

COMMUNITY

Many community members contribute to and benefit from the ability to preserve and strengthen diverse retailers. In ideal circumstances, the community can celebrate the businesses contributing to the place and provide the goods and services needed. Tools in this category seek to demonstrate the value of diverse retailers and accomplish the goals of:

- Providing tools to mitigate for negative impacts of construction and policy changes
- Creating physical communities that ingrain the legacy of diverse retailers
- Supporting businesses through community-based organizations

SMALL BUSINESS IMPACT POLICY

Geography Assigned: Countywide

To minimize the impact of construction and county policy changes, create a policy statement that requires scoping sessions where small business access (e.g., room for loading and delivery systems, access to parking lots and driveways, among others) and financial impact are considered. The recommendation intends to limit strains on staff capacity and consulting fees by deploying a policy instead of an official report similar to an environmental impact statement (EIS). As such, the goal of this policy is to integrate into existing systems.

Engage the County Executive's office and County Council alongside small businesses to begin drafting the resulting policies.

Recommendation 1: Host a standing meeting with Diverse Retail Liaisons

In the project's study areas, the Diverse Retail Liaisons should remain abreast of projects, communicating with and advocating for the retailers they support. Standing meetings with key county staff, e.g., development review staff, public works, and councilmember staff, among others, can support a clear understanding of what changes are planning to impact the businesses. Diverse Retail Liaisons can then communicate those back with the business owners and help design solutions to mitigate negative impacts.

Recommendation 2: Create a business impact checklist

Include a checklist of critical concerns to address and a mitigation guide for public and private construction teams. Construction teams should leverage the guide to create mitigation plans. Real estate developers should submit both the checklist and mitigation plan for approval. Department of Permitting Services with input from Development Review staff should be responsible for determining whether the mitigation plan is adequate.

To monitor the program, leverage the building department to ensure the mitigation plan is followed during regular inspections. For maintenance of access efforts, the Department of Transportation and/or the Police Department should be required to assure compliance.

Depending on the extent of the checklist requirements, this provision could pose an impediment to redevelopment. Additional costs could include the costs of predevelopment engagement with small business owners, labor or construction costs to protect right-of-way access, and the extra review time that might be incurred.

Recommendation 3: Provide a grace period for compliance

To mitigate the immediate impacts of new policies on diverse retailers and other independent retailers who struggle to navigate new policies' cost implications, provide a grace period for businesses. For most policies, consider a grace period of six months to a year to enable business owners to seek solutions to adapt within their budgets.

Utilize the MOUs with the Diverse Retail Liaisons to help create factsheets to navigate required changes. The factsheets should include all of the policy changes and steps to navigate.

“There have been negative impacts from construction, where contractors are disrespectful and do not care that they are inhibiting sales at businesses”

**- PERSONAL SERVICES BUSINESS OWNER,
SILVER SPRING**

PLACEMAKING EFFORTS

Geography Assigned: Silver Spring, Takoma-Langley Crossroads, Wheaton

Placemaking is the process of shaping the public realm to maximize shared value and to strengthen the connection between people and the places they share, often achieved through the installation of public art, seating, or planters, and programming the space with frequent formal and informal community events. Placemaking must be iterative and ongoing to endure. At this point, Silver Spring, Takoma-Langley Crossroads, and Wheaton have opportunities to celebrate the cultural diversity apparent in their business and residential populations through

placemaking efforts. In addition to celebrating current cultures occupying the community, the area histories should be ingrained into physical form through design and storytelling.

Currently, urban districts and other community organizations provide mutually beneficial public services to businesses and property owners within their specified geographic areas. Commonly, these are the organizations that manage placemaking efforts, addressing concerns of safety, cleanliness, homelessness, and marketing. There is an opportunity to utilize these organizations to serve diverse retailers' needs better through increased marketing and promotion activities.

Recommendation 1: Silver Spring

Utilize public art, programming, and marketing to celebrate the Black American, African, and Caribbean business community. Existing efforts such as the Taste the World and Ethiopian Festival events and the neighborhood's historical markers serve as an example of placemaking efforts to continue.

Recommendation 2: Takoma-Langley Crossroads

This community has the opportunity to utilize the optional method of development to integrate public art and programming that celebrates the Hispanic business and residential population into redevelopment projects. Explore other opportunities to incentivize real estate developers to reach the same outcome if the optional method is not utilized.

Recommendation 3: Wheaton

Utilize the recently developed plaza to host programming and install public art that promotes existing businesses' diversity. The programming should highlight the study area's businesses and encourage attendees of the events to visit their stores during and after by deploying marketing tactics.