

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY
PUBLIC HEARING STAFF REPORT
PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF SILVER SPRING TRANSIT CENTER
RED LINE
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
HEARING NO. 173
DOCKET NO. R-06-3

The Hearing

The Silver Spring Transit Center Compact public hearing was held at 7 p.m. on April 24, 2006 at the Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission's Montgomery Regional Office Auditorium. The hearing was chaired by WMATA Board Member Gordon Linton. Approximately 75 people attended the hearing, 14 witnesses testified, and eight written comments were received. All of the testimony supported the project, but some with qualifications as reported below.

The Project

The Silver Spring Transit Center (SSTC) is to be located on a 6.37-acre site at WMATA's Silver Spring Metrorail station. The SSTC will consist of a three-level structure and surrounding area containing:

- 32 bus bays
- 22 Kiss & Ride parking spaces
- A MARC commuter rail station
- An intercity bus station
- Connections to bicycle trails
- Bicycle storage facilities
- An open space urban park
- A transit store
- A transit police station
- Ancillary WMATA facilities
- Infrastructure to support an intelligent transportation system.

During the construction of the SSTC, an Interim Operations Facility (IOF) will be placed in service to accommodate customers.

In addition to the SSTC, the site is proposed to contain a transit-oriented development that will entail two residential buildings, a hotel, and retail space subject to an agreement currently under negotiation between WMATA and a private sector entity.

Issues and Responses

1 Bicycle access and services

- Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) alignment. This trail links Georgetown, DC to Silver Spring, MD.
 - Testimony: The CCT should have a grade-separated alignment and lead directly into the SSTC, preferably along the railroad right-of-way and a direct connection to the Metropolitan Branch Trail, a proposed trail linking

Washington Union Station to Silver Spring, MD.

- Response: The CCT alignment will be determined as part of the Bi-County Transitway study being conducted by the Maryland Transit Administration. The SSTC has been designed so that there will be a direct link between the SSTC and the CCT.
- Metropolitan Branch Trail (MBT) alignment.
 - Testimony: The MBT should be connected to the Silver Spring street network and to the second and third levels of the SSTC.
 - Response: The project architects have been directed to study the feasibility of bicycle path connections among the MBT, the uppermost level of the SSTC, and the street network.
- Bicycle station. Bicycle stations may include secure bicycle parking, showers, lockers, retail sales, bicycle repair and rental, and food service.
 - Testimony: A bicycle station should be included in the plans.
 - Response: Staff and the architects will investigate the feasibility of incorporating bicycle station space at, or proximate to the SSTC. Staff will also work with the bicycle community to investigate sources of funding outside of the SSTC budget and to identify potential operators.
- Bicycle parking and storage.
 - Testimony: The planned number of bicycle lockers and racks is insufficient to meet prospective demand and is not well located.
 - Response: The architects are examining locations for additional racks and lockers as close as possible to the station entrance, yet not directly in pedestrian paths.
- Sidewalk width.
 - Testimony: Sidewalks along Colesville Road and Wayne Avenue are not wide enough to accommodate both pedestrians and bicycles.
 - Response: The Colesville Road sidewalk is one of several approaches to the Metrorail station entrance from the northeast. Pedestrian traffic will redistribute itself among the routes to minimize congestion. Nevertheless, the architects and engineers will evaluate the feasibility of widening the Colesville Road sidewalk. The Wayne Avenue sidewalk adjacent to the SSTC site is the same as the width of the sidewalk on the next block and there is no reason to change it.
- Bicycle mobility within the SSTC.
 - Testimony: It is difficult to travel between floors with bicycles.
 - Response: The architects have been directed to incorporate bicycle troughs along the stairways, if feasible, for vertical circulation.

2 SSTC design

- Pedestrian safety.
 - Testimony: There are pedestrian-bus conflicts within the transit center.
 - Response: Pedestrian safety is a paramount concern. The current concept plans do not depict the SSTC in sufficient detail to show pedestrian safety

attributes. Forthcoming plans will show features such as barriers, signage, crosswalk markings, generous sight lines, and enhanced lighting, stop signs, and coordinated traffic signals.

- Light and air within the SSTC.
 - Testimony: The interior of the SSTC does not have enough sunlight infiltration and air circulation.
 - Response: The present design is open on the long sides of the structure, allowing light and air to penetrate. The top level of the transit center covers slightly less than half of the middle level, and there is a light and air well between the lower two levels. Forthcoming plans will show reflective ceiling treatments and enhanced interior lighting.
- Appearance.
 - Testimony: The SSTC should have a strong architectural presence, celebrating mass transit and acting as a gateway to Silver Spring.
 - Response: So far, architectural renderings have focused on function, rather than appearance. Further work will produce a design that reflects the importance and unique character of the transit center.
- Site planning.
 - Testimony: The SSTC is designed to fit onto a portion of the available site to accommodate the joint development project.
 - Response: The primary objective of the SSTC is to expand capacity while consolidating the facility into a multi-level structure to reduce walking distances and to minimize exposure to adverse weather conditions. The architects designed the joint development project within the constraints imposed by the size and shape of the parcel and the area required by the SSTC.

3 Interim Operating Facility

- Relocation of bus stops to street locations.
 - Testimony: While the IOF is in operation, pedestrians will have to walk long distances from bus stops to the Metrorail station entrance.
 - Response: Pedestrian routes on the plan have been selected to avoid conflicts with construction activities while minimizing walking distances. Although walking distances technically fit within established guidelines, staff and the architectural/engineering team will continue to pursue methods of improving pedestrian access to the Metrorail station. Following the Compact public hearing, the architectural/engineering team identified a shorter ADA-accessible route from Bonifant Street to the Metrorail station entrance and shuttle service is under study.
- Adverse effect of temporary facilities on existing businesses.
 - Testimony: The locations of bus stops will encourage loitering and increased pedestrian traffic, and may result in diminished safety and security. Utility service might be interrupted during construction.

- Response: Metro Transit Police, the Montgomery County Police Department, and the Silver Spring Urban District will formulate a plan to minimize loitering and enhance security at the sites including increased police presence and increased maintenance and security staffing. Montgomery County has initiated a series of meetings with local businesses to keep them abreast of current activities and resolve issues as they arise. The Silver Spring Regional Services Center will continue to keep the community informed of the project as well.

4 Other related projects

- "Southwest Entrance". A new pedestrian entrance at the southwest side of the Metrorail tracks, along the southeast side of Colesville Road.
 - Testimony: The Southwest Entrance should be opened, preferably prior to the start of construction of the SSTC.
 - Response: The Southwest Entrance is not part of the SSTC, but is worthy of consideration as an independent project. Federal, state, and local officials are working to secure additional funding for this improvement independently of the SSTC.
- Bi-County Transitway (BCT). This proposed line would link New Carrollton and Bethesda via Silver Spring.
 - Testimony: The BCT should be constructed simultaneously with the SSTC to mitigate the bus traffic on the surrounding streets.
 - Response: The BCT is part of a separate project being administered by MTA. The SSTC design reserves a right-of-way for the BCT.

Staff recommendations

- 1 The project architect, under its contract with Montgomery County, must:
 - Study the feasibility of:
 - Establishing a bicycle path connection between the Metropolitan Branch Trail and the uppermost level of the SSTC
 - Establishing additional, and better located, bicycle storage facilities
 - Potential design solutions to widening the Colesville Road sidewalk
 - Incorporating bicycle troughs into the interior stairway system of the SSTC
 - Incorporate into future plans:
 - Pedestrian safety features, enhanced interior illumination, and IOF signage
 - Architectural details that reflect the SSTC's importance as a multimodal transportation center and a gateway to Silver Spring
- 2 WMATA staff must cooperate with public and private entities to:
 - Investigate the feasibility of obtaining bicycle station space and the availability of sources of funding outside of the SSTC budget, and identify potential operators
 - Assist public and private entities in securing funding for the Southwest Entrance
 - Devise plans to address construction, maintenance, safety, and security issues during the construction and operation of the SSTC



(Board Copy)
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
**METRO ELECTRONIC ACTION
DOCUMENT**

IDENTIFICATION			
MEAD ID:	99577	ACTION:	Initiate
AWARD VALUE:	(Not yet awarded)	CONTRACT: (Proposed)	
FUND SOURCES: (View)		CONTRACTOR:	
LAST MODIFIED:	06/02/2006		

DESCRIPTION	
SUBJECT:	Approval of Silver Spring Transit Center Compact Hearing Staff Report
PURPOSE:	To obtain approval by the Real Estate Committee and the WMATA Board of Directors of the Silver Spring Transit Center Compact Public Hearing Staff Report.

ORIGINATION					
INITIATOR			DEPARTMENTAL APPROVAL		
AARON HERTZ on 06/01/2006			Not Approved Yet		
PHONE:	202-962-2108	OFFICE:	LAND	DEPT:	Secretary and Chief of St

COORDINATION (ROUTING)		
OFFICE	NAME	ACTION/DATE
PRMT (7410)	JACKSON, LUCY	Not Reviewed Yet
LAND (7310)	MALASKY, GARY	Approved 06/02/2006
(1120)	Moneme, Emeka	Approved 06/02/2006
COUN (1410)	O'KEEFFE, CAROL	Not Reviewed Yet
PDEC (4110)	SALPEAS, PANAGIOTIS	Not Reviewed Yet
OPAS (3161)	HUGHES, JAMES	Not Reviewed Yet

FINAL APPROVALS	
OFFICE	NAME/ACTION
BEMR	Approved for by Emeka Moneme on 06/02/2006
PLN_DEV_CMTE	PANAGIOTIS SALPEAS (Not Yet Approved)
OPER_CMTE	JAMES HUGHES (Not Yet Approved)
BEMR	Emeka Moneme (Not Yet Approved)
GM	GMGR CEO (Not Yet Approved)
BOARD	BOARD WMATA (Not Yet Approved)



Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
**METRO ELECTRONIC ACTION
DOCUMENT**

NARRATIVE

On December 17, 2004, the WMATA Board of Directors authorized staff to: (1) conduct a public hearing for the Silver Spring Transit Center (SSTC) in accordance with WMATA Compact requirements and (2) release of the Draft Public Hearing Staff Report for public comment, subject to later submission of the Staff Report to the Board for its action.

The SSTC is a cooperative venture of WMATA, the State of Maryland, Montgomery County, Maryland (the Partners), subject to approval by the Federal Transit Administration. A private sector architectural/engineering team composed of the Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Partnership and Parsons Brinckerhoff is designing the SSTC under contract to Montgomery County. In March 2006, after a series of design revisions and value engineering efforts, the architectural/engineering team produced concept plans that satisfied the requirements of the Partners. The SSTC design program features 32 bus bays, 22 Kiss & Ride parking spaces, a MARC commuter rail station, an intercity bus station, connections to bicycle trails, bicycle storage facilities, an urban park, a transit store, a transit police station, infrastructure to support an intelligent transportation system, and ancillary WMATA facilities.

Following the completion of the satisfactory concept plans, WMATA conducted a Compact Public Hearing on April 24, 2006. A total of 22 individuals and organizations testified or presented written comments about the SSTC. While all of those testifying or commenting supported the project, several offered suggestions as to how the transit center design and operations could be improved. The Staff Report sets forth a description of the SSTC and the Interim Operating Facility (IOF) to be used during construction of the SSTC, catalogues and responds to the comments, and offers recommendations as to which comments to incorporate into subsequent design efforts.

ALTERNATIVES

Do not approve the Staff Report. If the Staff Report is not approved, the Federal Transit Administration approval process will be interrupted, and federal funding of the SSTC will be in jeopardy. This course of action is not recommended.

IMPACT ON FUNDING

Montgomery County will be responsible for the design and construction of the IOF and SSTC. Upon the completion and acceptance of the SSTC (and the closing of the IOF), WMATA will assume ownership and absorb all operation and maintenance costs.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Real Estate Committee and the Board of Directors approve the Silver Spring Transit Center Compact Public Hearing Staff Report.



**WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA
TRANSIT AUTHORITY**

**FINAL PUBLIC HEARING
STAFF REPORT**

**PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF
SILVER SPRING TRANSIT CENTER
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

HEARING NO. 173
DOCKET NO. R06-3

June 15, 2006

WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY
FINAL PUBLIC HEARING STAFF REPORT
REVIEW OF PUBLIC HEARING AND STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF SILVER SPRING TRANSIT CENTER
RED LINE
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

HEARING NO. 173
DOCKET NO. R06-3

This report presents a review of the public hearing held on April 24, 2006. It also presents the WMATA staff's recommendations concerning the transit center proposed at the Silver Spring Metrorail Station in Montgomery County, Maryland. Included in this report are the following sections:

- I. Background
- II. Summary of the Public Hearing
- III. Summary of the Presentations
- IV. Supplemental Testimony and Correspondence Submitted for the Record
- V. Compact Article IV, Section 15 - Other Agency Review and Comments
- VI. Responses to Comments Received for the Record
- VII. Staff Recommendations

Appendix A - WMATA Public Hearing Notice

Appendix B - Public Hearing Advertisement

Appendix C - Public Hearing Testimony of WMATA Official

Appendix D - Public Hearing Presentation of Montgomery County Official

I. BACKGROUND

On December 16, 2004 the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's (WMATA) Board of Directors authorized WMATA to hold a public hearing, in accordance with WMATA Compact requirements, for the Silver Spring Transit Center (SSTC). The proposed project is to be located at WMATA's Silver Spring Metrorail station on a 6.37-acre site, 4.0 acres of which is owned by WMATA, 1.42 acres of which is existing right-of-way, and 1.13 acres of which is owned by Montgomery County. The site is bounded by the WMATA tracks on the southwest, Colesville Road on the northwest, Wayne Avenue on the northeast, and Ramsey Avenue and other adjoining properties on the southeast.

The SSTC involves the construction of a three-level structure containing, among other elements, 32 bus bays, 22 Kiss & Ride parking spaces, a MARC commuter rail station, an intercity bus station, connections to bicycle trails, bicycle storage facilities, an open space urban park, a transit store, a transit police station, ancillary WMATA facilities, and infrastructure to support an intelligent transportation system. The SSTC will take the place of, and expand upon, the facilities currently existing on the site. In addition to the SSTC, the site is proposed to contain transit-oriented development that will entail two residential buildings, a hotel, and retail space subject to an agreement currently under negotiation between WMATA and a private sector entity.

The public hearing was held Monday, April 24, 2006 at 7 p.m. at the Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission, Montgomery Regional Office Auditorium, 8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20910. As required by the WMATA Compact, official notice of the public hearing was published in The Washington Post on March 24, 2006 and March 31, 2006. Notices were mailed to property owners and civic associations in the vicinity of the Silver Spring Metrorail station.

The proposed plans were made available for inspection prior to and following the public hearing, during normal business hours, at:

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
Office of Property Development and Management
600 Fifth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Montgomery County, Maryland
Department of Public Works and Transportation
Division of Capital Development
Design Section, 11th Floor
101 Monroe Street
Rockville, MD 20850

Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

Transportation Planning – Room 103

8787 Georgia Avenue

Silver Spring, MD 20910

Silver Spring Regional Center

8435 Georgia Avenue

Silver Spring, MD 20910

Montgomery County Public Library

8901 Colesville Road

Silver Spring, MD 20910

Mid-County Services Center

2424 Reddie Drive

Wheaton, MD 20902

II. SUMMARY OF THE PUBLIC HEARING

The formal public hearing proceedings were convened at 7 p.m., Monday, April 24, 2006. Prior to the hearing, display boards and copies of the public hearing notice were available to the public for their review and comment. The hearing was chaired by WMATA Board Member Gordon Linton. Approximately 75 people attended the hearing.

Mr. Linton explained the public hearing procedure which includes a staff presentation and public testimony. Mr. Linton further explained that the public will have the opportunity to present written testimony until May 4, 2006 and that testimony could be mailed to the Office of the Secretary, WMATA, 600 Fifth Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001, faxed to 202-962-1133, or e-mailed to public-hearing-testimony@wmata.com. He stated that following a review of all testimony, WMATA staff will prepare a report which may recommend changes to the plan based on that testimony. He further explained that the report will be released for a two-week public comment period and that upon the completion of the review process, the WMATA Board of Directors will consider the public hearing record, the staff report, and public comments, and act on the SSTC.

Ms. Elisa Hill, representing WMATA's Joint Development Program, gave the first staff presentation, noting the collaboration among WMATA, Montgomery County, the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) required to develop the plans to be presented at this hearing.

Mr. Bruce Johnston, representing Montgomery County, MD presented a series of slides describing the SSTC and the Interim Operating Facility (IOF) to be used while the SSTC is under construction.

The staff presentations are summarized in Section III of this report.

Following the staff presentations, 14 witnesses testified.

All issues and suggestions raised in testimony that are within the scope of the public hearing are addressed in Section VI of this report.

The public hearing was adjourned at 8:44 p.m.

III. SUMMARY OF THE PRESENTATIONS

Ms. Elisa Hill, Senior Development Specialist, Office of Property Development and Management, WMATA

The public facilities proposed to be built on the site will include an increased number of bus bays for Metrobus and RideOn, intercity bus facilities, a MARC station, a park, improved bicycle and pedestrian connections, and a transit store. The private development, while not the subject of this hearing, will include a minimum of 276 residential units, a 150-room hotel, and 25,000 to 35,000 square feet of retail space. The public will have the opportunity to comment on the private development through the normal approval process administered by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC).

Mr. Bruce Johnston, Chief, Division of Capital Development, Department of Public Works and Transportation, Montgomery County, MD

WMATA, MDOT, MTA, Montgomery County, MD, and Silver Spring Metro, LLC – an entity formed by Foulger Pratt and MidCity Urban, LLC – have been working together on the SSTC project for a number of years. Silver Spring is a key transportation center, and the SSTC is a key piece of property in the redevelopment of Silver Spring. The Silver Spring Metrorail station is one of the busiest stations in Maryland with 25,000 Metrorail riders, 20,000 Metrobus riders, and 12,000 RideOn passengers each day. The majority of the intermodal movements are bus-to-bus transfers. The station is served by 145 buses in the peak hour.

The goals of the SSTC project are:

- Provide a first-class, state-of-the-art transit center with room for growth;
- Provide efficient connections between existing and anticipated modes of transportation (to include bicycle to bus and bicycle to rail connections);
- Strengthen pedestrian connections;
- Create a safe secure, maintainable, and inviting environment; and
- Meet the objectives stated in the adopted Silver Spring Central Business District Sector Plan:
 - Create a varied and active town center with housing, office, and retail development in a pedestrian-friendly environment, enhanced with parks and open spaces;
 - Develop quality open space and amenities
 - Achieve the investment, value, and functional benefits of transit-oriented development; and
 - Maximize the visibility and sunlight for the public spaces.

The development program features a three-level transit center with enhanced Metrorail Red Line access from intra- and inter-city buses, MARC trains, bicycle, and pedestrian ways. The SSTC program includes more bus bays for future growth, vehicular access for Kiss & Ride and taxis, an enhanced urban open space park, improved connections to hiker-biker trails, improved and safer pedestrian access, improved traffic flow, an

intercity bus terminal, a MARC station, and a transit store. The design will accommodate an alignment for the Bi-County Transitway in any of the modes under consideration as well as infrastructure for future information technology such as real-time scheduling.

Under existing conditions, bus traffic enters the property from Wayne Avenue and Ramsey Avenue. There are ongoing conflicts among buses, pedestrians, and other vehicles on Wayne Avenue and Ramsey Avenue. The new SSTC will substantially eliminate these conflicts, resulting in a safer environment for all. The design of the STC takes advantage of the topography of the site to provide entrances at several points, rather than concentrating entrances on Wayne and Ramsey.

The lowest level of the transit center will be on Colesville Road, at Elevation 305. A new bus access point on Colesville Road will lead to an elongated two-way bus loop on the first level with bus bays on either side of the loop. Pedestrian access to this level from the northeast will be through the lower level of the new open space park with directed inviting pedestrian pathways, or via sidewalks on the north and south sides of Colesville Road. A new traffic signal will be installed to control the intersection of Colesville Road and the lower level bus entrance. This signal will also facilitate use of the sidewalks on Colesville Road. Pedestrian circulation within the lower level will occur on platforms on either side and in the middle of the bus loop with clear direction to safe points of access. The interior pedestrian circulation areas will be linked by crosswalks. Vertical circulation will be via a system of elevators, escalators, and stairs located at various points within the transit center. The Metropolitan Branch Trail will feed directly into this level, providing greater access to the Metrorail station. Bicycle racks will be located immediately outside of the station entrance.

Directly above the first level, on the middle deck, at Elevation 335, thirty feet above the lowest level, is the second two-way bus loop. The bus entrance to this level is on Ramsey Avenue. Pedestrians will be able to access this level from the intersection of Wayne and Ramsey Avenues via a Pedestrian breezeway in one of the residential towers and then across the upper level of the new open space park easement. Once in the transit center, pedestrians will circulate through it using a series of crosswalks and the vertical circulation system. The MARC and intercity bus facilities will be at this level, south of the bus loop. Since the top deck covers approximately half of the middle deck, the middle deck will be open to sunlight and air. There will be an open area in the center of the middle level to allow sunlight to penetrate to the level below. Canopies will be provided to shelter the bus stops that will not be under roof. Additionally, the sides of the transit center will be open, allowing sunlight to penetrate into the center's interior, and providing for good ventilation.

Automobile and truck access will occur at the highest level of the transit center, at Elevation 357. The top level will be accessed from Bonifant Street at the corner of Ramsey Avenue and Bonifant Street. This level will be streetscaped and will accommodate automobile traffic including Kiss & Ride, and taxis. Bicycle racks and

lockers will be located along the Metropolitan Branch Trail, which will lead from this elevation down a slope to Elevation 305. The top level will be linked to the lower levels via the vertical circulation system. A paved walkway and a lawn will be constructed at the southern end of this level, directly over the MARC and intercity bus facilities. The proposed hotel and one of the proposed residential towers will have direct connections to the top level of the transit center.

Bicycle access to the Silver Spring Metrorail station will be dramatically improved with a convergence of local rails directly to the station. The Capital Crescent Trail will be connected to the transit center from the west via Colesville Road. The Silver Spring Green Trail runs along Wayne Avenue, but is not now linked to the Silver Spring Metrorail station. Under the proposed plan, the link will be established between Colesville Road and Ramsey Avenue. Connections will also be made to the Bonifant and Dixon Trails, linking the Metrorail station to other parts of downtown Silver Spring.

The corridor between the WMATA tracks and the transit center will be reserved for the Bi-County Transitway.

A new, attractive open space park easement will replace the existing open space easement. The existing open space easement consists primarily of hardscape features such as concrete sidewalks, stairs, and planters. At one time there was a water feature, but that was filled in a long time ago. The new open space park easement will be relocated to a more visible and accessible portion of the site at the intersection of Wayne Avenue and Colesville Road. It will be a far more inviting facility that will truly serve as open space, enhancing the urban experience. The lower level of this two-level 0.8-acre facility will be more urban in character with pathways, seating areas, functional art, and a possible water feature. The upper level will have a softscape character with plantings, functional art, pathways, and other features. Steps will connect the two levels.

The Interim Operating Facility (IOF) will be used during construction of the SSTC. All bus operations will be moved one block east to curbside locations along Wayne Avenue, Dixon Avenue, and Bonifant Street. WMATA buses will stop on Wayne Avenue, with a few stopping on Dixon Avenue. RideOn buses will stop on Dixon Avenue and Bonifant Street. Kiss & Ride and midday parking will be provided in the Bonifant Street Garage, and disabled parking will be provided in the Dixon Avenue Garage. A walkway will be constructed from the existing MARC station to the corner of Ramsey Avenue and Bonifant Street. Walkways will also be installed along Wayne Avenue to the bus stops and to protect landscaped areas along the curb. A walkway along Colesville Road will be provided as part of the IOF along with a right-turn lane and a median in Colesville Road. Some utility work will be performed along Colesville Road as part of the IOF construction.

Prior to transferring bus operations onto the IOF, WMATA and Montgomery County will actively engage in public outreach which will include dissemination of information about the construction timetable and the temporary locations of the Metrobus and RideOn bus

stops in the area of the IOF. Additionally, these efforts will be coordinated with the Silver Spring Regional Center and MTA (the operator of the MARC rail service), who will cooperate in disseminating the necessary information.

IV. SUPPLEMENTAL TESTIMONY AND CORRESPONDENCE SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

A. Testimony By Witnesses

Mr. Gary Stith, Director, Silver Spring Regional Center of Montgomery County (speaking on behalf of Montgomery County Executive Douglas M. Duncan)

The County Executive recognizes the outstanding cooperation among WMATA, MDOT, MTA, and the private developers that resulted in the plan for this complex project. The project is an example of a successful public-private partnership that enhances the community for years to come.

The design accommodates the different needs of each participant and will serve Silver Spring into the future by bringing together all of the transportation modes and services located throughout Silver Spring into one multimodal center: (1) buses – Metrobus, RideOn, MTA Regional Commuter Bus, Van-Go Shuttle, intercity buses, and the University of Maryland shuttle; (2) rail – Metrorail and MARC; (3) Kiss & Ride and taxi spaces; (4) capacity for an intelligent transportation system; (5) a multimodal transit store; and (6) accommodation for the Bi-County Transitway, connections to hiker-biker trails, and open space replacement and enhancement. The improvements will nearly double the capacity of the existing facility while mitigating traffic congestion and pedestrian-vehicular conflicts.

The Silver Spring Transit Center (SSTC) plan is consistent with the Silver Spring Central Business District Sector Plan and facilitates and supports Montgomery County's policy of concentrating higher-density development at transit facilities. Since the Metrorail station opened in 1978, Silver Spring has had extensive growth, and more development is under construction or planned. This facility is important in meeting the future needs of Silver Spring, Montgomery County, and the State of Maryland. In order to ensure that federal funding is not lost, the project needs to move forward and stay on schedule.

County Executive Duncan asks the WMATA Board of Directors to act favorably on this project.

Mr. Joel Ryerson

Pedestrian safety, particularly jaywalking, is a concern. The proposed crosswalks are better than the current condition.

The canopy at the station entrance is a good feature.

This transcript of this hearing should be on the Internet.

Mr. Peter Gray, Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail

The Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail recommends that the SSTC design include: (1) a direct and grade-separated trail alignment for the Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) into the transit center (the CSX right-of-way is the best potential alignment; an at-grade alignment along Second Avenue is undesirable); (2) a bicycle station; and (3) secure bicycle parking.

The CCT is the most heavily used trail in the region. Its design in Silver Spring must preserve the qualities that make it successful elsewhere (e.g., 500 users per peak hour in Bethesda). The trail could bring benefits to Silver Spring, helping to provide an improved pedestrian environment, increasing transit ridership, assisting in the redevelopment of downtown Silver Spring, and providing recreational benefits.

The CCT's success in the Bethesda area is due largely to its separation of the trail from motor vehicle traffic, and this feature should be replicated in Silver Spring. Of greatest importance is that the CCT have a direct connection to the Metropolitan Branch Trail (MBT), free of motor vehicle conflicts. The CSX-WMATA alignment has the potential to accomplish this. The December 2004 "Draft Transit Center Environmental Assessment" and the "4F Evaluation" show space reserved on this right-of-way for the bicycle trail, but do not show its specific alignment pending the determination of the Bi-County Transitway alignment.

Although the chokepoint at the Metro Plaza Building represents a design challenge, the railroad right-of-way is the only route that meets the criteria of directness and separation from motor vehicles that are essential to the trail's success. The Second Avenue alignment would require bicycles to cross numerous busy streets and possibly use the sidewalk on Colesville Road to connect to the MBT and the SSTC.

The Colesville Road sidewalk is too narrow to support a regional off-road bicycle trail, and cyclists would have to dismount and walk along Colesville Road. The "Silver Spring Central Business District Master Plan" recommends an off-road bicycle route along the south side of Colesville Road to connect several bicycle trails serving Silver Spring.

The SSTC plan diverges in important ways from the master plan with respect to access from the bicycle trails.

It is important to include enough bicycle parking in the design and to support the subsidization of a bicycle station.

Mr. Eric Gilliland, Director, Washington Area Bicyclists' Association

From the standpoint of the Washington Area Bicyclists' Association (WABA), the most important aspect of this project is the connection between the CCT and the MBT. This feature has not been well publicized. The best connection is the route described in the 2004 "Draft Transit Center Environmental Assessment," the route along the CSX-WMATA right-of-way. This route would align with the Bi-County Transitway and provide

a safe way to cross Colesville Road. WABA recommends that as plans move forward for the SSTC and the Bi-County Transitway, every effort be made to preserve a grade-separated crossing of the CCT over Colesville Road. The link between the CCT and the MBT is the highest priority.

The proposed 20-foot wide sidewalk on the south side of Colesville Road is inadequate to handle pedestrians and bicycles, particularly considering the area taken up by streetscaping. The “Silver Spring Central Business District Master Plan” calls for an off-road route along the south side of Colesville Road to connect the SSTC and various bicycle routes along East-West Highway and the Silver Spring Green Trail. The sidewalk should be widened to 30 feet to provide an eight-foot-wide bicycle trail separate from the pedestrian way.

The plan does not take into account growth in bicycle traffic. More bicycle racks and lockers are needed. Short-term bicycle racks need to be added in sheltered high-traffic areas. Bicycle lockers should be added at the north end of the station.

The MBT should be connected to the Silver Spring street network at the south end of the transit center, at Bonifant and Ripley, by extending and widening the sidewalk on the east side of the Kiss & Ride area.

The internal mobility of the SSTC must be improved for bicyclists. There is no direct connection between the MBT and the second and third levels of the SSTC. Bicycle troughs along the staircases, as implemented in WMATA’s New York Avenue Metrorail station, would be an inexpensive and effective solution.

A bicycle station, providing secure overnight parking, basic repair services, and changing facilities would encourage bicycle commuting and transit ridership.

Mr. Richard Reis

The proposed number of bicycle racks and lockers is inadequate.

The link between the CCT and the station has not yet been incorporated into the design.

A bicycle station should be included, perhaps within the transit store. The bicycle station should have secure bicycle parking; showers and lockers would be assets, but showers might be dispensable, and the bicycle station should sell bicycles and accessories, have repair and rental facilities; and include a snack bar.

Mr. Dale Tibbits

For the last few years since the joint development been in negotiations, the process has not been public and now the public has been given a finished product to comment on. The transit center has been shoehorned into half of the site. How well does the joint development project adhere to WMATA's goals and standards? Will the revenues help perpetuate the system?

There are pedestrian-bus conflicts within the transit center.

The Colesville Road sidewalk is not wide enough.

The direct access from the MBT is a good feature, but the CCT should also have direct access.

Locating bicycle racks at the perimeters leaves bicycles unprotected from theft.

The entrance on the southwest side of the railroad right-of-way (Southwest Entrance) should be opened.

The designers should continue to consider sunlight and air issues.

Mr. Webb Smedley, Chair, Coalition to Build the Inner Purple Line

The Coalition to Build the Inner Purple Line (CBIPL) supports light rail transit connecting Bethesda, Silver Spring, College Park, and New Carrollton and the completion of the CCT between Bethesda and Silver Spring and appreciates that the SSTC design includes space for light rail and bicycle trail alignments. The CBIPL would like to see these linkages constructed at the same time as the SSTC, but recognizes the importance of avoiding further delay.

The anticipated doubling of bus traffic into downtown Silver Spring might exceed the capacity of local streets, and diesel buses contribute to air pollution. A light rail connection would mitigate these issues.

The bicycle store could be part of the amenity package M-NCPPC will require the private sector development to provide.

Mr. Darian Unger

The plan downgrades the current bicycle facilities. It lacks a bicycle station and lockers near the Metrorail station entrance. Bicycle racks do not provide sufficient security. More lockers are desirable on both the north and south sides of the transit center, and they should be close to the Metrorail station entrance.

The sidewalks on Wayne Avenue and Colesville Road are not wide enough to accommodate pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

The interim plans require pedestrians to walk long distances from the bus stops to the Metrorail station entrance. The passageways should be shielded from construction, require few detours, and include signage.

The comment period for the “Draft Staff Report” of this hearing is insufficient to allow the Silver Spring Citizens’ Advisory Board to prepare comments. The Board meets monthly and the next meeting is four days after the deadline for comments, so it is requested that the comment period be extended.

Ms. Barbara Sanders

The 20-foot Colesville sidewalk width is inadequate for bicycles and pedestrians; it should be 30 feet wide. Although the private development is not part of this hearing, the first floor of the hotel should be set back.

Pedestrian-bus conflicts within the transit center are a concern. Pedestrians will not necessarily use the paths designed for pedestrian use.

The private development should be designed so as to allow more light into the covered areas of the transit center. The amount of light in the transit center could be increased by adding skylights in the upper levels.

The IOF needs significant improvements; the design requires a 3-block walk to transfer from bus to rail or rail to bus. To improve this situation, buses could discharge passengers on Second Avenue at the north side of the station.

The slow pace of decisions regarding the Inner Purple Line and bicycle trail along it is disappointing. The Inner Purple Line is needed to mitigate the effects of bus traffic on downtown Silver Spring.

Pedestrians are the most important patron of the transit center, and the plans should minimize inconveniences to them during the construction phase. A delay for redesign is not recommended, but we need to work together to include the constructive suggestions made tonight.

Mr. Henry Odeniran

The transit center should have a strong architectural presence, celebrating mass transit. The Metrorail station entrance must be designed as a gateway into Silver Spring.

The private development, which is under review by M-NCPPC, should have a greater setback, and the office component should be reinstated.

The Southwest Entrance should be opened to accommodate riders approaching the station from the west, and the nearly 30-year old Metrorail station should be redesigned.

It is positive that the design accommodates Purple Line alignments.

The private development has been designed to be seamlessly integrated into the transit center, and it is important to include moderate- and low-income residents in the homeownership opportunities here at a rate above the minimum 12.5 percent required by Montgomery County. Residential height and density should be increased to allow a greater number of moderately-priced dwelling units.

Ms. Jane Redicker, President, Greater Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce

The Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce supports expediting the development of the SSTC. The Chamber is confident that the transit center will effectively serve the needs of bus and rail commuters, bicyclists, and pedestrians, and is pleased that the plan includes private development.

Businesses adjacent to the site will be adversely affected during construction of the SSTC, and WMATA must take steps to mitigate this adverse impact. WMATA must assure that the area is secure and that congestion is minimized. It might be possible to divert some buses to other Metrorail stations.

WMATA should move forward with opening the Southwest Entrance.

Ms. Ginny Hardesty, Vice Chair, Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee

The existing facility is exceeding its capacity and is creating congestion on Wayne Avenue. Pedestrian-bus conflicts make walking difficult. Additional capacity located in one facility is vital to Silver Spring's redevelopment. The attractive design of the transit center and the location of the park at the corner of Wayne Avenue and Colesville Road will create an improved gateway to Silver Spring. The transit center and private development will become an example of urban transit-oriented development. Since delays in the project could jeopardize federal funding and its construction will cause disruption, the project should be completed as soon as possible.

The Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee asks the WMATA Board of Directors to approve this project and authorize its staff to proceed in a timely manner with Montgomery County, MTA, and the developer so as to keep the project on schedule.

Aaron Klein

The project should include opening the Southwest Entrance; it would be heavily used and the cost is small compared to the cost of the project.

Ms. Barbara Henry, State and Local Government Relations and Public Policy, Discovery Channel

Discovery supports the swift and efficient completion of the transit center. Transit access is extremely important to Discovery.

Discovery will be the most severely affected business in Silver Spring during the construction of the SSTC, and it is concerned about the two-year relocation of bus traffic onto three city blocks, the major block being the one adjacent to the Discovery building. Specific concerns are the maintenance costs caused by increased pedestrian traffic and the potential interruption of Internet service and electricity or sewer back-ups due to utility work under the streets. Project managers must communicate with Discovery throughout the process to minimize disruption and pain. Discovery hopes to handle these issues with WMATA staff and appropriate Montgomery County agencies.

It would be appropriate to open the Southwest Entrance prior to construction of the SSTC.

B. Correspondence Submitted For The Record

Mr. Richard Reis (e-mail received 4/28/06)

The number of bicycle racks and lockers do not meet today's needs. The proposed locations are unmonitored and unprotected from the elements. More lockers are needed at the north end of the station.

The MBT should be connected to the Silver Spring street network.

The proposed connection between the Wayne Avenue Green Trail and the East-West Highway trail would cause cyclists to dismount and walk.

The CCT should be kept off public streets.

The SSTC should include a bicycle station. It could be located in an expanded transit center or in a planned retail area.

Mr. Steven Smith (e-mail received 5/1/06)

The connections between the transit center and the surrounding bicycle trails are insufficient.

The sidewalk on Colesville Road is not wide enough.

There are not enough bicycle racks.

Mr. James S. Polk, Chair, Silver Spring Transportation Management District Advisory District (letter received 5/4/06)

The Silver Spring Transportation Management District Advisory District (SSTMD) is concerned about safety and security due to loitering and increased pedestrian traffic on Wayne Avenue and Dixon Street during the construction of the SSTC.

Traffic impacts of the SSTC and the IOF must be mitigated on surrounding streets and intersections, particularly Wayne Avenue between Colesville Road and Georgia Avenue and the intersection of Bonifant Street and Georgia Avenue.

The sidewalk on Colesville Road in front of the proposed hotel is too narrow.

Mr. Dale Tibbits (e-mail received 5/4/06)

This e-mail reiterated the points Mr. Tibbits made at the hearing. It also stated that the architectural renderings were uninspiring.

C. Correspondence Submitted During the Public Comment Period for the Draft Staff Report

Emmett R. Heltzel, P.E., Assistant State Location and Design Engineer, Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Transportation (fax received 5/25/06)

The project has no measurable impacts on Virginia commuters or Virginia projects.

Ms. Debbie Spielberg, Chair, Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board (fax received 5/26/06)

The Colesville Road sidewalk should be widened to 30 feet.

A bicycle station and additional bicycle lockers should be included. The lockers should be close to the Metrorail station entrances.

The plan should minimize pedestrian-bus conflicts.

The connection to the Metropolitan Branch Trail should be improved.

Bicycle access between levels should be improved.

The Southwest Entrance should be opened.

Ms. Julie Siegel (e-mail received 5/30/06)

The plan should include a bicycle station.

The plan should include more bicycle racks and lockers, and they should be better located.

The Metropolitan Branch Trail should be designed to connect the trail to the street network.

Cyclists must dismount to use the Wayne Avenue Green Trail connection.

The Colesville Road sidewalk should be widened.

Mr. Mark Foster (e-mail received 5/30/06)

The SSTC should include a bicycle station.

V. COMPACT ARTICLE VI, SECTION 15 - OTHER AGENCY REVIEW AND COMMENTS

Copies of the public hearing notices were sent to state, regional and local agencies. No additional comments were received.

VI. RESPONSES TO ISSUES RECEIVED FOR THE RECORD

This section of this report presents a summary of the issues raised in the testimony at the public hearing and during the public comment period. The staff has prepared a response for each issue raised regarding the subject of the public hearing, the proposed construction of the Silver Spring Transit Center. The pertinent issues raised are as follows:

A. Capital Crescent Trail Alignment

Mr. Gray The CCT should have a grade-separated alignment and lead directly into the SSTC, preferably along the railroad right-of-way. The CCT should have a direct connection to the Metropolitan Branch Trail.

Mr. Gilliland From the standpoint of the Washington Area Bicyclists' Association, the most important aspect of this project is the connection between the CCT and the MBT. The best connection is along the railroad right-of-way.

Mr. Reis
(testimony) The SSTC design does not show a link between the CCT and the station.

(correspondence) The CCT should not be on public streets.

Mr. Tibbits
(testimony &
correspondence) The CCT should have direct access.

Mr. Smith The connections between the bicycle trails and the transit center are insufficient.

Response:

The CCT alignment will be determined as part of the Bi-County Transitway project and is currently under study by MTA. The CCT master plan alignment is along the railroad tracks, and the SSTC plan has been designed so that there will be a direct link between the SSTC and the CCT under the master plan or other alignments.

B. Metropolitan Branch Trail Alignment

Mr. Gilliland	The MBT should be connected to the Silver Spring street network at the south end of the transit center. There is no direct connection between the second and third levels of the SSTC and the MBT.
Mr. Reis (correspondence)	The MBT should be connected to the Silver Spring Street network.
Mr. Smith	The connections between the bicycle trails and the transit center are insufficient.
Ms. Spielberg	The connection to the MBT should be improved.
Ms. Siegel	The MBT should be designed to connect the trail to the street network

Response:

The project architects have been directed to study the feasibility of making a bicycle path connection between the MBT south of the transit center and the uppermost level of the SSTC. This alignment would allow a connection onto the Bonifant Street Trail which is part of the planned bicycle path network in the Silver Spring Central Business District. The SSTC will incorporate this bicycle path connection if it is feasible.

C. Bicycle Station

Mr. Gray	It is important to support the subsidization of a bicycle station.
Mr. Gilliland	A bicycle station would encourage bicycle commuting and transit ridership.
Mr. Reis (testimony)	A bicycle station should be included in the plans, possibly within the transit store.
Mr. Reis (correspondence)	The bicycle station could be incorporated into an expanded transit center or the planned retail area.
Mr. Smedley	The bicycle station could be part of the amenity package M-NCPPC will require the private sector development to provide.
Mr. Unger	The plan lacks a bicycle station.

Ms. Spielberg	A bicycle station should be included.
Ms. Siegel	The plan should include a bicycle station.
Mr. Foster	The SSTC should include a bicycle station.

Response:

There are significant financial and physical impediments to building and operating a bicycle station. The project budget does not include funding for this use. Estimates of potential revenues and operating expenses have not been made. Nevertheless, Montgomery County staff, WMATA staff, and the project architects will investigate the feasibility of obtaining bicycle station space in the joint development project, other commercial space proximate to the transit center, or other areas within or near the SSTC site. Staff will also work with the bicycle community to investigate the availability of sources of funding outside of the SSTC budget and to identify potential operators.

D. Bicycle Parking and Storage

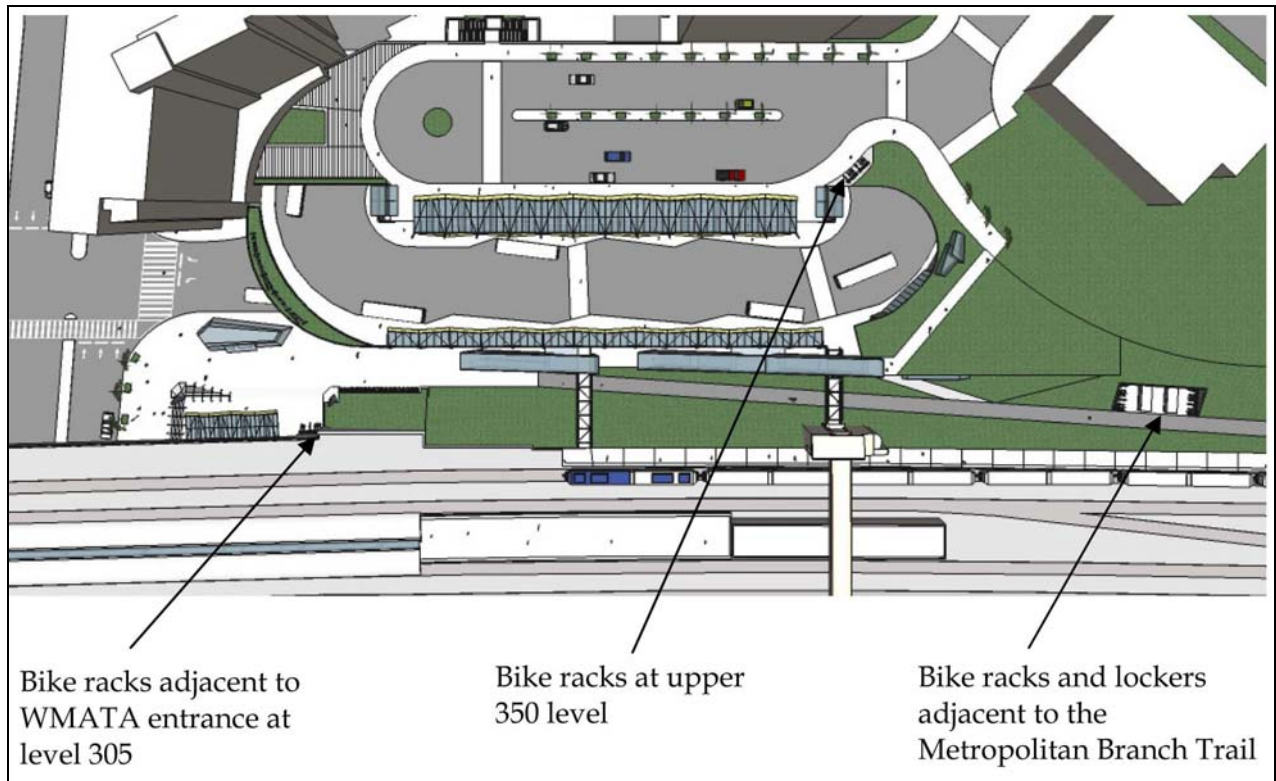
Mr. Gray	The transit center should include secure and sufficient bicycle parking.
Mr. Gilliland	More bicycle racks and lockers are needed. Racks should be sheltered and located in high-traffic areas. Lockers are needed at the north end of the station.
Mr. Reis (testimony)	The proposed number of racks and lockers is inadequate.
(correspondence)	The proposed bicycle parking and storage locations are unmonitored and unprotected from the elements. More lockers are needed at the north end of the station.
Mr Tibbits (testimony & correspondence)	Locating bicycle racks at the perimeters leaves them unprotected from theft.
Mr. Unger	The plan lacks bicycle lockers near the Metrorail station entrance. Lockers should be located on the north and south sides of the station. Bicycle racks do not provide sufficient security.
Mr. Smith	There are not enough bicycle racks.

Ms. Spielberg Additional bicycle lockers should be included and should be close to the Metrorail station entrances.

Ms. Siegel The plan should include more bicycle racks and lockers, and they should be better located.

Response:

In locating bicycle parking and storage facilities, a balance has to be reached between maximizing the proximity to the Metrorail station entrance and impeding pedestrian access. The project architects are examining locations for additional racks and lockers on the southeast and southwest sides of the station. The objective is to define bicycle storage areas that will be as close as possible to the station entrance and sufficiently close to well-traveled areas in order to provide security, yet not directly in pedestrian paths. Some of the areas under consideration are shown in the drawing below.



E. Colesville Road Pedestrian and Bicycle Access

Mr. Gray The Colesville Road sidewalk is too narrow to support the master plan-recommended off-road bicycle trail that would link several bicycle trails serving Silver Spring.

Mr. Gilliland	The Colesville Road sidewalk should be widened to 30 feet to accommodate pedestrians and the bicycle connections to the East-West Highway trail and the Silver Spring Green Trail.
Mr Tibbits (testimony & correspondence)	The Colesville Road sidewalk is not wide enough.
Mr. Unger	The sidewalk on Colesville Road cannot accommodate pedestrian and bicycle traffic.
Ms. Sanders	The Colesville Road sidewalk should be increased from 20 feet to 30 feet by increasing the setback of the first floor of the hotel.
Mr. Odeniran	The private development should have a greater setback.
Mr. Reis (correspondence)	The proposed connection between the Wayne Avenue Green Trail and the East-West Highway trail would cause cyclists to dismount and walk.
Mr. Smith	The sidewalk on Colesville Road is not wide enough.
Mr. Polk	The sidewalk in front of the hotel is too narrow.
Ms. Spielberg	The Colesville Road sidewalk should be widened to 30 feet.
Ms. Siegel	The Colesville Road sidewalk should be widened.

Response:

The Colesville Road sidewalk is one of several pedestrian approaches to the Metrorail station entrance from the northeast. Others are through the lower level of the new park, through the lowest level of the transit center to the station entrance (under shelter), through the upper level of the new park, and through the middle level of the transit center. If the Colesville Road sidewalk becomes too congested, pedestrian traffic will redistribute itself among the alternate routes to minimize congestion. Nevertheless, the project architects and engineers will evaluate the feasibility of two potential design solutions to widening the Colesville Road sidewalk: (1) setting the first floor of the hotel back several feet, and (2) investigating the elimination or shortening of the proposed right turn lane on northbound Colesville Road south of Wayne Avenue and using the space gained to widen the sidewalk. The second solution will have to be supported by traffic analysis, the Maryland State Highway Administration, and Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T) to be considered as a viable option.

F. Wayne Avenue Pedestrian and Bicycle Access

Mr. Unger The sidewalk on Wayne Avenue cannot accommodate pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

Ms. Siegel Cyclists must dismount to use the Wayne Avenue Green Trail connection.

Response:

The width of the sidewalk on the south side of Wayne Avenue sidewalk in the block between Colesville Road and Ramsey Avenue is the same as the width of the sidewalk on the south side of Wayne Avenue between Ramsey and Georgia Avenues. There is no reason to change the width of the sidewalk in the block in front of the residential tower.

G. Bicycle Accessibility of the SSTC

Mr. Gilliland The internal mobility of the transit center must be improved for bicyclists. An effective solution would be to provide bicycle troughs along the stairways.

Ms. Spielberg Bicycle access between levels should be improved.

Response

The project architects have been directed to incorporate bicycle troughs, if feasible, as suggested for vertical circulation.

H. SSTC Pedestrian Safety

Mr. Ryerson Pedestrian safety, particularly jaywalking, is a concern.

Mr. Tibbits
(testimony &
correspondence) There are pedestrian-bus conflicts within the transit center.

Ms. Sanders Pedestrian-bus conflicts within the transit center are a concern. Pedestrians will use other paths than the designated walkways.

Ms. Spielberg The plan should minimize pedestrian-bus conflicts.

Response:

Pedestrian safety is a paramount concern for all of the entities involved in the design, construction, and operation of the IOF and the SSTC. Although not included on the “Concept Plans” used for the purpose of describing the project in general terms to allow the public to make comments, the forthcoming “Design Development” drawings and specifications will incorporate features to inhibit pedestrian crossings in undesignated areas and encourage crossings in designated areas. These features include barriers, signage, and crosswalk markings. Other design elements to enhance pedestrian safety will include generous sight lines, traffic controls (stop signs and stop lights), and enhanced lighting. Note that traffic signals at the Colesville Road entrance will be coordinated to optimize pedestrian crossing time and to provide warning of other movements at this intersection.

I. Adequacy of Light and Air Within the SSTC

Mr. Tibbits (testimony & correspondence) The designers should continue to consider sunlight and air issues.

Ms. Sanders The private development should be designed to allow more light and air into the transit center. Skylights should be added to the upper levels of the transit center.

Response:

The present design is open on the southwest and northeast sides, the long sides of the floorplan, allowing light and air to penetrate from the sides of the structure. The top level of the transit center covers slightly less than half of the middle level, and the design incorporates a light and air well between the middle and lowest levels. Design elements to be included in the Design Development drawings and specifications, such as reflective ceiling treatments and enhanced interior lighting, will augment natural daylight and improve visibility at night.

J. Southwest Entrance

Mr. Tibbits (testimony & correspondence) The Southwest Entrance should be opened.

Mr. Odeniran The Southwest Entrance should be opened and related station improvements should be made.

Ms. Redicker WMATA should move forward with opening the Southwest Entrance.

- Mr. Klein The project should include opening the Southwest Entrance.
- Ms. Henry The Southwest Entrance should be opened prior to the start of construction of the SSTC.
- Ms. Spielberg The Southwest Entrance should be opened.

Response:

The Southwest Entrance is not part of the SSTC project, but is worthy of consideration as an independent project. Federal, state, and local officials are working to secure additional funding for this improvement. This funding will continue to be pursued independently of the SSTC project.

K. Bi-County Transitway Alignment

- Mr. Smedley A light rail system should be constructed at the same time as the SSTC and would mitigate the effects of increased bus traffic on the surrounding streets.
- Ms. Sanders The Inner Purple Line is needed to mitigate the effects of bus traffic on downtown Silver Spring.

Response:

The Bi-County Transitway is part of a separate project being administered by MTA. The SSTC design reserves a right-of-way which may be used by the Bi-County Transitway.

L. Interim Operating Facility Pedestrian Issues

- Mr. Unger Pedestrians will have to walk long distances from bus stops to the Metrorail station entrance. The passages should be shielded from construction, and the routes should require few detours and have adequate signage.
- Ms. Sanders The current design requires passengers transferring between bus and rail modes to traverse three blocks by foot. Discharging bus passengers at the north side of the station on Second Avenue would improve this situation.
- Mr. Polk Loitering and increased pedestrian traffic on Wayne Avenue and Dixon Street may result in diminished safety and security.

Response:

Although walking distances technically fit within established guidelines, staff and the architectural/engineering team will continue to pursue methods of improving pedestrian access to the Metrorail station during SSTC construction. Following the Compact public hearing, the architectural/engineering team identified a shorter ADA-accessible route from Bonifant Street to the Metrorail station entrance. At the present time, various types of shuttle services are under study.

Prior to developing the Concept Plans, staff examined the feasibility of establishing bus stops on Second Avenue and rejected it for several reasons, among them are: (1) the steep grade of Second Avenue poses problems in the winter and is not ADA-accessible; (2) eastbound buses starting on the upgrade would present a noise problem for residents of the homes on Second Avenue; (3) short RideOn buses currently using Second Avenue would be augmented by larger Metrobuses, adversely affecting this residential area.

Passageways will be sheltered from construction activities and well-lighted.

The pedestrian routes have been selected to avoid pedestrian conflicts with construction activities while minimizing walking distances.

Staff and the design team are developing a signage package that will direct customers from bus to bus, bus to rail, and rail to bus.

Prior to the implementation of the IOF, Metro Transit Police, the Montgomery County Police Department, and the Silver Spring Urban District will formulate a plan to minimize loitering and enhance security at the sites. The plan will include increased police presence and increased maintenance and security staffing.

M. Other Interim Operating Facility Issues

Ms. Redicker Businesses adjacent to the IOF will be adversely affected. WMATA must make sure that the area is secure and congestion is minimized. Diverting some buses to other stations might mitigate the adverse effects of the IOF.

Ms. Henry The temporary relocation of many of the bus stops to an area adjacent to Discovery will require Discovery to incur increased maintenance costs. Utility service might be interrupted during construction.

Mr. Polk Traffic impacts on surrounding streets must be mitigated.

Response:

DPW&T has initiated a series of monthly meetings with Discovery to keep Discovery abreast of current activities and resolve issues as they arise. At the first meeting, DPW&T reviewed the results of the test pits dug to determine the location of underground utilities. DPW&T also meets with the Chamber of Commerce and will meet with other interested groups as they desire. The Silver Spring Regional Services Center has also kept the Urban Maintenance District and members of the community apprised of the SSTC project. DPW&T will continue to sponsor coordination meetings throughout the design and construction of the project. The Silver Spring Regional Services Center will continue to keep the Silver Spring community informed of the project as well.

N. Architectural Design

Mr. Odeniran The transit center should have a strong architectural presence, celebrating mass transit and acting as a gateway to Silver Spring.

Mr. Tibbits The architectural renderings are uninspiring.
(correspondence)

Response:

At the present time, architectural renderings have focused on function, and further work will describe appearance in greater detail. Among the appearance items to be stressed are a design that reflects the importance and unique character of the transit center and lighting.

O. Site Planning

Mr. Tibbits The transit center has been shoehorned into half of the site to
(testimony & accommodate the joint development project.
correspondence)

Response:

Primary objectives of the transit center are to achieve expanded capacity while consolidating the facility. Consolidating the transit center into a multi-level structure enhances the pedestrian environment by reducing walking distances for bus to rail and bus to bus transfers and by minimizing exposure to adverse weather conditions. The architects have designed the joint development project within the constraints imposed by the size and shape of the parcel and the area required by the transit center.

VII. STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

The staff has considered the testimony received for the public hearing record. The recommendations that follow address the pertinent concerns raised during the public hearing process.

Staff recommends approval of the conceptual plans for the Silver Spring Transit Center subject to the following:

1. The project architect, under its contract with Montgomery County, must study the feasibility of establishing a bicycle path connection between the Metropolitan Branch Trail and the uppermost level of the SSTC;
2. WMATA staff must continue to cooperate with public and private entities to: (1) investigate the feasibility of obtaining bicycle station space in the joint development project, other commercial space proximate to the transit center, or other areas within the SSTC site; (2) investigate the availability of sources of funding outside of the SSTC budget; and (3) identify potential bicycle station operators;
3. The project architect, under its contract with Montgomery County, must study the feasibility of establishing additional, and better located, bicycle storage facilities;
4. The project architects and engineers, under their contracts with Montgomery County, must evaluate the feasibility of potential design solutions to widening the Colesville Road sidewalk;
5. The project architect, under its contract with Montgomery County, must evaluate the feasibility of incorporating bicycle troughs into the interior stairway system of the SSTC;
6. The project architect, under its contract with Montgomery County, must specify pedestrian safety features, enhanced interior illumination, and IOF signage in the SSTC Design Development package;
7. The project architect, under its contract with Montgomery County, must display architectural details that reflect the SSTC's importance as a multimodal transportation center and a gateway to Silver Spring;
8. WMATA staff must cooperate fully with federal, state, and local governmental entities in securing funding for the Southwest Entrance; and
9. WMATA staff must cooperate fully with other public and private entities in devising plans to address construction, maintenance, safety, and security issues during the construction and operation of the SSTC.