

Silver Spring Transit Center Update

August 24, 2006

Purpose:

To provide the latest information on the Silver Spring Transit Center construction project and to disclose the impact upon NOAA and its employees, visitors and contractors.

Background:

The new Silver Spring Transit Center is an effort to improve traffic flow and reduce conflicts between cars, buses and pedestrians for the local area. Upon completion, the Center will be a state-of-the-art Intermodal Transit Center.

The location of the new Transit Center will be between the MetroRail and MARC tracks and bordered by Colesville Rd., Bonifant Ave. and Wayne Ave. Ride-On, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) and Inter-City (Greyhound, Peter Pan) bus service will converge on the site as well as MARC and MetroRail service, Hiker-Biker trails, Kiss & Ride and cab service.

The Transit Center will consist of three levels. Generally, bus service will be on the first level, with ingress and egress onto Colesville Road at a new intersection, referenced above. Rail service will be on the second level. Entrance on the second level will come off of Wayne Avenue. The third level will be for cabs, Kiss & Ride and hiker-biker trail access. Entrance to this level will be from Ripley St. (at the end of Bonifant Ave). There will be a park fronting the corner of Wayne Ave and Colesville Rd.

Planning has been underway for some time. In 1998, in order to respond to a Smart Growth initiative, joint development proposals were sought from developers.

Improvements have been separated in two phases.

- Phase I consisted of relocation of the MARC station and providing a pedestrian bridge. This work is complete.

- Phase II is the Transit Center itself. Plans started in June 1998 and expanded to include WMATA's joint development proposal.

Discussion

The Transit Center construction is currently scheduled to start in October/November 2006 will last approximately two years and will also be performed in two phases.

Construction - Phase 1 will be the Interim Operations Facility (IOF) which will consist of site preparation work and will last from October 2006 until April 2007. This phase will entail the temporary relocation of all bus operations to the local city streets and will require the construction of new access ways to the front of the subway station.

Additionally, a new crosswalk and traffic light will be placed at Colesville Road, north (east) of the overpass and south (west) of Wayne/Second Avenue and Colesville intersection.

The MARC train bridge will remain open as will Bonifant Ave. Therefore, the impact upon NOAA employees will be negligible.

Construction - Phase 2 will be the actual Transit Center Construction which will commence approximately in June 2007 and be completed around June 2009. There will be no bus, cab or Kiss & Ride service on the current site in front of the Metro station. Ride-On and WMATA bus service will be staged on Wayne Ave, Bonifant Ave and Dixon Ave.

The first two levels of the building will be giant oval decks with two lanes for buses only. The third level will be a smaller deck for Kiss and Ride, taxis, and 23 short-term parking spaces.

Impact:

There will be commercial development simultaneous to Transit Center construction in the same immediate area. Three buildings will be constructed adjacent to the three-level Transit Center. Two of the buildings will likely be residential (condominiums) with the third building to be a long term stay hotel, likely a Marriott Residence Inn. The approximate height of each building is likely to be 200 feet.

There will be potential traffic delays due to construction; however, parking in the area (specifically garages 5 and 55 which have been historically underutilized) will remain open for NOAA and the local community if needed.

The project will improve transfers for bus riders in a weather protected facility. The project will improve pedestrian and vehicular circulation and safety, while creating a pleasant pedestrian environment including a wide promenade, green parks, plazas, and patron conveniences. Hiker/biker trail enhancements (Capital Crescent & Metropolitan Branch) are included in the design concept. Adequate space for the future Capital Crescent Trail will be provided along the north side of the existing CSX tracks.

Buses, Metrorail and taxis currently serve 57,000 patrons daily at this site. By 2020, the number of patrons projected to be using the facility will be 97,000. The present number of peak hour buses of 120 buses per hour will roughly double by 2024.

A new traffic signal will be installed on Colesville Road at the north side of the existing CSX tracks to facilitate access to the bus bays, which will also greatly improve pedestrian access to the Red Line station and SSTC. Another new traffic light is planned for the intersection of Wayne and Dixon Avenues.

The existing urban park will be reconstructed and a public plaza will be incorporated into the project.

Miscellaneous:

Concept plans for the project have been completed and design funding approved. The Federal Transit Agency approved the environmental assessment and granted permission to enter into preliminary engineering. Maryland Transit Authority and WMATA, along with Montgomery County, Dept. of Public Works and Transportation are major stakeholders in the design and construction of this facility.

Traffic studies associated with the project are complete. Design work has begun including securing federal, state, and local approvals. The time frame for design and funding is approximately 12 to 15 months.

Public sector cost for the Center has been estimated at approximately \$70.2 million. Funding sources include federal aid, general obligation bonds, impact tax revenues, and state aid.