

NORTH FOUR CORNERS NEWS

PUBLISHED BIMONTHLY BY THE NORTHWOOD-FOUR CORNERS CIVIC ASSOCIATION ■ DECEMBER 2025

Pedestrian Safety Improvements on MD 193/University Boulevard

Planning is underway on University Boulevard/MD 193 for pedestrian safety improvements. The Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (PSAP) is a component of the Maryland Department of Transportation’s (MDOT) Complete Streets policy. The State Highway Administration held a public informational workshop on 5 November 2025 to present proposed improvements and gather community feedback for pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements.

Nearly 40,000 vehicles per day travel along MD 193/University Boulevard from Georgia Avenue to Colesville Road; crash data has identified this portion of the road as a high injury area. The opportunities identified for

improvements will include:

- Concrete sidewalk maintenance;
- Signage repairs and replacements;
- High-visibility pavement markings for crosswalks;
- Enhanced bus stop upgrades;
- High-visibility mid-block crossings;
- Side street curb extensions at crosswalks;
- Decreased stress for cyclists;
- Intersections designed to enhance pedestrian and bicyclist safety and mobility; and
- Shared-use paths.

The MDOT roll maps illustrating proposed pedestrian safety improvements showed a pedestrian hybrid beacon and crosswalk on westbound University Boulevard to walk safely to the grocery store and post office at the jug handle turn-around. There is already a crosswalk on eastbound University. The roll maps also showed a new traffic signal at the Brunette Avenue intersection with University Boulevard. A copy of the rollmap for the corridor adjacent to the NFCCA area can be found at <https://>

Winter Social on Wed., 10 Dec.

The next meeting of the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association will be held on Wednesday, 10 December 2025, at **6:30 p.m.** (note the earlier time). ***The meeting will be held in person at Forest Knolls Elementary School only.***

This will be our third “Holiday Winter Social” in lieu of our regular meeting; we’re starting an hour earlier to make it easier for children to attend on a school night.

In the giving spirit of the holiday season, there will be a Food Collection Box (non-perishable) for Silver Spring-based Manna Food Center.

Bring treats or good eats to share, and there will be activities for kids, music, a caroling performance, and a holiday market with vendors selling their wares. ■

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WWW.NFCCA.ORG

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

At the October NFCCA meeting, we had a large crowd show up in person and via Zoom to hear Councilmember Kristin Mink describe her positions on the University Boulevard Corridor Plan and update the community about the FLASH 2.0 bus rapid transit expansion on Colesville Road, as well as the development timeline for Viva White Oak and issues impacting redevelopment of the Sears building in White Oak.

The election of 2025–2026 Officers and Board members took place and all of the Officers and two Board members who chose to continue in their roles were approved. I'd like to give a hearty thanks to Jon Prochilo, who has served as a board member for four years. With his resignation, we now have an unfilled slot on the board. If you are interested in becoming more engaged, offer to run yourself or nominate someone you believe can contribute special expertise. The vote to fill this seat will take place at our 11 February 2026 meeting.

Most of the current Officers and Board members have served for many years and several of the older volunteers are planning retirement moves. NFCCA needs a succession plan to address this transition. If you can help with organizing newsletter distribution, editing the newsletter, administering the *nfcca.org* website, or building out our communications efforts, NFCCA will be looking for volunteers or new Board members to fill these vital roles. Please contact me at *president AT nfcca DOT org* or call me at 240.281.3911 if you have any questions about serving or suggestions for a nominee.

Another matter taken up at the October meeting was an amendment to the NFCCA bylaws to change the name of our association from Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association to North Four Corners Civic Association. The vote was close, but the matter was tabled to research the bylaws so this amendment will be taken up again at the February 2026 meeting (see related story on page 10).

The Planning, Housing, and Parks Committee of the Montgomery County Council has concluded its work sessions on the University Boulevard Corridor Plan (UBCP). Council members voted on various housing and transportation recommendations in the UBCP. See the related story on page 4 in this newsletter, which describes issues being decided and next steps. It's been a long haul but now is the time to pay attention and stay engaged!

Another transportation development that NFCCA is paying attention to is the FLASH 2.0 Bus Rapid Transit proposal to construct a dedicated bus lane on U.S. 29 Colesville Road, which will remove one-to-two vehicle traffic lanes from Southwood to the outer loop 495 beltway ramp.

October marked the beginning of the next NFCCA dues cycle. Our membership total ticked up to an all-time high of

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 3)

Communicate!

NFCCA Listserv

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Compost Crew: 5-gal. @ \$22, 12-gal. @ \$29, compostcrew.com

Seasonal Roots: Sign up @ \$25, seasonalroots.com/nfcca

NORTH FOUR CORNERS NEWS

The *North Four Corners News* (formerly *Northwood News*) is published by the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association. The NFCCA represents the 1,600+ households in the area bounded by Colesville Road (Rte. 29), University Blvd. (Rte. 193), Caddington Avenue, and the Northwest Branch.

Any resident of this area is eligible to join the NFCCA. Annual dues are \$15 per household and may be paid online, at any Association meeting, or mailed to the treasurer.

The *North Four Corners News* is published five times a year—in October, December, February, April, and June. To place an ad or discuss a story, please contact the editor.

Editor

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Visit Our Website
www.nfcca.org

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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279 in 2024–2025. Currently, 110 households have paid their 2025–2026 dues. NFCCA membership dues are only \$15, so please do your part.

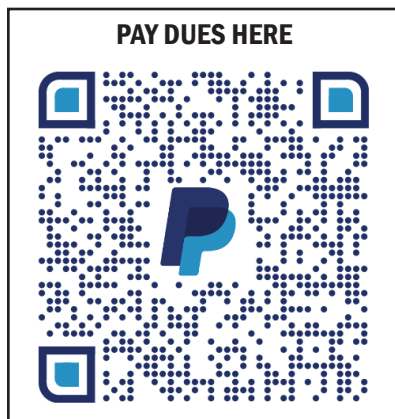
Ped Safety

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maryland.maps.arcgis.com/sharing/rest/content/items/a80b1510d1d14a80b9fc-c17a9cdec74/data.

MDOT's goal is to incorporate public feedback on the proposed improvements before moving to the preliminary 30% design phase by Spring 2026, with construction anticipated to start in Spring 2027.

To stay up-to-date on this pedestrian safety improvements plan, consult the project page at <https://mdot-sha-md193-md97-to-us29-moa72b21-maryland.hub.arcgis.com/>. If you wish to make comments to improve pedestrian safety on University Boulevard, you may do so here at <https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/3c5999897e5d4f56831673ebce12e066>. ■



See the box below for the easy way to pay your dues. We also welcome voluntary donations to keep our newsletter going and fund social activities.

Speaking of community festivities, instead of a December general meeting, NFCCA is hosting our Holiday Winter Social on Wednesday, 10 December, at Forest Knolls Elementary. We are starting a bit earlier at 6:30 p.m. so families with younger children can join us. Have a happy and healthy holiday season!

—Sharon Canavan

NFCCA E-Mail Listserv Issues

We are still getting annoying scam applications to join the nfcca@groups.io neighborhood listserv; in fact, we learned that our neighboring civic associations are experiencing the same phenomenon. NFCCA has added extra steps to the application process to fight off these bots.

It's important to provide your street address when applying to join the listserv so the moderator can check that against real estate ownership records. That step could screen out renters and, of course, we don't want to do that. So the listserv moderator may send a separate message asking for a screenshot of a piece of mail addressed to the applicant's residence.

If you are not yet on our listserv, join by sending an email message to [nfcca+subscribe AT groups DOT io](mailto:nfcca+subscribe@groups DOT io). ■

NFCCA BOARD

The Board of Directors for the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association serves for one year and meets every month except July and August. Current officers (until October 2026) are:

President

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240.281.3911
president AT nfcca DOT org

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Treasurer

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403 Hannes Street
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ricky AT nfcca DOT org

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UBCP Headed to County Council

By Sharon Canavan

Councilmembers Friedson, Fani-Gonzalez, and Jawando serve on the Planning, Housing, and Parks Committee (PHP Committee) of the Montgomery County Council, which has concluded its series of Work Sessions on the “Planning Board Draft Summer 2025” for the University Boulevard Corridor Plan (UBCP).

Although not on this committee, Councilmember Mink—who represents District 5 (including the NFCCA community)—actively participated in these work sessions. She sent a detailed letter on 26 September to Council colleagues laying out her concerns with the UBCP, with the following requests: (1) eliminate the street grid that impacts South Four Corners; (2) reduce the height proposed for Commercial Residential Town (CRT) zoned properties near Four Corners; (3) remove the recommendation to repurpose existing general traffic lane for a bus-only lane near Four Corners; (4) remove the Phase 2 transportation recommendations for Four Corners;

and (5) either remove entirely or significantly scale back the proposed rezoning of single family properties. For a copy of this letter, see the second document attached behind the staff report at https://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=169&clip_id=18371&meta_id=206908.

Housing

The PHP Committee agreed to a number of significant changes to the UBCP. By a 2-to-1 vote, the PHP adopted Chairman Friedson’s amendment to cut back the areas proposed for rezoning as Commercial Residential Neighborhood (CRN) throughout the length of the corridor. CRN zoning allows higher density housing redevelopment (duplex, triplex, quadplex, and small multi-family up to 19 units).

The Friedson amendment applies CRN rezoning only to the single-family homes that directly front University Boulevard from Caddington to Sutherland, as well as homes 10200 to 10226 on Colesville Road between

Timberwood and Lorain. For a map of the properties affected by this amendment, see page 20 of the Staff Report to the PHP at https://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=169&clip_id=18371&meta_id=206907.

The properties along University Boulevard and Colesville Road were already upzoned by Zoning Text Amendment 25-02 (Housing N.O.W.) previously enacted by the Council. A newsletter article described Housing N.O.W. is at <https://www.nfcca.org/news/nn202510a.html>. There are important differences, however, between Housing N.O.W. and the CRN rezoning as proposed by the UBCP.

A building’s square footage can be slightly higher under Housing N.O.W. as the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is 1.25, but is lower at FAR 1.0 for CRN. For example, on a 5,000 square foot lot, Housing N.O.W. allows a building up to 6,250 square feet vs. 5,000 square feet for a CRN-zoned building. Housing N.O.W. restricts building height to 40 feet, but Friedson’s amendment will allow buildings up to 45 feet (lower than the 50 feet height recommended by the Planning Board’s original recommendation).

Lot coverage—that is, the percentage of a site covered by the building—is similar for smaller lots at 30 to 35%, but can go up to 90% for larger CRN-zoned lots greater than



Councilmember Mink spoke on the UBCP at our last meeting.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 6)



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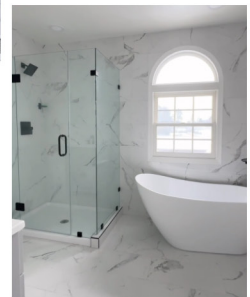
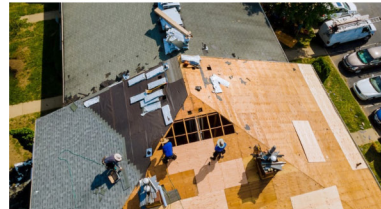


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UBCP

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15,000 square feet. Front, side, and rear setback requirements are also narrower for CRN-zoned lots.

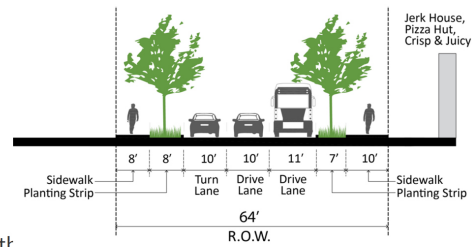
Under Housing N.O.W., a redeveloper may seek Planning Board approval to reduce required parking below two spaces per unit; in contrast, only one parking space per unit is required under the UBCP because proximity to public transit qualifies this corridor as a Reduced Parking Area.

Housing N.O.W. limits lot consolidation to a maximum of up to three properties; the lots must abut the corridor and “flag” lots (with an access driveway leading off the corridor to the lot) or “through” lots that abut two roads are not eligible for consolidation.

In contrast, CRN zoning gives redevelopers more flexibility to purchase and consolidate an unlimited number of lots so long as they have frontage on University Boulevard or Colesville Road. Although the properties at 611 and 613 University Boulevard are flag lots, the UBCP, as adopted by the PHP, rezones these as CRN and they will be treated as fronting the corridor. CRN zoning will apply the duplex site standard method of development.

A redevelopment application under Housing N.O.W. is considered by the Planning agency under a streamlined optional method workforce housing development process. A redeveloper will only need to submit a site plan and, once approved, a building permit

- Repurpose one travel lane per direction
- Reduce lane widths
- No additional right-of-way from businesses
- No dedicated bus lanes
- Street buffers exceed minimum width
- Sidewalks/sidepath meet or exceed Complete Street Design Guide minimum widths



Example: Westbound University Boulevard West of Colesville Road

Option ‘C’ Public Hearing Draft: Staff Recommendation

will be issued to proceed with construction. The process for CRN zoning is more streamlined as redevelopment is “by right,” so the redeveloper simply needs to secure a building permit.

A chart illustrating the differences between Housing N.O.W. and CRN zoning can be found on the 16th page of the following document: https://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=169&clip_id=18281&meta_id=203895.

Another concern raised during the PHP work sessions, particularly by Jawando, was that redevelopers could buy up the supply of market rate affordable single-family housing in one of the most diverse and relatively affordable areas of the county. Prior to consideration by the full Montgomery County Council, Friedson and Fani-Gonzalez sought to bring the UBCP more in line with the affordable housing requirements under Housing N.O.W.; they forwarded a proposal to add a requirement to the implementing Overlay Zone text amendment, ZTA 25-12, that any 3+ unit redevelopment of CRN proper-

ties have at least one Work Force Housing unit, or 15% of the total units, whichever is greater. ZTA 25-12 will be considered by the full Council in December.

High-Rise Development

In the “Four Corners Town Center” at the intersection at University Boulevard and Colesville Road, the UBCP recommended Commercial/Residential Town (CRT) zoning, which allows greater density for mixed-use redevelopment with commercial, retail, and housing. The PHP Committee chose to grandfather the existing zoning with a 100-foot height limit on several commercial properties at the corner of Lorraine and University. PHP did, however, generally lower the CRT height limits applicable to other sites throughout the Four Corners commercial area to 60 feet, which is well below the 75- to 100-foot heights recommended by the Planning Board. Slightly higher height limits of 65 feet apply to the properties in the median islands between east- and west-bound University Boulevard, as well as the Safeway site.

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UBCP

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Transportation

The UBCP recommends developing University Boulevard as a “Cool Corridor” with tree canopy, shaded transit stops, landscaped buffers, and improved stormwater management. To make the experience more pleasant and safer, the PHP embraced the UBCP recommendations to widen sidewalks and add a green “buffer” separating the sidewalk from traffic lanes. To make space for this, the PHP decided to narrow existing lanes and repurpose a lane in each direction for these safety improvements, as illustrated on page 6.

Although the Planning Board had also pushed for a dedicated bus-only lane running through the Four Corners intersection, the PHP Committee chose not to adopt this recommendation, deciding instead to “evaluate options to improve transit performance through Four Corners, including transit signal priority or relocating bus stops. The adopted recommendation is to extend the dedicated bus lane with red pavement from Dennis to Lorain and pick up the dedicated bus lane again at Williams-

burg Drive to the Beltway exit at the plan’s eastern edge.

The PHP, however, reaffirmed the recommendation for dedicated median bus lanes on Colesville Road between Timberwood Avenue and the outer loop Beltway ramp. The plan contemplates relocating the Flash Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) stations presently located in front of the Four Corners Pub and Montgomery Blair High School to a two-lane wide station in the middle of the Four Corners intersection. An illustrated “roll map” showing the current design for this intersection can be found at <https://www.montgomery-countymd.gov/dot-dte/Resources/Files/US%2029%20Flash%20BRT%20Phase%20II%2035%20Percent%20Design%20Drawings.pdf> (excerpt shown below).

Park Recreation Building

Friedson made the case and added language to consider the possibility of reopening the now vacant building in Four Corners Local Park as a public amenity space. After this recreation center was decommissioned as a parks building, it was leased for a handful of years as a Montessori school. Since that lease expired, the building has lain

vacant. The Planning Board’s UBCP recommendation had been to simply consult with the community about a suitable potential lessee. Now the language calls for identifying an appropriate use “that complements the park and addresses community needs and interests.”

Process Steps

The County Council began its work on the PHP adopted version of the UBCP on 18 November as this newsletter went to print. A redline copy of the Council Staff’s report on the UBCP showing the changes made by the PHP to the Planning Board’s version can be found at https://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=169&event_id=16659&meta_id=207204.

Planning Board documents and other critical information can be found on NFCCA’s website at the link titled “Montgomery County Planning” at <https://nfcca.org/mocoplan.html>. There is background and information—such as how to write a letter to the Council expressing your views—sample pro and con issues to raise in a letter, and contact information on where to email a letter. ■



Part of the ‘roll map’ showing the current BRT redesign at the Four Corners intersections.

I'm Deren Blessman. As Realtors, my wife Jeni and I study the neighborhood market regularly for our real estate business and to monitor the values of our own home on Malta Lane.

Well, it's football season already, and that's something the pups like to do with me when I'm not out working on helping buyers and sellers navigate this very odd real estate market. Bader & Kobe (my neighborhood walking buddies) were more interested in the treats I had in my hand than the game, but we all had to have our football snacks!



The real estate market is changing daily, so if you have any questions or concerns in Maryland, D.C., or Virginia, Jeni & I are here for you, and your friends and family. Even if you're not ready to sell, let us know if you'd like a free Home Market Analysis for your home. We also have excellent Realtor associates throughout the country if you need an excellent agent referral.

The Blessman Team with Keller Williams has YOU covered with over 40 years collectively in the business. Please give us a call, text, or email for any of your real estate needs:

Deren (retUSAF) | MD & DC | 240-793-2794 | dblessman@kw.com
Jeni | VA | 571-437-5656 | jblessman@kw.com

Much love, peace, and a blessed Holiday Season to you all!

Deren & Jeni

\$5K Goal for NFCCA Community Cares Campaign

By Sharon Canavan

The Woodmoor-Pinecrest Civic Association reached out to NFCCA to challenge our community to participate in the “Season’s Feedings Showdown 2025” to raise donations to the Capital Area Food Bank. Challenge Accepted!

Our NFCCA COMMUNITY CARES campaign set what we hope is an achievable goal of \$5,000 to support our neighbors in need. But if we want to beat the Woodmoor-Pinecrest team, we’ll have to work harder, because their goal is \$10,000. As this newsletter goes to print, our NFCCA neighbors have donated \$2,473, but Woodmoor-Pinecrest is nipping at our heels with a total of \$2,225 in contributions.

Federal Reductions in Force and the recent government shutdown have had a real impact on food banks and the people they serve. The Capital Area Food Bank service area is home to 20% of the federal workforce, many of whom have missed at least two paychecks since October 1st. In the last several weeks, Capital Area Food Bank has been serving federal workers at five different supplemental sites to

address the increased need.

To donate, the fundraising page for the NFCCA COMMUNITY CARES campaign can be accessed at <https://give.capitalareafoodbank.org/team/785030>.

This campaign runs through the end of 2025. Thank you for supporting the Capital Area Food Bank and our neighbors in need this holiday season, and good luck in this year’s showdown! ■



This year’s Halloween Parade on Margate. All photos online!

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Holiday Social

Get into the holiday spirit at the NFCCA Winter Wonderland Holiday Social starting at **6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, 10 December**, at the Forest Knolls Elementary School all-purpose room (10830 Eastwood Avenue). Doors open a bit earlier

this year so the kids can make it on a school night.

In the giving spirit of the holiday season, there will be a Food Collection Box for Silver Spring-based Manna Food Center. Bring treats or good eats to share, and there will be activities for kids, music, a caroling performance, and a

holiday market with vendors selling their wares.

Cycling Santa

Santa and his Elves once again will be riding their bikes through the neighborhood in December; the date and route map will be posted soon on the *nfcca.org* website, Listserv, and the NFCCA Facebook page. Volunteers to host hot chocolate or cider tastings at stops along the way should contact *ipp AT nfcca DOT org*.

Chili/Curry Cookoff Fundraiser

Calling all chefs for our 4th Annual NFCCA Cookoff, which will be **Sunday, 22 February 2026, from 3 to 5 p.m.** If you are interested in preparing your favorite chili or curry for NFCCA's fundraiser, please contact *cookoff AT nfcca DOT org*. For those who just want to come for the good eats and to support the NFCCA, tasting tickets—which are \$10 for five tickets—will be available for purchase on the *nfcca.org* website or at the door.

Vine Cutting

Participate in NFCCA's annual effort to clear out invasive vines and overgrowth along the creek on Lockridge Drive. Gather at the corner of Lockridge and Belton Road at 10:00 a.m. on **Saturday, 7 March 2026** (with a rain date of Sunday, 8 March 2026). Bring your clippers!

Earth Day Bike Ride

Meet at North Four Corners Local Park at 10 a.m. for this all-ages community bike ride on **Sunday, 26 April 2026**. Donuts, coffee, fun! ■



Many neighbors joined the HalloWHEEL bike ride last month! More photos from this and the Halloween Parade are online.

Vote on Name Change for NFCCA

At the October 2025 general meeting, a motion to amend the NFCCA bylaws to change the name of our civic association from “Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association” to “North Four Corners Civic Association” was discussed. Pro and Con arguments for making this change were discussed in a previous newsletter article at *nfcca.org/news/nn201302i.html*.

After a spirited debate, a hand count vote was taken with a narrow majority of 19 to 18 to change the name. The matter, however, was tabled in order to check on the bylaws requirements for making this change.

After researching the issue, it became clear that in order to pass an amendment to the bylaws requires a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the mem-

bers present in person or via Zoom (provided there is a quorum of at least 15 NFCCA members in attendance at the meeting). Only members whose dues are current are entitled to vote—one vote per member house.

Furthermore, the proposed amendment must be submitted in writing prior to its consideration. This requirement is met by including the following in this newsletter article: “Be it resolved to amend the NFCCA bylaws to change the name of this organization from “Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association” to the “North Four Corners Civic Association.” This amendment will be discussed and taken up for a membership vote at the NFCCA meeting on 11 February 2026. ■



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Paper Bags Will Be 10 Cents, No Plastic Bags Allowed in 2026

Starting 1 January 2026, Montgomery County's new "Bring Your Own Bag Law" will take effect. This law increases the *paper bag* tax to 10 cents per bag and *bans plastic carryout bags* in areas that include Silver Spring.

Retailers will retain five cents from each carryout bag provided, while the other five cents goes to the County to support the County's Water Quality Protection Charge fund.

Key exemptions include:

- Customers paying with SNAP/WIC benefits (no bag tax).
- Restaurants providing prepared/leftover food, take-out, and drive-through (no bag tax).
- Bulk or perishable items like produce, meat, fish (plastic bags allowed).

Learn more details on the County website at <https://montgomerycountymd.gov/bag/retailers.html>.



Hello,

I'm Brad Higbee, owner of [Aardvark Entertainers](#).

I am a family and children's entertainer from Aspen Hill, with a connection to many families in your area, recently teaching at a local preschool where some children from the area attend or attended.



I've been bringing smiles and laughter to 'children' of all ages for several decades, performing magic, twisting balloons into all sorts of designs and employing other forms of fun! I perform at family parties and events, at businesses, stores and shopping centers, for community groups, at gatherings of various faiths, cultural events, several events abroad and more. I make holiday visits, and am preparing for some upcoming Santa visits. Some of my favorite visits are made to small family gatherings and parties at homes. Given my connection to this area, I'm making an offer for multiple visits taking place in the area which enables Santa to visit at multiple homes in one trip to the neighborhoods in your association.

I can be reached at SC@SantaVisitor.com or [240-539-7390](tel:240-539-7390) (Seigh/Text).

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