


Barrio de Langley Park

A Neighborhood Planning Newsletter Published by Action Langley Park
Issue #209, June-July 2011

THE PURPLE LINE & SECTOR PLANNING = THE FUTURE OF LANGLEY PARK

There has yet to be a modification or redoing of the viciously destructive PG "Sector Plan"—the sector plan that, when fully implemented, will destroy (e.g., see photo) much of the affordable housing in the Langley Park area, leaving the current residents with no viable way to retain affordability and to sustain the community that is the neighborhood's heartbeat.



The sector plan activity was triggered by the decision to run a light-rail Purple Line from Bethesda through Langley Park and College Park to New Carrollton. The line has not yet been funded (the odds may be better than even that the funds will be available), but there are predictions that the construction will begin in about four years and will be completed in 2020.

There have been several conflicts over the alignment (route) of the Purple Line. One, the route through the University of Maryland, appears to have been settled; the second, in the Chevy Chase area, will probably result in a final decision favoring the state-approved alignment. Now, the conflict focus is whether affordable Langley Park will be replaced by more upscale housing and businesses to meet political and big-business interests.

Current residents and small businesspeople are still fighting to retain their homes and businesses. The "Save Langley Park" advocacy meeting on June 17th is part of the fight. Join in! For meeting information, see below or p.7. For a preliminary alternative plan for the future of Langley Park, see p. 6.

Mr. President: You can do more—according to our laws and regulations—to improve the lives of immigrants in the USA. Therefore, you should do more. Therefore: do it! The New York Times editorial, partly reprinted below, provides guidance for our apparently reluctant president.

How a Democracy Works

Editorial, New York Times, 3 June 2011

President Obama, who has spent two and a half years not delivering on his promise to fix immigration, gave a speech in El Paso last month and cloaked his failure in tough statistics—this many new border agents, that much fencing, these thousands of deportations. As for the other parts of reform—where millions of immigrants get right with the law and get on with becoming Americans, where workers are better protected—he threw up his hands. He said immigration advocates "wish I could just bypass Congress and change the law myself. But that's not how a democracy works."

O.K., so maybe it isn't. But there is a lot President Obama

"Democracy" continued on Page 3

Hilda L. Solis Secretary of Labor

This past May, Secretary of Labor Solis gave the commencement address at the University of Texas at Brownsville. For those not familiar with that part of the country, it is adjacent to the border with Mexico—to the city Matamoros. Crossing from one country to the other is a two minute walk over the Rio Bravo, which in that area is not much more than a creek. Brownsville is 93% Mexican-American. There's a food stand on the road into Brownsville that has great tacos! The first segment, below, is taken from the commencement address.



Then, on May 27, Secretary Solis addressed those at an "Immigration Town Hall" at East Los Angeles College. East LA is heavily Mexican-American working class—97% Mexican-American or other Latino. (LA County is about 50% Mexican-American or other Latino.) Her LA remarks follow the commencement address. BLP thinks both of her remarks are worth sharing with many of our young people (and some non-young people) in Maryland.

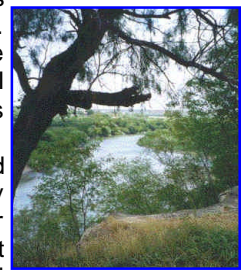
In Brownsville

I understand this journey you are on. Because the road you are traveling is one I took, too. My mother immigrated to this country from Nicaragua to escape poverty. She stayed home for many years to raise my brothers, sisters and me. She later went to work in a toy factory to help my family make ends meet. My father was from Mexico and worked as a farm worker, railroad worker and a Teamsters shop steward in a battery recycling plant. Like many families, my parents made many sacrifices so my six siblings and I could achieve whatever our talents would allow.

Though our family could not afford much, we always had each other. My parents knew that the only way for their children to have a better life was to get an education. Without their moral and spiritual support, I know I couldn't have achieved so much.

I grew up in a barrio outside of Los Angeles, and I was angered by the injustices I saw: the Vietnam War, the civil rights struggle. We lived in a town called La Puente. I grew up in the shadows of polluted landfills and toxic dumps. My parents—and my friends' parents—went to work in conditions that were dirty and unsafe.

I was a good student in high school, but I didn't think about college. No one in my family ever had. One of my school's



Rio Bravo

"Solis" continued on Page 2

► The "Save Langley Park" meeting and rally takes place on June 17 at 6:30 p.m. at 6201 Belcrest Road. Be there!

"Solis" continued from Page 1

career counselors told me I wasn't college material. He told me I was best suited for office work and suggested that I become a secretary. As it turns out, he was half right. I was suited to be a Secretary. The Secretary of Labor.

Today, I remember three pieces of advice that made a lasting impact: one from my father, one from a counselor, and one from a President. My father told me, "Hold your head up high. And remember to respect yourself and others. Be proud of your Latino heritage." My high school career counselor, Robert Sanchez, told me to take my anger and energy—and channel it to help other people in my community. He told me not to listen to the naysayers. He put the college application in my hand and told me to fill it out. So I did. Thank you, Mr. Sanchez! My President and hero, John F. Kennedy, told me, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country."

In East Los Angeles



Good morning everyone and thank you for being here today! Buenos dias gente! Como estamos? Muchisimas gracias por estar aquí con nosotros! It's great to be back in my home state! Great to be back in Los Angeles! And it's great to be here at ELAC with all of you! It makes sense that we have this conversation here.

At 2.6 million, the number of undocumented people in California remains largest in the country—that's one-quarter of our nation's total. But the immigration issue in communities like this one is about a lot more than numbers. I'm from around here. So I know that for the families in these neighborhoods, this issue represents a daily struggle guided by great uncertainty, anxiety, and fear. Millions of the faces behind the numbers we often hear about—but seldom see—live right here.

So let me begin by saying that I know many of you may be frustrated or discouraged. You want clear answers and information. I get that. At times, I feel disheartened, too. When I hear stories about families that have been separated; or a fearful worker who's been treated terribly; or when I meet brilliant students, with beautiful dreams who can't make them come true... it breaks my heart.

It breaks my heart because I think about my family, about the people who raised me and how much they've meant to my life. My parents came to this country with only the best of intentions—to work hard, make a decent living, and give my siblings and me a better life than they had. And I know that many of you ... have [your] own immigration stories. Your stories are important. They bring us closer as a people, and they need to be told. But they also provide a unique framework for us to better make the case for the immigration system we wish to see in the 21st century. And that's what this conversation is about today.

Our frustration stems from the fact that we are still fighting for reform. We've gotten so close in the recent past, but now almost every Republican in Washington has withdrawn their support. This issue should not divide along party lines. And President Obama is right to keep pushing on this. We're living in a time of economic uncertainty. Too many Americans are out of work—that's especially true for Latinos. Yet some Americans who once supported reform have changed their position because they think bringing immigrants out of the shadows will make it harder for them to find work. Our challenge is to make them understand the opposite is true.

We've learned a lot in our struggle. We've learned that the stories we tell are even more powerful when we also talk about the economic benefits that immigrants bring to every-

one in this country. But we can't just preach to the choir. We have to be strategic. We have to prove to all Americans that comprehensive reform is in our national interest. We have to change the conversation. We have to take hold of the way people talk about this issue and about our people.

In the media, and in states across the country, immigrants are consistently painted as incompetent, as thugs, and as criminals. But it's just not true—you know that. This kind of demonization is not right, it's devastating, and it needs to stop! For generations, immigrants have contributed vastly to the wealth and prosperity of this nation. Today, immigrants are scientists and engineers. They create jobs as small business owners and entrepreneurs. They file three times as many patents, which are the foundation for 21st century innovation. Immigrants build roads and harvest crops—work that is critical to our economic prosperity. Immigrant families boost local economies, increase tax revenue, and pay into social security. And yes, immigrants are driven, smart and some the best students we have this country!

So we need to tell this story, too. Because these stories—the hopes and dreams of so-called "illegal aliens" are not "alien" at all. They're the same stories of countless hopeful Americans who have come here from everywhere in the world to make a better life for themselves and for their children.

And look, the President knows this. I can tell you that the President cares deeply about this issue. He comes from a family whose father



Mural in East Los Angeles

was an immigrant. I've seen how he interacts with our community at every level, and it's sincere and heartfelt. I know some of you feel frustrated. You see that the other party will do nothing about this issue, so you want this administration to do more. But I want to tell you that under the President's leadership, we've made some strong progress in protecting immigrant workers at the Department of Labor. We've signed agreements with the Department of Homeland Security and the Mexican and Salvadorian Consulates to provide added safeguards to vulnerable workers. We've also made it easier for all workers to know their rights, speak up on the job and file complaints. Through the H2A program, we've provided increased protections for foreign workers who come here to harvest seasonally. And we've begun the process of certifying U-Visas for victims of crimes like trafficking and involuntary servitude. This will help us go after their abusers and let these immigrants stay here and defend their rights.

So, I feel very privileged to work for a President who has supported all of these things and who is committed to a more sane, humane 21st century immigration system. The President believes we can't fix the system and change hearts and minds until we lower the temperature on the rhetoric. He is leading a civil national conversation. ...

Our talk today is about restoring dignity and respect to people who are working hard and playing by the rules. It's about reuniting families and building communities. It's about knocking down the media stereotypes and making sure America knows who immigrants really are. And it's about understanding that to create jobs and speed up our economic recovery, we must harness all of our human capital. Our most precious resource is ourselves. ... I share your conviction that, working together, we can live up to our ideals and make America a place where anyone can make it if they try.

Why are all those Guatemalans in the USA? They even constitute the largest heritage set of residents of Langley Park! And some of them don't even have documents that would make them legal in the USA! The answer at least in part is that the USA created criminal havoc in Guatemala that forced the thoughtful and able to escape the USA-created terror. (See the film *El Norte* to get an idea of how the terror worked.) If the USA operated on the basis of ethics and equity, it would award permanent residence or even citizenship to all 1980s and 1990s "refugees" from Guatemala because the USA forced their desperate trip to *El Norte*. The "op ed" below provides more information about our actions and their consequences.

Ghosts of Guatemala's Past

Op Ed by Stephen Schlesinger, NY Times, 3 June 2011

In 1954, the American government committed one of the most reprehensible acts in its history when it authorized the C.I.A. to overthrow the democratically elected leader of Guatemala, President Jacobo Arbenz (pictured here). It did so secretly but later rationalized the coup on the ground that the country was about to fall into communist hands. Guatemalan society has only recently recovered from the suffering that this intervention caused, including brutal military dictatorships and a genocidal civil war against its Indian population, which led to the deaths of an estimated 200,000 people. Only in the 1980s, when a peace process commenced, did democratic governance resume. But a silence about the Arbenz era continued. ...



Washington feared Arbenz because he tried to institute agrarian reforms that would hand over fallow land to dispossessed peasants, thereby creating a middle class in a country where 2 percent of the population owned 72 percent of the land. Unfortunately for him, most of that territory belonged to the largest landowner and most powerful body in the state: the American-owned United Fruit Company. Though Arbenz was willing to compensate United Fruit for its losses, it tried to persuade Washington that Arbenz was a crypto-communist who must be ousted.



Dwight D. Eisenhower, along with Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and his brother, Allen, the C.I.A.'s director, were a receptive audience. In the cold war fervor of the times, Eisenhower and the Dulles brothers believed a strike against Arbenz would roll back communism. And the Dulleses had their own personal sympathies for United Fruit: they had done legal work for the company, and counted executives there among their close friends....

Eisenhower's attack on Guatemala was brilliantly executed. A faux invasion force consisting of a handful of right-wing Guatemalans used fake radio broadcasts and a few bombing runs flown by American pilots to terrorize the fledgling democracy into surrender. Arbenz stepped down from the presidency and left the country. Soon afterward, a Guatemalan colonel named Carlos Castillo Armas took power and handed back United Fruit's lands. For three decades, military strongmen ruled Guatemala. The covert American assault destroyed any possibility that Guatemala's fragile political and civic institutions might grow. It permanently stunted political life. ...

The full commentary is at <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/04/opinion/04schlesinger.html?scp=2&sq=Guatemala&st=cse> ■

can and should do, using the discretion and authority granted to the executive branch and its agencies to make the system work better:

♦Mr. Obama can bolster public safety by pulling the plug on Secure Communities... . It was supposed to focus on dangerous felons, but the heavy majority of those it catches are non-criminals or minor offenders—more than 30% have no convictions for anything. ...

♦The president can push much harder against the noxious anti-immigrant laws proliferating in the national free-for-all. The administration sued to stop Arizona's radical scheme. But Utah, Alabama, Indiana and Georgia are trying to do the same thing.

♦He can grant relief from deportation to young people who would have qualified for the Dream Act, ...

♦He can resist Republican lawmakers who want mandatory nationwide use of E-Verify, a flawed hiring database, which would likely lead to thousands of Americans losing their job because of data errors. ...

♦He can order the citizenship agency to keep families intact by making it easier for illegal immigrants who are immediate relatives of American citizens to fix their status without having to leave the country.

♦He can bolster the civil rights division of the Department of Justice and give the Department of Labor more tools to strengthen protections for all workers and the authority to combat labor trafficking. Such authority now lies with Homeland Security, which means many immigrants are too frightened to speak up when their rights are abused. ...

The full editorial is at <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/04/opinion/04sat1.html?hpw=&pagewanted=print> ■

ACTION LANGLEY PARK

The nonprofit 501c3 organization, Action Langley Park, is a coalition of residents, businesspeople, workers, academics, church leaders, and others. It was founded in 1998 to improve the quality of life of residents in and near Langley Park. The means include services, information-sharing, and advocacy. The organization's service/event activities focus on a Fall "Health Check" and a Spring "Langley Park Day." Meetings of the organization take place about every other month, usually on Thursday evenings, at the Langley Park Community Center. All meetings are open, and participation is encouraged. For information, send an email to actionlangleypark@yahoo.com.
Upcoming:

Health Check 2011 = November 6
Langley Park Day 2012 = May 6

WHOM TO CALL?

Emergency: 911
PG Police non-emergency: 301 352-1200
PG Health Department: 301 883-7879
On call nurse: 1888 315-7257
Gang taskforce: 877 629-4264
PG Property Standards: 301 883-6100
Ensures buildings are properly maintained
CASA de Maryland: 301 431-4185
MD Multicultural Youth Cr.: 301 431-3121
Action Langley Park: 301 405-4005

NEWS AND NOTES

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CHECK YOUR VISION



The community-oriented Hispanic Institute for Blindness Prevention, a regular participant in Langley Park's Health Checks and Langley Park Days, operates an eye clinic in Northern Virginia at 2946 Sleepy Hollow Road, Suite B. The clinic offers vision screenings, eye exams, and affordable eyewear. It is open Mondays through Fridays from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturdays 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. For further information, call 703 533-5560.

ALP expects to have the Institute present at Health Check 2011 on November 6 and at Langley Park Day 2012 on May 6. But check your eyes sooner if possible.

CASA ATTACKED

The hyper-conservatives keep attacking. Hey, folks, it's not a zero-sum game; we can help other human beings without hurting ourselves. From a commentary in *Southern Maryland Online* (1 June 2011): "In the midst of collecting signatures, ... volunteers and signatories are being approached and harassed by people sympathetic to illegal aliens, some of them affiliated with the notorious illegal alien advocacy group, Casa de Maryland. If you think the claim of illegal alien advocacy is hyperbole, read the words on their own web site:

CASA's vision is for strong, economically and ethnically diverse communities in which all people - especially women, low-income people, and workers - can participate fully ... REGARDLESS OF THEIR IMMIGRATION STATUS. [emphasis in original].

"Every item on their web site is about fighting federal agencies like Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), or law-enforcement initiatives like Secure Communities or E-Verify. Their active resistance to efforts to uphold the laws of our nation ought to make you angry."

There certainly are differences of opinion about immigration, immigrants, and immigrant-serving organizations, not to mention war and peace, right to choice or right to life, global warming, and whether there is a God or god or g-d or gods. But however difficult, we have to be respectful of others' opinions even if we think they are crazy or hateful. It is difficult.

The long commentary is available at <http://somd.com/news/headlines/2011/13800.shtml>.

DALLAS: OPENING THE DOOR? (A little bit):

The *Dallas Morning News*, in an editorial (24 May 2011), seems to have opened the door to some immigration reform: "The easiest way to delegitimize your opponent's argument in a debate is to concoct wild exaggerations about it, then make the exaggerations the fulcrum of the debate. To see this tactic at work, just look at how the word 'amnesty' accompanies any discussion about comprehensive immigration reform. ... [The current proposal for comprehensive immigration reform] is no amnesty. To ensure that [it] doesn't turn into another Simpson-Mazzoli Act [the 'amnesty' passed in 1986, signed by President Reagan], Congress must include tough enforcement requirements that stiffen penalties for employers and immigrants who violate the law. If there is no credible threat of enforcement and punishment, indeed, this measure could suffer a fate similar to the 1986 law. There is also a radical difference in the level of border security in force today and the virtual free-for-all on the border in 1986. Even so, Congress should make tighter border security an ongoing goal to ensure that immigrants receive one singular, consistent message: The legal route is the only route to work and live in America."

IN-STATE TUITION

The US Supreme Court has rejected an appeal to California's policy of giving in-state college tuition to state high school graduates who are in the country without documents. The action leaves in place laws in eleven other states that permit immigrants to obtain in-state tuition without reference to their immigration status. Of course, in Maryland there is the petition.

SAN FRANCISCO DEFIES 'SECURE COMMUNITIES'

San Francisco Sheriff Michael Hennessey, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reports (5 May 2011), "will start releasing illegal immigrants arrested for low-level crimes from jail even if federal officials notified through a controversial fingerprint identification program request that they be held for a deportation hearing. The new policy, set to begin June 1, means illegal immigrants arrested for petty crimes such as disorderly conduct, drunk in public or shoplifting will not be held in jail until U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials come to collect them. ... Local jails are not required to hold inmates if ICE has identified them as illegal immigrants, and sheriff's deputies would not be violating any law, Hennessey said. The change is meant to uphold San Francisco's sanctuary ordinance, which prohibits local officials from assisting ICE unless it involves a felony."

ASSAULT ON SOCIAL SERVICES

Maryland's social service offices are reportedly about 1,100 employees and \$50 million short of what's needed to meet demand, according to the Maryland Budget & Tax Policy Institute. So resources decline when demand increases. Agh! This doesn't hurt the wealthier members of our society, but it inflicts cruel choices on those who are marginal, including many immigrants. Food or the doctor. Tragic. Source: MarylandReporter.com.

THE FORMER COUNTY EXEC

How horrifying—and sad—is the story about the disgraced Jack Johnson. The recent *Washington Post* overview (6 June 2011) is hard to read because of the harm he did to Prince George's County—and how much more he could have done for it. Here are a few quotes from the article.

"Month after month, Johnson doled out jobs and consulting contracts to friends, a number of whom seemed unqualified."

"Johnson built a brazen web of patronage, cronyism and corruption. He talked of shaking down businessmen for hundreds of thousands of dollars. He talked of using his wife as a political pawn to help his allies. He talked of getting his share."

Doyle Niemann comments: "He surrounded himself with people who were timid and afraid and unwilling to challenge and confront him."

And Johnson said to reporters, before the walls came crashing down: "You can go fishing, but you're not going to find anything. I'm absolutely convinced that Prince George's County, under my administration, is the most ethical, well managed that you'll find."

There may be some residue of pay-to-play in the county. Let's hope not, but if there is, let's hope that ethics investigators and the FBI root it all out. Let the county's greatness shine.

The full article is at http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/jack-b-johnsons-rise-and-fall-as-prince-georges-county-executive/2011/05/27/AGyR7kJH_story_4.html



IMPROVING EDUCATION

1. WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

The problem is that many students are not doing well, their trajectory is worrisome, and the dropout rate is approaching 50% from the start of the 9th grade until time of graduation (or when the young people are scheduled to graduate). For instance, take the Latino/

	Math	English
2008	76%	71%
2009	81%	80%
2010	73%	73%

a math and English scores at High Point High School over the past three years (see table). What has happened? We can hope that a new principal with proper resources and a family-linking approach can make a difference. Superintendent Hite, at graduation 2011, said, "We're sending you out to the world prepared." That's not reality.

2. LET'S PROVIDE TEACHERS WITH RESOURCES

In the last issue of BLP (#208), two writers in the *New York Times* were quoted on support for military personnel versus support for teachers. If the military has problems, the solution is more support; but if a school has problems, the solution is to blame the teachers (and perhaps also the principal) and call for their removal. If teachers had the support that military personnel do, schooling would be much more productive.

A teacher writes to BLP about this inequality: "School systems invest a great deal in their teachers just as the military invests in their soldiers. Why throw away that investment by dumping teachers because the particular groups of students they were given were unable to succeed on tests that were designed to assess student (not teacher) achievement? I guess the assumption is that veteran teachers are easily replaced by cheaper recruits fresh out of college. No, give current teachers what they need to do their jobs: materials, equipment, training, etc. As far as money spent, educational bureaucracies are top-heavy, and yet those in positions of power are held less accountable than those on the front lines. Fear is not a great motivator of people who are well-educated and self-motivated to begin with. What kind of educators are going to thrive under the threat of losing their jobs? ... The demonization of public school teachers is so in vogue right now."

Teachers help to shape the next generation. They need our support. The current situation is saddening.

3. LET'S EVALUATE TEACHERS VALIDLY

Last year, Maryland received \$250 million from the federal government to develop a way to evaluate teachers (and principals) that would be "transparent and fair." The process of development has been slow, but maybe a draft will be ready in the 2011-2012 school year.

The *Washington Post* (5 June 2011) reports: "Although specifics are still unclear, an outline has emerged: Fifty percent will be based on student growth, including test scores and other measures, and the other 50% will take into account professional skills, such as how well teachers understand their subjects and how they interact with students and families. In addition to standardized tests, districts will be able to choose from a list of state-approved options—including, potentially, portfolio-style tests and classroom observations. They also can develop some measures on their own."

We all hope for a valid assessment, but the challenge is

enormous. One anecdote: Once upon a time, there was a teacher who was being evaluated, and one component was an observed class. The observer watched as student participation was excellent, the class was energizing and the content rich. And the class ended. But soon thereafter, two students came to the observer's office and reported that the many unobserved classes were entirely different: little participation, poorly developed classroom content, students in the class with heads down perhaps sleeping. Why the one good class? The reporting student said they felt sorry for the teacher, who was somewhat old and had done some good deeds at the Nuremburg Trials before becoming a teacher. Validity?

4. CARNEGIE: IMPROVE HUMAN RESOURCES

Carnegie Foundation people have produced a "challenge paper" on improving education in the USA.* It argues that success calls for a strategy that is able to:

- ◆Prepare teachers better, hire the best, and incentivize them to work where they are needed most;
- ◆Support teachers so that they can succeed, and develop them throughout their careers so that they, and their students, keep improving;
- ◆Use data to accurately assess and elevate teacher performance; and
- ◆Retain the best teachers and, when necessary, fire the worst.

5. THE SCHOOL PLUS THE COMMUNITY

All of us want to improve schools, but many of us realize that the focus on teacher quality is only one piece of the puzzle. Yes, we should prepare teachers better, hire the best, and so forth. Improving the pay of teachers and principals would help to interest the best in teaching (for some, teaching would be more rewarding than a low-level routine job as a lawyer or an engineer) and staying in teaching.

But the school is embedded within a neighborhood, and key components of a neighborhood are families. The relatives and neighbors must become a part of a child's success in school. But how, especially in a neighborhood where dollars and time are in short supply and adults do not have a strong educational background? In such situations, the schools must reach out to the parents and other family members to help them understand the educational system and how they can further a child's educational progress.



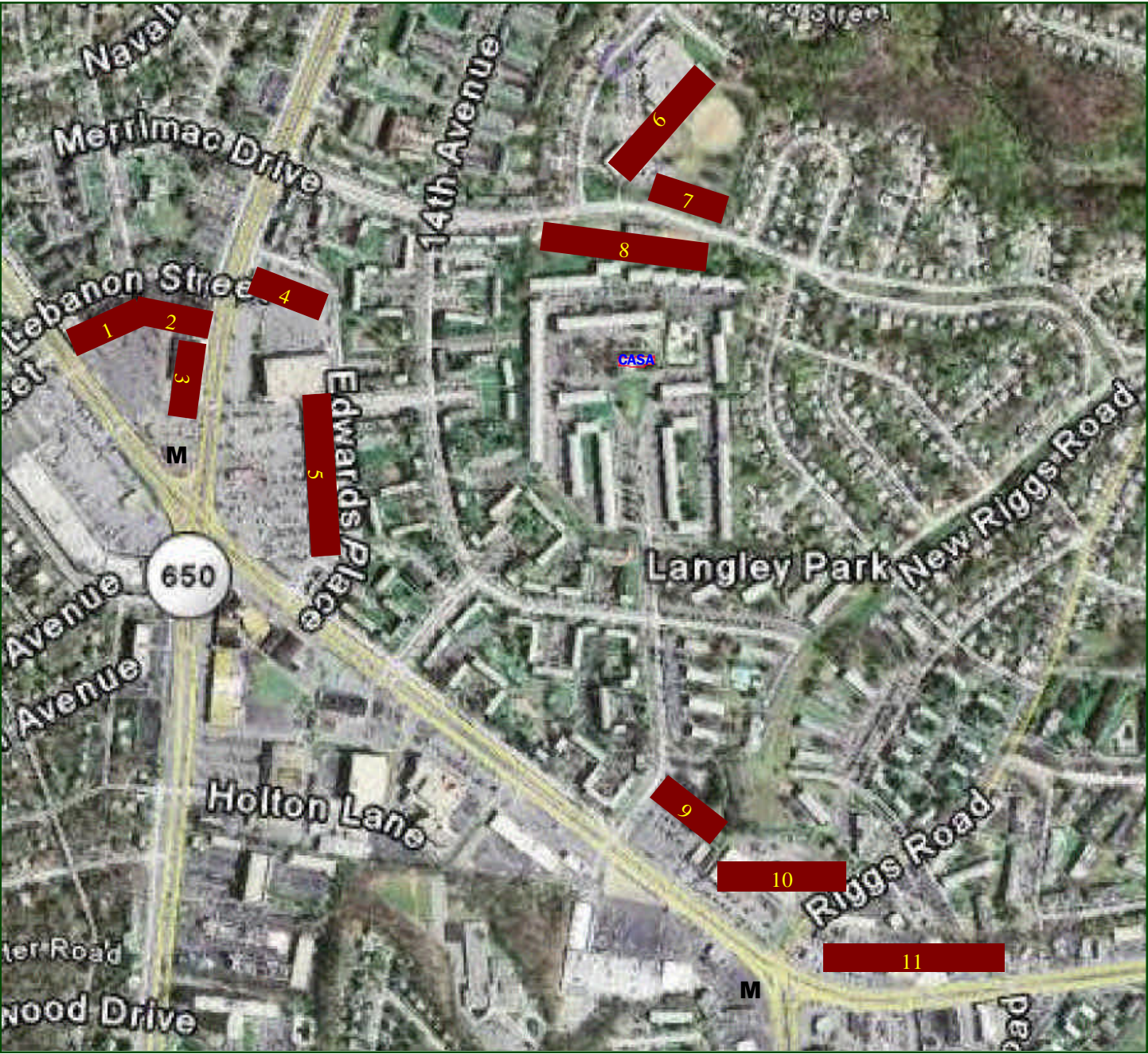
The School Door Should Be Open To Members of the Community

How can the outreach take place? If the building enables a fusion, there should be a merger of the school and the local community center so that children and adults feel that the building is theirs and it is not threatening to enter. The Langley Park McCormick Elementary School and the Langley Park Community Center would make a perfect pair: link the two with a passageway and declare the merger!

But if a merger is not possible, there must be parent liaison staff members who reach out to parents and involve them in school matters. There must also be a principal who is conversant in the neighborhood's main languages and knows how to pull the parents and children in for events and schoolwork. Have a clothing drive; have a food bank come every few weeks; have a party; invite entertainers—whatever works to get people to know and feel a connection with the school

*The Carnegie report is at http://carnegie.org/fileadmin/Media/Publications/elusive_talent_strategy_excellent_teacher.pdf.

AN ALTERNATIVE: A sketch of an alternative plan that eliminates no affordable apartments yet adds many buildings to be used for middle-income apartments or condos plus office & retail spaces.



NOTES ON AN ALTERNATIVE PLAN FOR LANGLEY PARK

At least eleven new or rebuilt buildings are proposed for old and new uses in Langley Park.

- 1, 2, 3: These three buildings should probably be new rather than renovated. They can be mixed use up to 8 stories.
- 4: A new 4 to 6 story building at the northern end of Langley Park Plaza
- 5: A new or upgraded 8 story mixed use building. Current occupants, e.g., Atlantic Supermarket and CVS, would be retained
- 6: A building above and between the Community Center and Elementary School connecting these two functions to enhance the school-community linkage, but residential above the school and community. Total up to 6 stories.
- 7. A new 4 to 6 story primarily residential building facing Merrimac Dr. Several retail shops should be included, e.g., a pharmacy, a health clinic, and a grocery store.
- 8. A new primarily residential building of up to 6 stories, to include a gymnasium and offices for the Boys and Girls Club.
The old plans for the Mother Theresa complex might be useful as a starting point, although with the proposed plan, usage would be different.
- 9. A mixed-use building of up to 8 stories, to include such current occupants as Pho 75.
- 10. A mixed-use building of up to 8 stories., to include such current occupants as Tick Tock.
- 11. A mixed-use building of up to 8 stories.

The satellite photo is from Google Earth.

The War on Drugs

What to do when defeated

The USA spends many billions of dollars a year in its so-called war on drugs. And there are more billions spent to incarcerate drug sellers and users (which is helpful to the prison-building companies).

Members of the Global Commission on Drug Policy (a heavyweight group that includes such world leaders as Nobel laureate Mario Vargas Llosa, former UN head Kofi Annan, and former presidents of Mexico, Columbia, and Brazil) have just issued a call for an end to the global "war on drugs," whose policies have caused tens of thousands of deaths in Mexico and elsewhere. The Commission calls for a shift from criminalization to decriminalization and public health:

The global war on drugs has failed, with devastating consequences for individuals and societies around the world. Fifty years after the initiation of the UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, and 40 years after President Nixon launched the US government's war on drugs, fundamental reforms in national and global drug control policies are urgently needed.

The war was launched to create a drug-free world. But probably everyone knows that the policy has failed miserably.

USA—and the rest of the world—have lost the war. Just in the past decade, according to UN estimates, the annual rates of consumption of illicit drugs have increased by 34.5% for opiates, 27% for cocaine and 8.5% for cannabis. There are 160 million "pot" users around the world! The global drug trade is estimated at several trillion (trillion!) dollars and perhaps the greater cost is the human slaughter taking place in Mexico and elsewhere as drug gangs fight each other, officials, and others.



In Langley Park, the cost includes deaths and injuries caused by drug control battles, and too-often-successful efforts to hook youths on drugs so that they will become regular shoppers.

So the war goes on despite our continuing defeat. But what else can be done? Decriminalize and treat:

End the criminalization, marginalization and stigmatization of people who use drugs but who do no harm to others. Challenge rather than reinforce common misconceptions about drug markets, drug use and drug dependence.

But won't that lead to a massive increase in drug use? Well, Portugal may provide guidance; it decriminalized a decade ago and two things happened: enforcement costs dropped significantly, and so did use! Let's try the Portuguese approach here—unless giving up contributions from prison-builders is too high a cost for our representatives to bear:

Many countries still react to people dependent on drugs with punishment and stigmatization. In reality, drug dependence is a complex health condition that has a mixture of causes – social, psychological and physical (including, for example, harsh living conditions, or a history of personal trauma or emotional problems). Trying to manage this complex condition through punishment is ineffective – much greater success can be achieved by providing a range of evidence-based drug treatment services. Countries that have treated citizens dependent on drugs as patients in need of treatment, instead of criminals deserving of punishment, have demonstrated extremely positive results in crime reduction, health improvement, and overcoming dependence.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if residents of the Langley Park area who use drugs were sent to a drug-rehab clinic (maybe on the 3rd floor of La Union) rather than sent to jail where no effective treatment was offered or even available? Wouldn't it be wonderful if the occasional shootings in the area declined to zero because no one was selling or trying to raise money for drug use? ■

WHO, WHAT, AND WHEN

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. (Editor, Bill Hanna) It 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.

CALENDAR

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.

June 17—Save Langley Park meeting, 6:30 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church, 6201 Belcrest Rd., Hyattsville.

June 18—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.

June 20—District 1 Town meeting, 6:30 p.m. at Parkdale High School (6001 Good Luck Road). Eric Olson's district is a neighbor; the meeting might be interesting.

June 21—Envision Prince George's, a "conversation," 6 to 8:30 p.m. at the County Ballroom, 2411 Pinebrook Ave., Landover. Information: 301 952-3594.

June 21—County Council meets on taxi licenses. Details TBA.

June 25—El Preg's Multicultural Fair, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., 700 Roeder Rd., Silver Spring. Jobs, immigration services, etc.

June 25—CASA's Summer Fair, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the CASA mansion (8151 15th Ave. Health checks, legal and know-your-rights workshops, and more. For information, call 301 431-4185.

June 25—SEED's Community Fest takes place from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 6200 Riverdale Road. SEED stands for "Sowing Empowerment and Economic Development." There will be workshops on financial literacy, and those who participate can get a bag of food. There will also be games and more. Information: Julie Sarmiento, 301 458-9808 x139.

June 30 to July 4 and July 7-11—Smithsonian Folklife Festival on the National Mall in D.C. Themes: Colombia, Peace Corps, Rhythm and Blues.

July 14—Action Langley Park meets at 7 p.m. in the Langley Park Community Center. The main agenda item will be planning ALP's work for the coming year.

August 2—National Night Out Celebration, 3-5 p.m. in and around the Langley Park Community Center. Music, games, and friendly police officers.

September 18—Hispanic Festival in Lane Manor Park, noon to 6 p.m. Lots of food, music, and games. The location is on the south side of University Blvd. about one-half mile west of the University of Maryland.

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, poor kidney function, and more. Yes, it's free!

Note: Apologies to those who have tried to contact ALP or BLP but have not received our usual prompt replies. ALP Executive Secretary Bill Hanna is recovering from hip replacement surgery.