bethesda through Langley Park and College Park onto New Carrollton. The plan is for two stops in Langley Park, one at University Blvd.



and New Hampshire Ave. adjacent to the planned transit center and the other at University Blvd. and Riggs Rd.

About \$2 billion are needed to complete the project. Fed-state half and half? The new start date for construction is 2015, with completion scheduled for 2020. There may be more slippage.

The *Washington Post* (7 October 2011) published an article on the federal decision, and it has this possibly ominous paragraph:

"Officials are also looking to the transit project to help stimulate redevelopment in some of the aging communities in the Washington suburbs." Redevelopment? That must be good because we all want development. But wait: could it be that the Prince George's County's version of the "Sector Plan" for an area that includes Langley Park would be "redeveloped" by tearing down affordable apartments and replacing them with upscale apartments, condos, and more? Alas, that's what the Sector Plan as currently drafted and approved calls for. Let's hope that certain politicians and businesspeople take the position that the Purple Line will be good for many residents and businesspeople but that it must not throw thousands of residents out of their homes. Well, that's our dream.

One thoughtless county official said that people can always find affordable housing elsewhere. That's true, but they cannot find affordable housing that sustains the community rather than scatters community members. Another thoughtless county official, when asked publicly about the problem of affordability, said that "all apartments and houses are affordable because someone can afford them." Sad.

Most people support the building of the Purple Line. It will facilitate the movement of people, it might reduce some traffic on the Beltway, and it will probably bring some additional business to Maryland's International Corridor (the area along University Boulevard from west of Piney Branch Road to east of Riggs Road). But the building must not devastate people's homes. That's a Prince George's County Council responsibility.

JERRY BROWN SIGNS THE CALIFORNIA DREAM ACT

California takes the lead in meeting the educational needs of all residents whether they are black or white or brown, male or female or something else, fluent in one language or more, citizen or green card holder or not. Hurray for Governor Jerry Brown and the California legislature for being willing to meet the educational needs of all Californians.

The California legislation enables all residents to receive in-state tuition to be eligible for institutional grants while attending the University of California and California State University systems, and fee waivers in the California community college system.

"I want to be better educated and to help my new country."
Comment by a Dream-eligible young Langley Park woman.

Governor Brown: "Going to college is a dream that promises intellectual excitement and creative thinking." Further, "The Dream Act benefits us all by giving top students a chance to improve their lives and the lives of all of us." So our neighbors are fellow human beings! What an odd position to take given Alabama, Arizona, Georgia, and other places where some human beings are not the equal of others.

Plus Rhode Island

The Rhode Island Board of Governors for Higher Education has unanimously approved in-state tuition rates for undocumented children of immigrants. Governor Chafee: "All that separates these young people from thousands of other students who gain entry to Rhode Island's public colleges and universities each year is the place they were born—a factor none of us can control."

And Maryland

Hurray for the courageous Maryland legislators and governor for signing their version of the DREAM Act. It is not as comprehensive as the California legislation, but California has 14 million Latino/as—37.6% of state total—whereas Maryland only has 477,066 (8.2% of state total). Let's hope the vicious anti-immigrant gang doesn't overturn our legislation in the 2012 election.)

HEALTH CHECK 2011

This annual event takes place on November 6 from noon to 3 p.m. at the Langley Park Community Center. Lots of screenings (of the heart, the teeth, and much more), information, and consultations. Be there! And please pass the word! We want lots of people to be healthy!! SEE BLP PAGE 5 below!

NEWS AND NOTES

SCHOOLS

The selection of Sandra Jimenez to be Principal at High Point High School is a good sign that the school system is both serious and thoughtful about improving the education of the children of Prince George's County. But the challenge is great for many reasons, including funding and lack of parental involvement. The cutting of the budget pushed out the vital parent liaisons from many schools, and these are the people who can link school to home and get the home more involved in the educational mission: coming to PTSA meetings, overseeing homework, keeping the young people away from gangs, and more. Hey Bill Gates: How about tossing a few million to PG so that we can get the parent liaisons back?

Crime: Of course, schools should be a sanctuary away from economic stresses, crimes, bullying, and interpersonal conflicts. But alas, that is not always the case. Recent news: Since the beginning of the current school year, seven students have been arrested at Northwestern High School. Three of the arrests were for disorderly conduct, one for possession with intent to distribute marijuana, two for an assault on a police officer, and one as yet specified. Two for assaulting an officer!? That deserves a flunking grade below the school-issued F! Talk about dumb!

Another Audit: The *Washington Examiner* (10 October 2011) reports that an audit is on the way: "Maryland officials are auditing Prince George's County Public Schools' finances to determine what progress the county has made since the state issued a scathing report more than five years ago. The Office of Legislative Audits uncovered a series of financial problems in the school system in 2006, and made 24 recommendations to fix issues in departments such as human resources and procurement. 'We want to find out exactly what's been done to take corrective measures, and drill down even more to determine the effects of not doing the recommendations,' said Tim Brooks, director of performance audits for the state." This time, we hope and expect that school head Bill Hite and his team have swept away all the misdeeds that were discovered five years ago. We hope.

Filipino Teachers and Corruption? "Lawyers for some of the displaced Filipino teachers in Prince George's County are urging Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley to investigate public school officials who allegedly received gifts and favors from recruiters in the Philippines. 'We learned that money by way of commissions was involved,' said lawyer Arnedo Valera of the Virginia-based Migrant Heritage Commission, who serves as counsel for some teachers who have been hit by the Department of Labor's debarment order against [PGCPS]. 'Some received gifts, and the lavish way they were treated while they were in the Philippines was inappropriate for county officials,' he said. About 800 Filipino teachers in PG County have lost or are on the way to losing their jobs because the Labor Department determined that GPCPS 'willfully violated' the conditions of the H-1B visa when they illegally collected fees from teachers that should have been paid for by the schools. 'If we can show corruption, the position of the teachers will be strengthened,' Valera argued." (From ABS-CBN North America News Bureau, 12 October 2011) Let's hope for clean!

JOBS

The Job Market: It really is awful, and the fields that working class immigrants gravitate to are double-awful. The official unemployment figures for September are: construction, 13.3%; leisure and hospitality, 11.3%; and agriculture, 11.1%. So if there are a lot of men looking for part-time or one-

day-at-a-time work, the explanation is in these figures. In the Washington DC metro area, there does appear to be a construction uptick; in residential areas, the tear-downs to build are increasing, as are the cranes in some commercial areas of DC.

Among the major worker groups, the unemployment rates for adult men (8.8%), adult women (8.1%), teenagers (24.6%), Whites (8.0%), Blacks (16.0%), Asians (7.8%) and Latino/as (11.3%) showed little or no change in September. The scary figures are teenage unemployment, especially among Blacks.

These teenage figures are serious danger signs. Many of the teens would like to work, can't find work, don't consider school to be a good option, and therefore hang around. "What's up?" "Nothing." "Then let's find that homo and beat the shit out of him." Etc.

What about overall unemployment in the counties of Maryland? In August 2011, Prince George's County's rate was 7.50. Its two wealthy neighbors clocked in at 5.4% for Montgomery and 5.6% for Howard. The location of great stress is Baltimore City at 11.1%.

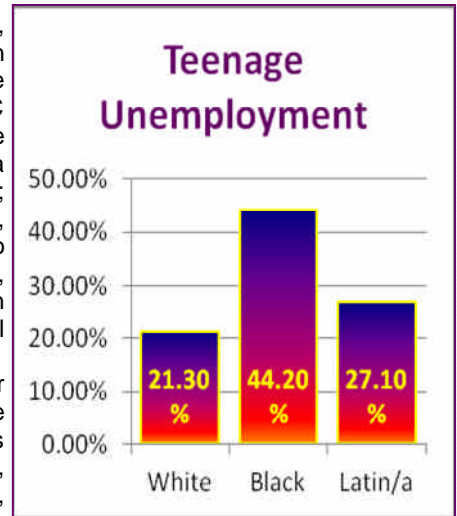
The Office-Cleaning Job: If one needs a job, it's likely he or she will take one offered even if the pay is low and the hours are late at night. That's the situation of the area's office cleaners who are now considering a strike because of the working conditions and rewards. As reported in the *Washington Post* (9 October 2011), many office cleaners are paid in the \$9-11 per hour range with few health or other benefits and almost double the tasks compared to pre-recession days.

Most of the office cleaners are from Central America, and some of them live in Langley Park. They often come home quite late because the cleaning work is usually done after the office work has ended for the day. The bus schedules are not helpful because most of them don't run late at night. And when they arrive near the home, the workers may be victimized by robbers or more.

The office cleaners, members of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), are considering a strike. Whether they will strike, and if they do whether they will gain in wages or benefits, are unknowns. What we do know is that they are part of the flat-wage (considering inflation) masses that are at the bottom side of the increasing rich-poor gap in the USA.

ALABAMA'S CHILDREN

An Alabama newspaper includes these words in its editorial: "For now, those who want illegal immigrants driven from Alabama at any cost are getting some of what they want. Some immigrant families are leaving the state, officials are saying. But a terrible byproduct is falling on the shoulders of young Alabamians of Hispanic descent who deserve the same public-school education as any other Alabama student.



"That principals are reporting their students are scared, their students are afraid, their students are crying about being pulled out of school, should make legislators ... [and the governor] hide their faces in shame."

The *Washington Post* (3 October 2011) reminds us: In turning the schools into immigration registrars, Alabama's new law flies in the face of good sense and settled law. The Supreme Court has specifically prohibited such registration schemes by the states aimed at immigrants, legal or illegal. And, in a ruling almost 20 years ago, it conferred on undocumented students an unfettered right to a public education through high school.

ALABAMA LOSES DOLLARS
Undocumented immigrants in Alabama paid \$130.3 million in state and local taxes in 2010, according to data from the Institute for Taxation and Economic Policy. These include \$25.8 million in state income taxes, \$5.8 million in property taxes, and \$98.7 million in sales taxes.

And ha! From the *Oregonian* (6 October 2011): "Georgia passed its anti-immigration law in April yet already watches thousands of acres of agricultural crops go to ruin, unharvested. A report released Tuesday by the Center for American Progress estimates Georgia's crop losses this year alone will hit \$300 million while the law's broader damage to the state's economy this year could reach \$1 billion." And the Georgia law was not as harsh as the one in Alabama. Maybe Alabama will lose \$2 billion. Wouldn't that be a shame! Hey, immigrants, enrich Maryland. We welcome you (sort of).

POLITICS

Redistricting: This process that takes place after each census can get hot—and it is getting hot in suburban Maryland. Redistricting is drawing district (voting) lines to gain advantage, so there are often some winners and some losers. Here's an email sent by Fannie Lou Hamer: "With the exception of Delegate Aisha Braveboy, the Silence of Prince George's County African American Elected Officials is alarming and disgraceful on this issue of Congressional Redistricting!!!! To allow the White power structure to dictate political districts and say they know what is best for African American communities as it relates to Wealth, Health and Education is 21st Century Slavery." It is too bad that the redistricting process has been infused with race rather than with the policy positions of political parties and their likely candidates. But we're in the USA.

The Earnings Trend: This is a very strange economic time: The stock market has been moving upward, executive pay has soared, yet the pay of the rank-and-file worker has nearly been flat and unemployment continues to hover around 9%. But maybe it's not so unusual. Check out the "Rise of the Super-Rich" in this chart. There certainly is a tight relationship between many office-holders and the wealthy.

Are We Politically Passive These Days? Some of us are old enough to remember the protests against the war in Vietnam that contributed, eventually, to our military withdrawal from that country. Massive demonstrations around the country! But the protests have been rare against the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and against the rich-poor gap that has kept worker (the "99%") wages flat while the money elite's income has soared. The gap probably ac-

counts for some officials making decisions that powerfully impact people in a negative way without, it would appear, much activism—or at least concern—by those impacted. Could the Wall Street protests start a movement? Probably not, but at least there is growing awareness of the inequalities in our country. Maybe that will lead to a greater democracy or at least slow a slide from democracy.



PGCPS BUDGET HEARINGS: Somewhat open, probably grim

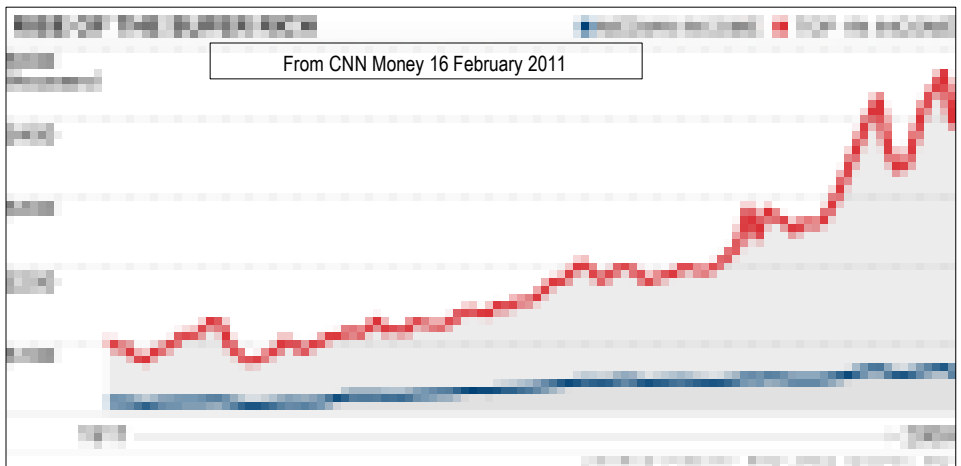
Two hearing sessions were scheduled for October in Upper Marlboro. Of course, many people can't or don't want to make their way by car or bus to that location. So ALP sent a message to PGCPS indicating that sessions held in three or four parts of the county would better enable residents who might want to provide input. The response was, "The hearings will be broadcast live via our television station and website." But apparently there is no provision for those watching from a distance to ask questions or otherwise provide input. Too bad; those not living near Upper Marlboro might well have something useful to say. Maybe sending a question or comment via email will be included in the discussion. Send it to briant.coleman@pgcps.org.

From the *Real Prince George's* (10 October 2011): "Last year's budget saw cuts to popular programs, the enactment of a surcharge for high school athletes, and the threat to cut transportation for students attending specialty schools. The cut to transportation was saved at the last-minute by an infusion of money from the County Council and Executive Rushern Baker. This year, with the threat of another recession and a huge budget gap by the county, no one is expecting a last-minute infusion of money from either the county or the state. 'Last year's budget will be nothing compared to what we expect to face next year,' a member of the Prince George's County Educators Association said."



POLICE PLANS: Cooling the hot spots

Our county police plan to resume the "hot spot" focus on five neighborhoods again next May, continuing until the end of August. One of the hot spots was and probably will be Langley Park—in part because of gang membership in the area and also in part because it has a high crime reputation. (The reality is not as bad as the reputation, and reputation change takes a long time.) Our former police division head and now Deputy Chief Kevin Davis will again head the effort. Go Kevin!



TWO VOICES

Will we ever get sensible immigration reform? Probably not too likely given the ideologies of the extreme that seem to be commanding attention these days—an extreme perhaps generated by fear. Here are two views on reform:

JANET NAPOLITANO (of DHS) WRITES

In a *Politico* (5 October 2011) commentary, Secretary Napolitano writes: "We have ... refined how we go about immigration enforcement in the nation's interior. Our approach directs the limited resources we have been given to bolster commonsense priorities like public safety, border security and the integrity of the immigration system.

"This approach has included adopting new policies—like a new process that ensures those enforcing immigration laws make appropriate use of their existing discretionary authorities. We also expanded the use and frequency of investigations and programs, like Secure Communities, that track down criminals and gang members on our streets and in our jails.

"These efforts are producing results. We have achieved record levels of enforcement, over the past two years, even as we have moved to focus our efforts in line with our priorities. In 2010, Immigration and Customs Enforcement removed more than 195,000 convicted criminals—more than had ever been previously removed and 81,000 more than ICE removed in FY 2008. For the first time in decades, 50% of the immigrants removed from our country had been convicted of a criminal offense."

The unstated statistic that emerges from the Napolitano comment is that about 200,000 non-criminals have been removed. And of those convicted, we wonder if there was a trial with an effective defense lawyer present. Anyone want to bet a million on that? So there may be some slight improvement, but the war against some undocumented immigrants and also some documented ones appears to continue at pace. Two hundred thousand! How many families have been fragmented?

The full article is available at <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/1011/65209.htm#ixzz1aDo34Zkl>

LINDA CHAVEZ (writing from the right) WRITES

Ms. Chavez (29 September 2011) writes in the *Patriot Post*: "Instead of intoning, 'I would build a fence on America's southern border -- on every mile, on every yard, on every foot, on every inch of the southern border,' as Michelle Bachmann did last week, they ought to try listening to Ronald Reagan on the issue.

"In 1980, when Reagan was running for the GOP nomination against Texan George H. W. Bush, he had this to say: 'Rather than talking about putting up a fence ... why don't we make it possible for them to come here legally with a work permit? And then, while they are working and earning, they can pay taxes here.'

"The illegal immigration issue is easy to solve -- and at far less cost than building a nearly 2,000-mile fence along our southern border. Create a legal way for workers willing to do jobs that Americans shun -- even during periods of high unemployment -- and you will eliminate about 90 percent of illegal immigration. And those new, legal workers will pay taxes, buy American services and products, rent and buy homes that now sit vacant, and bolster the economies of communities that are now suffering."

A conservative Ms. Chavez certainly has a more sensible position than most of the right-of-right anti-immigrant people who get into the press reports today.

The full article is available at <http://patriotpost.us/opinion/linda-chavez/2011/09/30/gop-can-learn-from-reagan-on-immigration/>

IMMIGRATION

Another Dream Destroyed: A few days ago, Dreamer Ramon, until then a resident of Kentucky, was deported. Ramon had been living here since he was seven years old. He was a talented artist; while in high school, he was recognized by Kentucky Governor Paul Patton for a mural he created. During his 111 days in detention, Ramon found himself sketching portraits for other detainees to send to their loved ones on the outside. Not wanting send black and white drawings, Ramon would go as far as using jelly beans to add color. Ramon has a 4-year old son and a United States citizen wife. Will he see them again? In the USA? Another dream destroyed by opponents of humanity.

Our Detention System: The organization Human Rights First has issued a report, "Jails and Jumpsuits," looking at our detention system. Two of many findings: Asylum seekers and other immigrants are still overwhelmingly held in jails and jail-like facilities. And immigration detention costs our taxpayer over \$2 billion a year. "The use of immigration detention facilities that are penal in nature is inconsistent with U.S. commitments under the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its Protocol, as well as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights." The full report is at <http://humanrightsfirst.org>.

SLOTS

A County Council committee has recommended legislation that would ban slot machines and other such gambling devices from the county—presumably including Rosecroft. Should it do that? One consideration: probably about one-third of the money gambled goes to the slot operators and governments (governments need money!); the rest is for the winners. Thus for every dollar gambled, the return is about 66c. Lottery is about 50-50.* Also, most of the people who gamble with slots are working class or poor hoping for the big winner. Hope is good. But much of the money doesn't come back; that is, it is a poor investment. But placeboes do work.

*Dear reader: Do you know the exact split of the money played?



JOB OPENINGS

Norberto Martinez has informed BLP of job openings for bilingual Spanish-English applicants. Here are three:

Bilingual Facilitator at House of Ruth: Send a resume to jobs@hruthmd.org.

Bilingual Legal Advocate at House of Ruth (same contact)

Bilingual Paralegal at Community Legal Services: contact Neal Conway at 301 864-4907

WHAT'S IN A NAME? Sticks and stones...

From the *Washington Business Journal* (7 October 2011): "During a meeting recently with four business leaders ..., I was

taking notes on our whiteboard and, as I wrote down a name, I uttered the phrase 'P.G. County.' One of the people in the meeting stopped to correct me. 'Let me offer you a tutorial. People from Prince George's County don't like that term.'" Yes, it's true: some people don't like the shorthand. Perhaps those people don't like D.C. for District of Columbia, L.A. for Los Angeles, D.F. for Distrito Federal, and U.S.A. for the United States of America. But the shorthand does save time and typo mistakes. Prince George's County is clearly on the way up with completed construction and more on the way: Whole Foods, Busboys and Poets, Harbor Place, the mixed-use New Carrollton, and more! So no need now to be defensive.





Health Check 2011



**On November 6 from noon until 3 p.m.
At the Langley Park Community Center
1500 Merrimac Drive
Langley Park, Maryland 20783
Organized by LPCC & Action Langley Park**

This annual event offers a wide range of health checks, information, and advice—and it's all free!

There will be doctors, nurses, chiropractors, dentists, and other health specialists.

Their contributions to your health will all be free!

Professionals will come from such health organizations as the Maryland School of Medicine, the Maryland School of Dentistry, Identity Inc., Suburban Hospital, the Adelphi/Langley Park Family Support Center, Adventist Health Care, TAYA, Doug Sims Chiropractic, Hispanic Institute for Blindness Prevention, Hispanic Nurses, Montgomery College Nursing Program, CASA de Maryland, and more!



**Get tested!
Volunteer to help out!**

FOR INFORMATION:
Center 301 4454508
ALP 301 4054005
Actionlangleypark@yahoo.com



Domestic Violence

What Is It? How Do You Change the Behavior?

Workshops presented by the Family Crisis Center of Prince George's County

Brown Bag Luncheons, October 24 – October 28, 2011, 12 noon – 2:00 p.m. at the Family Crisis Center, 3601 Taylor Street, Brentwood, MD
6 CEUs Offered for three Workshops (\$25)

Monday, October 24, 2011:

Men who Are Victims
Michael Pegues

Tuesday, October 25, 2011:

LBTGQ – “Speaking their Language”
Sonia Morgan, MA & Marcus Thorne, BS

Wednesday, October 26, 2011:

Domestic Violence and the Elderly
Priscilla Thomas, MS

Thursday, October 27, 2011:

Domestic Violence & the Faith Based Community
Manuel Ruiz, MA & Rev. Robbin Rose-Gross, LCPC

Friday, October 28, 2011

Safe Passage Emergency Shelter – “Day to Day Operations” Megan Lanning, BA; Yvonne Lawrence, BA

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER, GO TO: www.familycrisiscenter-pgco.org

TWO QUOTES

Herman Cain provides one viewpoint: “If you don't have a job and you're not rich, blame yourself.”

Bill Clinton provides another: “Essential what they're saying is that America has become too unequal, and that some of the people who cause the problem are in good shape today, and a lot of [the protesters] aren't. A lot of them have lost jobs, not been able to find new ones. So the country's not really working for ordinary folks.”

BARRIO DE LANGLEY PARK

This neighborhood planning newsletter is edited and published by Action Langley Park, with a supportive link to the Langley Park Project of the University of Maryland as an element of the university's community outreach. The Editor is Bill Hanna, who is a university professor and also Executive Secretary of Action Langley Park.

BLP appears irregularly, but approximately every two weeks. Submissions and suggestions are welcome at actionlangleypark@yahoo.com. Back issues of BLP will soon be available on the web.

BLP is read in the United States, Canada, and Mexico! Maybe elsewhere too! If you have friends or associates elsewhere in Maryland or the USA or elsewhere who are interested in immigration issues, please pass BLP along or let us add the person to one of our email lists.

For information about Action Langley Park, a non-profit 501c3 organization, email actionlangleypark@yahoo.com.

WHAT AND WHEN

Here we list upcoming ALP activities and other events that come to our attention. Have an event to list? If so, send information well in advance to actionlangleypark@yahoo.com.

Wednesdays—the Crossroads Farmers' Market on the 7676 New Hampshire Avenue space operates from 2:30 to 6:30 p.m. Lots of fresh fruit, vegetables, and more—even music!

October 15—Foreclosure Prevention Class organized by Sowing Empowerment & Economic Development (SEED). Spanish 10 a.m. to noon; English 1 to 3 p.m. At 6201 Riverdale Rd. (Suite 200), Riverdale, MD. Information: 301 458-9808x139.

October 15—Free Community Dinner & Food Distribution at the St. Michael and All Angels Church, 8501 New Hampshire Ave. in upper Langley Park. From 5 to 6:30 p.m. This is a regular event; it takes place every third Saturday of the month. For information, call 301 434-4646.

October 19—Transit-oriented development, 6:30-8:30 p.m., a discussion led by Will Campos and others. At the CSC Building, 7900 Harkins Rd., Lanham (by the New Carrollton Metro).

The idea of transit-oriented development (TOD) is to create mixed use (residential, retail, offices) density around Metro stops so that fewer people will need to use an automobile to go from home to work or to shop. They can walk, or if there are greater distances, they can take the Metro. Downtown Bethesda and Silver Spring are nearby examples. Of course, the challenge is to care tenderly for those residents and businesspeople who are threatened by displacement from the development.

October 20—The Northwestern High School Choir presents Fiesta Latino at 7 p.m. at the school. (Also see Page 2, above.)

October 22—Zumba Fitness Charity Event supporting breast cancer research at St. Michael and All Angels Church. 1:30 - 4 p.m. All ages! \$10 admission.

October 26—Mary's Center groundbreaking at Cool-spring ES, 3 p.m. A clinic arrives!!

November 1—Forum on the Purple Line at the University of Maryland (Stamp Student Union, Prince George's Room). From 7 to 9 p.m.

November 6—Health Check 2011 from noon to 3 p.m. at the Langley Park Community Center. This annual event provides free screenings for many potentially harmful health conditions; high blood pressure, rotting teeth, HIV, diabetes, and more. Yes, it's free!

November 16—The Fire Chief will visit the Langley Park Community Center. From 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

December 8—Action Langley Park Meeting takes place at the Langley Park Community Center from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Everyone welcome! Let us know how the area can be improved, and let us try to help with the improvement. But ALP has to know the needs! So please participate!

April 28-29—Science and Engineering Festival: “Our mission is to re-invigorate the interest of our nation's youth in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) by producing and presenting the most compelling, exciting, educational and entertaining science gatherings in the United States.” It's free! For more, including President Obama's comments about a prior version of the event, go to <http://www.usasciencefestival.org/>

May 6—Langley Park Day 2012 from noon to 4 p.m. at the Langley Park Community Center. There will be music and dance performances; a major health fair checking vision, HIV status, blood pressure, and more; food and craft vendors; children's art and games; and more.

