

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
Board Action/Information Summary

<input checked="" type="radio"/> Action <input type="radio"/> Information	MEAD Number: 101664	Resolution: <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
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TITLE:

Final Approvals for Southern Ave. Bus Garage

PRESENTATION SUMMARY:

Staff will provide the Finance and Administration Committee a briefing on the Public Hearing staff report, discuss the process and recommendation of the preferred alternative and request approval to purchase property for the new garage.

PURPOSE:

Management is seeking the Finance and Administration Committee's approval of:
1) Public Hearing Staff Report; 2) selection of the preferred alternative; 3) and authority to purchase property for the new garage.

DESCRIPTION:

Funding was established in the FY11-16 CIP with the intent of building a new bus garage to replace the existing 88 year old Southern Avenue Bus Garage. The existing garage has exceeded its useful life, cannot be expanded in its current form and cannot house new fuel technology buses.

Key Highlights:

Since the Southern Ave Bus Garage has exceeded its useful life, Metro evaluated two new proposed sites - one near the intersection of Forrestville Road and Suitland Parkway (Alternative A) and another near the intersection of Pennsylvania Avenue and Westphalia Road (Alternative B). A rebuild in place option (Alternative C) and a no-build option were also evaluated.

Two public hearings were conducted, one in 2011 and a second in 2012. Before the 2011 public hearing process closed, the proposer for Site B withdrew from consideration, leaving three options for consideration.

Site A (Alternative A) was selected over the rebuild in place (Alternative C) and no-build options because it provides expansion opportunities for future growth, is less disruptive to current operations and did not displace any residents or businesses.

Background and History:

While Metro staff was evaluating the best solution for a replacement of the existing Southern Avenue Garage, an unsolicited proposal was received in August 2009 offering to provide the real estate necessary to house a new garage to replace Southern Avenue Bus Garage. The proposal also offered design and construction services. A second site was offered in response to a request for qualifications. Both sites and project teams were deemed technically acceptable. Metro entered into agreements with each proposer offering a stipend for their support of the environmental evaluation process as well as for the preparation of general plans. Meanwhile, a Metro consultant performed an environmental evaluation of the two proposed sites, a re-build in place option and the no-build alternative. Staff held a Compact Public Hearing on July 27, 2011. Before Metro could make a site selection and close the Public Hearing process, the proposer for Site B dropped from consideration and the proposer for Site A revised the entrance to the development within which the garage would be placed if that site was selected. The revised entrance is different enough from the original entrance that a revised traffic study was required. Metro also revised the scope of the project reducing the garage size to 150 buses. These changes were significant enough to trigger a revision to the environmental evaluation and the holding of a second public hearing.

Discussion:

The second Public Hearing was held on December 17, 2012. Five people testified. The Draft Public Hearing Staff Report was published on January 16, 2013 and its comment period closed on January 26, 2013. One person commented on the Draft Staff Report. The Final Public Hearing Staff Report addresses all comments received but does not identify meaningful differentiators between the alternatives. As a result, other factors need to be weighed to inform the decision of selection of the preferred alternative.

While both sites under consideration require acquisition of property, the property acquisition for the rebuild option would displace a resident as well as several businesses. The property acquisition at the existing site would allow for the construction of a 150 bus facility but would not be enough to expand the garage in the future. Rebuilding on the existing site is also in conflict with Prince George's County's plans for redevelopment in that part of the county.

Although Alternative A provides the opportunity to expand to a larger facility in the future, annual operating costs at this site would be approximately \$1.5 million higher than the existing location. The facility is farther from the service area than the existing garage which will result in additional deadhead costs (\$1 million). The facility is significantly larger than the existing facility and will have considerably more technology integrated into the systems and equipment resulting in an additional \$0.5 million for mechanical/technical and janitorial support.

The capital costs of each alternative are equivalent. This is because the higher real estate costs for Alternative A are offset by its less expensive configuration to construct.

When taking the above factors into consideration, staff recommends selection of Alternative A as the preferred alternative for the new Southern Avenue Bus Garage. Alternative A can accommodate future growth, is less disruptive to the existing operations, does not conflict with County development plans and is comparable in cost.

FUNDING IMPACT:

Fiscal Year 2011 - 2016			
Program:	Capital Improvement Program		
Project:	Southern Ave Garage Replacement (CIP 084)		
Project Manager:	John Thomas		
Project Department/Office:	Transit Infrastructure and Engineering Services/Chief Engineer - Infrastructure		
Budget:	Total Project Budget (FY11-19)	Prior Year Actuals (FY11-12)	Remaining Budget (FY13-19)
	\$96,294,379	\$4,548,679	\$91,745,700
This Action:			\$15,500,000
Available Budget :			\$76,245,700
Remarks:			
Operating Budget Impact:	<p>Positions: An estimated 4-6 additional staff would be required to maintain systems, equipment, HVAC, etc. and provide janitorial support in the new facility.</p> <p>Cost impact: Annual expenses for utilities and routine maintenance will likely increase due to moving into a facility that is larger than the current facility. The total net operating cost change will be determined during the design of the new facility. Also, bus operating costs are estimated to increase by approximately \$1 million annually since the new garage is farther from the service area than the existing garage. Future budget development will include these operating costs.</p>		

TIMELINE:

Previous actions June of 2010 Board approval of FY'11-16 CIP that includes funding for a new Southern Ave Bus Garage

December 2012 - 2nd Public Hearing was held

Anticipated actions Purchase the property in Summer 2013, purchase price not to exceed fair market value as determined by an outside appraisal.

Advertise to select a contractor to build the garage in Summer 2013

RECOMMENDATION:

Board approval of the Public Hearing Staff Report, the selection of the preferred alternative and approval to purchase property for the new garage.

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF FINAL STAFF REPORT FOR SOUTHERN AVENUE BUS GARAGE REPLACEMENT FACILITY AND AMENDMENT OF THE ADOPTED REGIONAL SYSTEM

**2013-13
RESOLUTION
OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OF THE
WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY**

WHEREAS, In June, 2010, the Metro Board of Directors approved the FY11-16 Capital Improvement Program that included funding for a replacement garage for the existing Southern Avenue Division; and

WHEREAS, Two new sites as well as a rebuild in place option were initially under consideration for the replacement of the existing garage; and

WHEREAS, Staff prepared an Environmental Assessment and Draft General Plans for the replacement facility that met the requirements of the documentation required for the holding of a Metro Public Hearing; and

WHEREAS, A public hearing is required for the proposed replacement of the existing garage because the new garage would need to be added to the Mass Transit Plan if constructed; and

WHEREAS, A public hearing was held on July 27, 2011; and

WHEREAS, Prior to the closing of the Public Hearing Record, the Proposer for Alternative A revised the entrance to the development within which the garage would be located and the proposer for Alternative B dropped out of the competition; and

WHEREAS, The new entrance triggered the need for a revised environmental evaluation to study traffic impacts; and

WHEREAS, The revised environmental evaluation needed to be presented to the public for consideration in the form of a public Hearing; and

WHEREAS, Metro revised the scope of the project for an initial build of 150 buses with expansion capability to 250 buses; and

WHEREAS, A public hearing was held on the project on December 17, 2012 at 7:00PM at the Andrew Jackson Academy, 3500 Regency Parkway, Forestville, Maryland 20747; and

WHEREAS, Five people testified at the hearing; and

WHEREAS, A report on the public hearing entitled *Public Hearing Staff Report, Staff Analysis of the Public Hearing and Staff Recommendations, Proposed Southern Avenue Bus Garage Replacement, Prince George's County, Maryland, Hearing No. 581, Docket No. R12-02* (the Draft Staff Report) was prepared and publicized for comment; and

WHEREAS, The Draft Staff Report addressed the issues and comments raised at the public hearing and in the comments submitted subsequent to the hearing; and

WHEREAS, The Draft Staff Report was released for public review on January 14, 2013, and the comment period remained open until January 26, 2013; and

WHEREAS, One additional comment was submitted on the Staff Report, and

WHEREAS, Staff has prepared the *Public Hearing Report Supplement and Staff Recommendations for the Proposed Southern Avenue Bus Garage Replacement Environmental Evaluation, Hearing No. 581, Docket No. R12-02*, (The Final Staff Report); and

WHEREAS, The staff recommendation in The Final Staff Report is to build the garage at Alternative A, with a capacity of 150 buses; and

WHEREAS, The new garage will require the acquisition of property; and

WHEREAS, The staff recommendation in The Final Staff Report is to add the new garage and acquired property into the Adopted Regional System; and

WHEREAS, The Final Staff Report, along with a transcript of the public hearing have been made available to the Board of Directors and the Board has considered this information; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Board of Directors hereby approves the attached *Public Hearing Report Supplement and Staff Recommendations for the Proposed Southern Avenue Bus Garage Replacement Environmental Evaluation, Hearing No. 581, Docket No. R12-02*, (The Final Staff Report); and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Board of Directors approves the acquisition of property for the new garage by purchase or condemnation; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Board of Directors amends the Adopted Regional System to include the new garage and the property; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That this Resolution shall be effective immediately.

Reviewed as to form and legal sufficiency,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Carol B. O'Keeffe", written over a horizontal line.

Carol B. O'Keeffe
General Counsel

**Public Hearing Report Supplement and Staff
Recommendations**

for the

**Proposed Southern Avenue Bus Garage
Replacement
Environmental Evaluation**

(WMATA Hearing No. 581, Docket R12-02)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Public Hearing Report Supplement was prepared to document and provide responses to comments received on the **Public Hearing Report** for the **Proposed Southern Avenue Bus Garage Replacement Environmental Evaluation**.

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) issued the **Public Hearing Report** for comment on January 14, 2013. The **Public Hearing Report** was placed on line, and in the same libraries where the Environmental Assessment (EA) had been placed previously. (See Appendix C for the announcement.)

The comment period ended at 5:00 pm on January 26, 2012. WMATA received comments from 1 individual; the original comments are presented in Appendix A.

PURPOSE AND ORGANIZATION

This report presents responses to comments on the Public Hearing Report. Section 1 provides an introduction to the report. Section 2 presents comment summaries, the original comments, and staff responses. Section 3 provides staff analysis, while Section 4 provides staff recommendations.

2.0 COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

Section 2 presents comments on the **Public Hearing Report** received during the comment period.

2.1 **AESTHETICS**

Summary: One commentor expressed concern about the aesthetics of the wall along Quinn Street [Alternative C], and offered specific suggestions to address the concern.

C. Brown

Aesthetics are of concern since vegetation will be removed, and the area currently used for cars to turn around at the end of Quinn Street will be eliminated. I propose that sufficient vegetation be planted to maintain a pleasing appearance at the boundary of the new facility and to discourage anyone from putting graffiti on the new wall. Further, it would be an element of “green” construction and good for the environment. It was discussed that the wall would be painted by local artists at the Community meeting with Metro representatives in 2011. I strongly encourage Metro to engage the community in a plan to discourage graffiti and vandalism of the proposed new wall/site.

Response: WMATA will work to ensure the facility “fits” into the neighborhood and that anti-graffiti surfaces are used.

2.2 **LIGHTING**

Summary: One commentor requested lighting around the property, presumably Alternative C.

C. Brown

Additionally lighting around the boundary or the property would help to discourage loitering at night around the property, and vandalism.

Response: Both Alternative A and Alternative C will be designed to meet WMATA standards for lighting.

2.3 **RUNOFF**

Summary: One commentor expressed concern about stormwater runoff [Alternative C].

C. Brown

Runoff from the property must be controlled such that residents on Quinn Street are not negatively affected by the construction or the facility after construction. Currently the water table under the properties at the end of Quinn Street rises quickly during intense storming. This leads to basements flooding. Thus it is very important that Metro not externalize the costs of water management on the residents and local government.

Response: Stormwater management plan for construction and operation will be designed and constructed to meet the requirements of Maryland law, and will be reviewed by the Maryland Department of the Environment.

2.4 PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

Summary: One commentor expressed concern about property maintenance of Alternative C.

C. Brown

Finally, continued maintenance of the new property is of concern. The head groundskeeper has been extremely responsive to community needs to clean and maintain WMATA property on Southern Ave. This has not always been the case. Some managers at the current Southern Ave. facility have been rude at times when residence request WMATA to care for their property; clean it up and cut the grass.

Response: WMATA strives to ensure that its properties are maintained in a state of Good Repair.

2.5 EMPLOYEE CONDUCT

Summary: One member of the public reported that WMATA employees at the existing garage engage in inappropriate behavior.

C. Brown

At times Metro employees have come on loiter on Quinn Street to gamble and purchase drugs. Metro must ensure that their increased presence does not negatively affect the local community.

Response: WMATA expects its employees to comply with the law at all times. A similar report was received during the 2011 public hearing process for this project. That report was transmitted to MTPD, WMATA's police department.

Likewise, this report has been forwarded to MTPD for its investigation. Other information can be reported to the Metro's police department at (202) 962-2121.

2.6 ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

Summary: One individual commented about the economic implications of the proposed replacement at Alternative C.

C. Brown

Several businesses are eliminated on the proposed plan. Some of these businesses and the church, I believe employ residents of the community (I may be mistaken). Certainly the church enhances the spiritual and moral foundation of the community and provides humanitarian services. Metro has no plans to mitigate the effect of these losses. There is no replacement of humanitarian services for residents not to have to travel and find new partners. There is no proposed local hiring. Further, no plans have been presented (maybe I just did not locate them) addressing the use of the emergency employee exit and its impact and mitigation on local residence.

Currently, the glut of foreclosed properties in Capital Heights is suppressing local property values. Metro's proposed construction and new facility may increase the problem by discouraging local purchase of houses due to increased traffic, noise,

reduced parking with no additional benefits to the local community. New amenities that currently not present in the area could mitigate the problems. In Gaithersburg, the gyms are clean; there is yoga, and a variety of good restaurants. Metro could encourage economic growth to meet the needs of their employees; this might mitigate any effects of delayed recovery attributable to expansion.

Response: As discussed in Section 3.3 of the 2012 Environmental Evaluation, owners of any property condemned for the Alternative C expansion will be compensated according to the *Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970* as amended, which ensures that property owners, residents and businesses affected by the acquisition or demolition of real property during the construction of federally-funded projects are treated fairly, consistently and equitably and that they do not suffer disproportionate injuries as a result of programs designed for the benefit of the public as a whole. Both federal and state laws require that property owners be paid fair market value for their land and improvements, and that property owners be assisted in finding replacement business sites or dwellings.

If negotiations with any affected property owners are unsuccessful pursuant to the Uniform Relocation and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act, WMATA has the authority to acquire real property by condemnation. WMATA would only use its condemnation authority if it were unable to come to an agreement with an unwilling property owner.

While some businesses would be displaced, it is possible that local businesses could grow and new ones started as a result of an increased WMATA workforce.

2.7 “GREEN” CONSTRUCTION

Summary: One commentor asked about Green construction.

C. Brown

Finally, is there any Green component to the site? Certain surfaces will increase ground temperatures. In Chicago green roofing is used to reduce fuel costs and is better for the environment. There are a number of green components that can be used especially ground cover. Where is this component of the plan?

Response: The WMATA Board of Directors has adopted a policy that all new construction projects be designed with a goal of achieving a LEED® Silver rating. This project will comply with that policy.

3.0 STAFF ANALYSIS

During the comment period, 1 set of comments was submitted.

The primary purpose of this Public Hearing Report Supplement is to document commentors responses to staff's analysis of comments on the Environmental Evaluation. No comment about about staff's analysis of comments was received.

The comment set addressed a number of continuing concerns about Alternative C, including aesthetics, lighting, runoff, property maintenance, employee conduct, economic impacts, and Green construction.

No comment was received about at Alternative A.

4.0 STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends selection of Alternative A.

APPENDIX A
ORIGINAL COMMENTS

From: Chris Brown (poweredliving) [<mailto:poweredliving@gmail.com>]
Sent: Monday, January 21, 2013 10:23 PM
To: writtentestimony
Subject: Docket Number R12-02, COMMENTS ON LATEST PLANS 01/21/2013

Christopher J. Brown, MT, P.E. (Resident Quinn Street- bordering proposed construction site)
4311 Quinn Street
Capitol Heights, MD 20743
Comments from review of latest plans: 01/2013

Docket R12-02

Concerns: Aesthetics, Runoff, Maintenance, Safety, and replacement of Jobs and humanitarian services, Green construction and facilities; sustainability.

Aesthetics are of concern since vegetation will be removed, and the area currently used for cars to turn around at the end of Quinn Street will be eliminated. I propose that sufficient vegetation be planted to maintain a pleasing appearance at the boundary of the new facility and to discourage anyone from putting graffiti on the new wall. Further, it would be an element of "green" construction and good for the environment. It was discussed that the wall would be painted by local artists at the Community meeting with Metro representatives in 2011. I strongly encourage Metro to engage the community in a plan to discourage graffiti and vandalism of the proposed new wall/site.

Additionally lighting around the boundary or the property would help to discourage loitering at night around the property, and vandalism.

Runoff from the property must be controlled such that residents on Quinn Street are not negatively affected by the construction or the facility after construction. Currently the water table under the properties at the end of Quinn Street rises quickly during intense storming. This leads to basements flooding. Thus it is very important that Metro not externalize the costs of water management on the residents and local government.

Finally, continued maintenance of the new property is of concern. The head groundskeeper has been extremely responsive to community needs to clean and maintain WMATA property on Southern Ave. This has not always been the case. Some managers at the current Southern Ave. facility have been rude at times when residence request WMATA to care for their property; clean it up and cut the grass.

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Currently, the glut of foreclosed properties in Capital Heights is suppressing local property values. Metro's proposed construction and new facility may increase the problem by discouraging local purchase of houses due to increased traffic, noise, reduced parking with no additional benefits to the local community. New amenities that currently not present in the area could mitigate the problems. In Gaithersburg, the gyms are clean; there is yoga, and a variety of good restaurants. Metro could encourage economic growth to meet the needs of their employees; this might mitigate any effects of delayed recovery attributable to expansion.

Finally, is there any Green component to the site? Certain surfaces will increase ground temperatures. In Chicago green roofing is used to reduce fuel costs and is better for the environment. There are a number of green components that can be used especially ground cover. Where is this component of the plan?

Metro has been a reasonably good neighbor, I wish for this relationship to continue to be a mutually beneficial one.

APPENDIX B

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF PUBLIC HEARING REPORT



**Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
Proposed Southern Avenue Bus Garage Replacement
Prince George's County, MD
Docket R12-02**

**DRAFT PUBLIC HEARING STAFF REPORT
AVAILABLE FOR INSPECTION**

Notice is hereby given that the draft staff report for a proposed replacement of the existing Southern Avenue Bus Garage in Prince George's County, MD is available for review and comment from January 15-25, 2013. The document addresses comments on the Environmental Assessment and plans for the proposed replacement of the bus garage received at the public hearing held on December 17, 2012, as well as written comments received during the public comment period. Comments on the draft staff report will be accepted until 5 p.m. on Friday, January 25, 2013. The report is available on-line at www.wmata.com/hearings and during business hours at the following locations:

WMATA
Office of the Secretary
600 Fifth Street, NW, Room 2D-207
Washington, DC 20001
202-962-2511
(Please call in advance to coordinate)

Suitland Community Center
5600 Regency Lane
Forestville, MD 20747
301-736-3518

Fairmount Heights Library
5904 Kolb Street
Fairmount Heights, MD 20743
301-883-2650

Hillcrest Heights Library
2398 Iverson Street
Temple Hills, MD 20748
301-630-4900

Morningside Matthew P. Rosch Municipal Center
6901 Ames Street
Suitland, MD 20746
301-736-2300

Oakcrest Community Center
1300 Capitol Heights Blvd
Capitol Heights, MD 20743
301-736-5355

John E. Howard Community Center
4400 Shell Street
Capitol Heights, MD 20743
301-735-3340

HOW TO SUBMIT WRITTEN COMMENTS

Written statements and exhibits must be received by 5 p.m. on Friday, January 25, 2012 and may be emailed to writtentestimony@wmata.com, or mailed to the Office of the Secretary, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, 600 Fifth Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20001. Alternatively, you may send a fax to 202-962-1133. Please reference the Docket Number R12-02 in your submission. All comments received may be posted, without change, to www.wmata.com/hearings, including any personal information provided.

