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Safe Silver Spring Summit Steering Committee Releases Recommendations

ROCKVILLE, Md., July 10, 2009 — On May 16, 2009, Councilmember Valerie Ervin, the Presidents' Council of Silver Spring Civic Associations (PREZCO), the Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board (SSCAB), and the Silver Spring Regional Service Center (SSRSC) sponsored the first Safe Silver Spring Summit. Fourteen local and regional organizations from the county, state, and federal level, and 120 residents participated in the summit, which included six different workshops. Some of the workshops were targeted to Spanish speakers and local teenagers.

The Summit steering committee has completed its report and will be sending letters to the County Council and County Executive that list the key action steps and recommendations made by the summit participants. Copies of the executive summary and the full report can be obtained by emailing safesilverpring@gmail.com or by calling 301-587-6943.

"The report's recommendations on youth, improving coordination among law enforcement, and methods to improve crime prevention in our neighborhoods, are great first steps. I look forward to working with the steering committee and Silver Spring residents to make the recommendations a reality," said Councilmember Valerie Ervin.

As Chair of the Education Committee, "I have asked the Office of Legislative Oversight to conduct an evaluation of truancy in Montgomery County, and I am working with the State's

Attorney's Office to evaluate ways we can help children who are not reporting to school and improve our truancy enforcement," said Ervin. "I believe that we can learn from neighboring jurisdictions and develop best practices to ensure that our children attend school as required by law."

The steering committee will be sending letters to other participating organizations, including: the Montgomery County Police, the Department of Recreation, the Department of Housing and Community Affairs, the State's Attorney's Office, the Board of Education, the Montgomery County Planning Board, the Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board, and a coalition of local youth groups, named Mixed Unity.

The report's priority recommendations are as follows:

Youth, Schools, and Recreation:

- Evaluate a teen center in central Silver Spring;
- Empower teens to address problems and concerns;
- Focus on civility, for example through arts projects and videos;
- Improve coordination among organizations dealing with truancy;
- Conduct gang workshops for as many relevant groups as appropriate; and
- Develop alternative programs and additional teaching resources for failing students.



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Police and Criminal Justice:

- Examine Community Relations Councils similar to those found in Baltimore, which are resident led and work with the police to develop goals and solve major issues;
- Increase proactive community policing efforts;
- Conduct safety assessments for apartment complexes and neighborhoods and ensure corrective action;
- Continue efforts to help police learn and understand cultural barriers;
- Encourage greater use of community listservs by law enforcement; and
- Maximize relations between police departments and other criminal justice agencies.

Neighborhoods, Civic Associations, and the Silver Spring Central Business District:

- Form a non-profit organization to develop solutions and apply for funding;
- Enhance environmental design to reduce crime, e.g. proper public lighting;
- Conduct safety assessments for apartment complexes and neighborhoods and ensure corrective action;
- Install more security cameras in the Silver Spring Central Business District and key neighborhood locations; and
- Strengthen or establish more neighborhood watched where desires.

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