

## Purple Line Briefing

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### Description

Staff will provide the Planning Board an update on the Purple Line, Capital Crescent Trail, and Silver Spring Green Trail Projects, including:

- the major outstanding issues and updates
- staff's review of the concept plan (15 to 20% engineering design)
- the public review process going forward

No actions are requested.

### Summary

The Preliminary Engineering phase of the Purple Line began in summer 2011 and is expected to be completed in summer 2013. At that time the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will issue a Record of Decision (ROD), which signals formal federal approval of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). The current schedule is to start final design in fall 2013, start construction in 2015, and to begin service in 2020. This is contingent upon securing funding. A recent cost estimate for the Purple Line estimated a capital cost of \$2.2 billion (year of expenditure). The project is proposed to be funded evenly by the state (50%) and the federal government (50%), but the state does not currently have a funding mechanism.

The current programmed funding level for the Purple Line is sufficient to complete Preliminary Engineering and the FEIS, to start final design, and to initiate the property acquisition process. State funding programmed beyond FY 13 would be reallocated, however, if a state funding source is not identified in the current session of the Maryland General Assembly.

The next step will be the mandatory referral shortly after the Purple Line ROD, which is expected to be issued in summer 2013. The mandatory referral will simultaneously review the Purple Line, Capital Crescent Trail adjacent to the light rail, Bethesda South Entrance, and the Silver Spring Green Trail. The

mandatory referral of the Capital Crescent Trail surface alignment would be conducted separately as it is a project that will be constructed by the County and/or private development projects.

## **SUMMARY OF MAJOR ISSUES AND UPDATES**

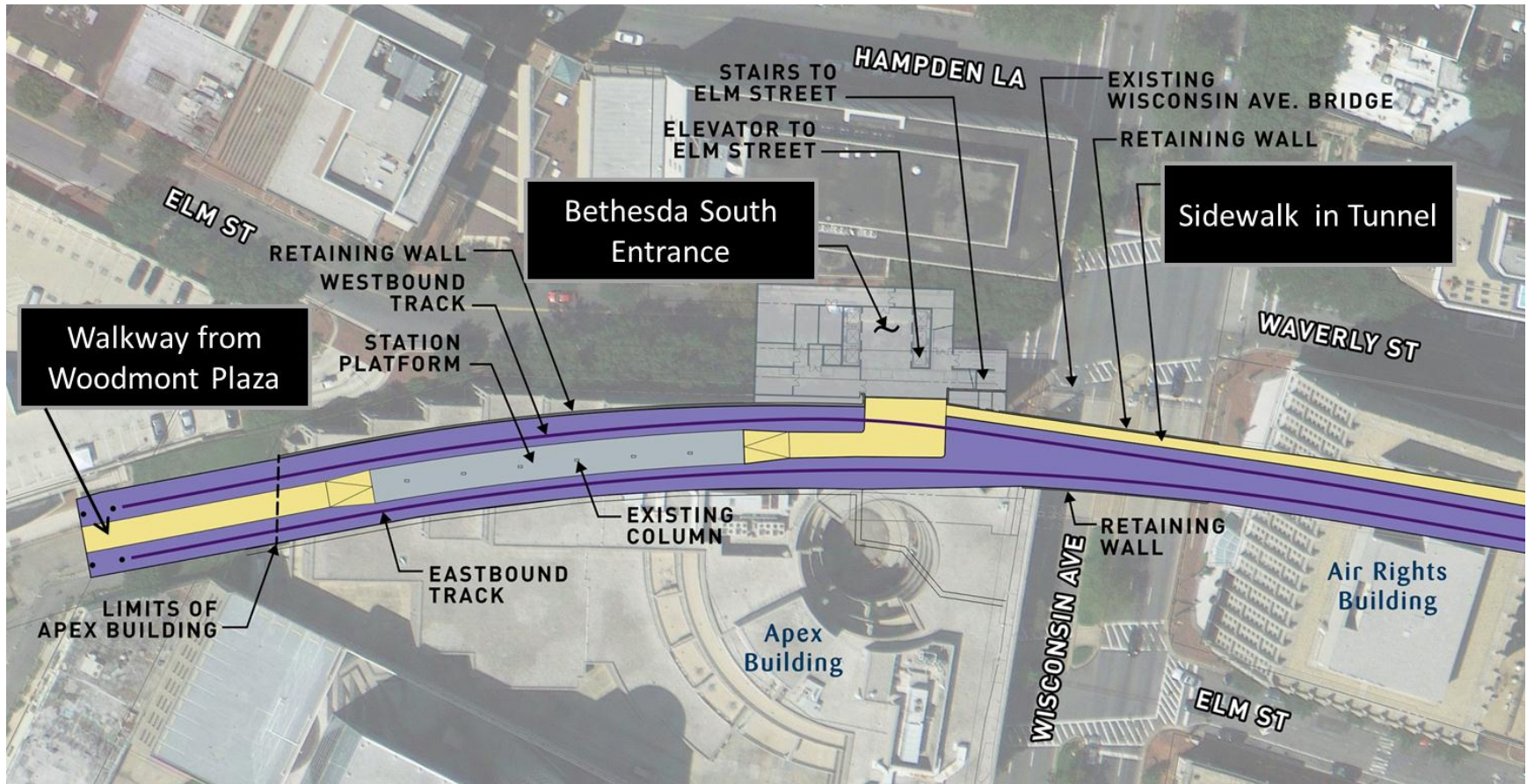
Significant progress has been made on all aspects of the Purple Line, Capital Crescent Trail, and Silver Spring Green Trail projects, but several issues remain for the County. This section summarizes the major remaining issues and provides an update on other key areas. The discussion begins at the western end of the Purple Line in Bethesda and works its way east to Takoma /Langley. Several issues applicable throughout the project are included at the end of the discussion.

### **Issue #1: Bethesda Station Access**

The Purple Line concept plans include three access points to the Bethesda Purple Line station, shown in Exhibit 1:

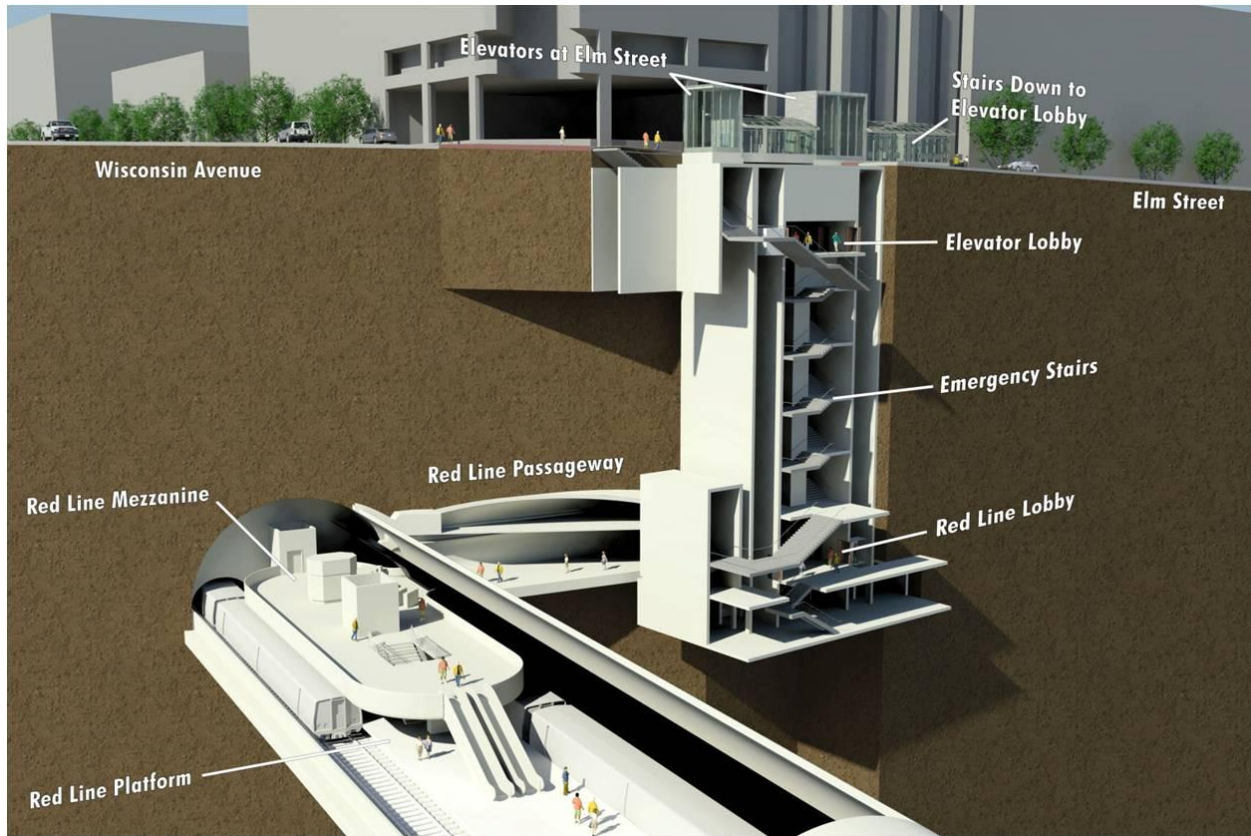
- Elevators on Elm Street: The Bethesda Metrorail Red Line Station has a single entrance located at the intersection of Wisconsin Avenue and Old Georgetown Road, but was designed to accommodate a second entrance at Elm Street. As part of the Bethesda South Entrance CIP project (#500929), this second entrance will link Elm Street with the Bethesda Purple Line station and the Bethesda Red Line station (see Exhibit 2). The existing parking lane on the south side of Elm Street will be removed and replaced with two elevators that will stop at the Purple Line platform (identified as “Elevator Lobby” in the exhibit) and the Red Line mezzanine. Four additional elevators will connect the Purple Line and Red Line stations and will be located beneath Elm Street. A stairway is also provided from Elm Street to the Purple Line platform level. **This project is over 95% funded in the current CIP, though the Executive is recommending pushing the project back six months. We anticipate that the mandatory referral for the Bethesda South Entrance will occur at the same as the Purple Line mandatory referral.**
- Walkway from Woodmont Plaza: Transit patrons will be able to walk into the Purple Line station directly from Woodmont Plaza, much as trail users currently enter the Bethesda tunnel today.
- Sidewalk in the Tunnel: At the request of the community, MTA evaluated the feasibility of a narrow 5 to 7-foot sidewalk on the north side of the Purple Line tracks between the Capital Crescent Trail just east of Pearl Street and the station platform. **This sidewalk is feasible and is included in the Purple Line concept plans.**

Exhibit 1: Access Points to Purple Line Station



Plan view showing the Purple Line in the Bethesda CBD. The three access points to the Purple Line station are highlighted in black.

**Exhibit 2: Bethesda South Entrance**



*Rendering of Bethesda South Entrance showing the elevators on Elm Street, proposed elevator shaft and stairway, and the Red Line platform.*

**Issue #2: Capital Crescent Trail Surface Alignment**

In March 2012, the County Council (after considering input from the Planning Board) voted to drop the “tunnel alignment” of the Capital Crescent Trail in the Bethesda tunnel due to the high cost (nearly \$50 million) and potential risk to the Apex Building, and to instead focus on the “surface alignment” that connects Elm Street Park to Woodmont Avenue, crossing Wisconsin Avenue at grade. In response, the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) hired a pedestrian and bicycle firm to design the surface alignment and convened a working group of stakeholders and advocates to provide advice on the project. The design process is well underway and MCDOT expects to complete Phase I of facility planning by late summer 2013.

Council requested that the project team consider a protected signal phase for pedestrian and bicycle crossing of MD 355, and consideration of a left turn prohibition for eastbound Bethesda Avenue at MD 355. Businesses and the Town of Chevy Chase oppose the turn prohibition. MCDOT has developed a potential signal phasing concept that provides for a protected portion for the trail crossing within the signal cycle, while maintaining the left turn movement. The project team is also working to find the

proper method to handle crossings for the intersection of Bethesda Avenue and Woodmont Avenue, which is proving to be a challenge based on traffic and pedestrian movements at that location.

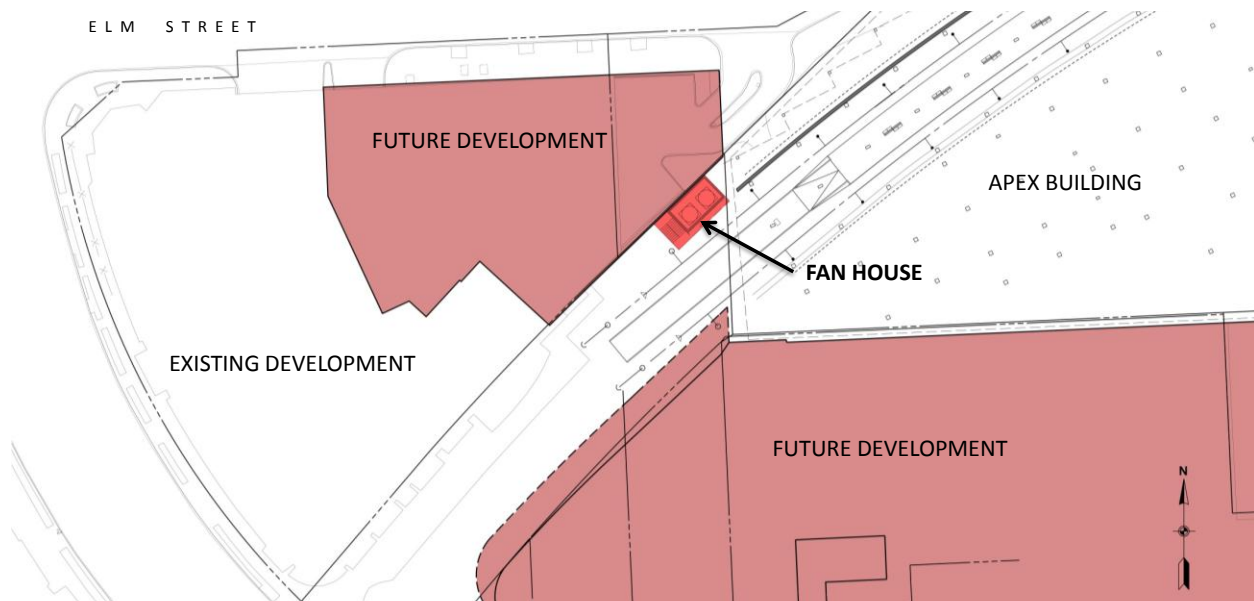
**The Planning Departments work program includes an update to the Bethesda CBD Sector Plan starting in April 2014 and Planning staff has asked MTA to determine whether a new tunnel crossing for the trail beneath the Apex Building, Wisconsin Avenue, and the Air Rights Building is feasible, and if so, to identify the location and spatial requirements of the tunnel so that it can be considered as part of the Sector Plan update.**

### **Issue #3: Bethesda Tunnel Ventilation**

NFPA 130 refers to the fire safety standards required by the Federal Transit Administration for all fixed guideway transit and passenger rail systems. To comply with these standards, MTA is proposing to locate fan houses (ventilation towers) on either side of the Bethesda tunnel. These fan houses are intended to be used only during emergency events to pull smoke out of the tunnel, though they would need to be tested about once a month. The fan house on the east side of the tunnel is concealed beneath the Air Rights Building parking garage on the south side of the Purple Line tracks. The fan house on the west of the tunnel will be located in Woodmont Plaza. It is 40 feet by 18 feet and is 92 feet high.

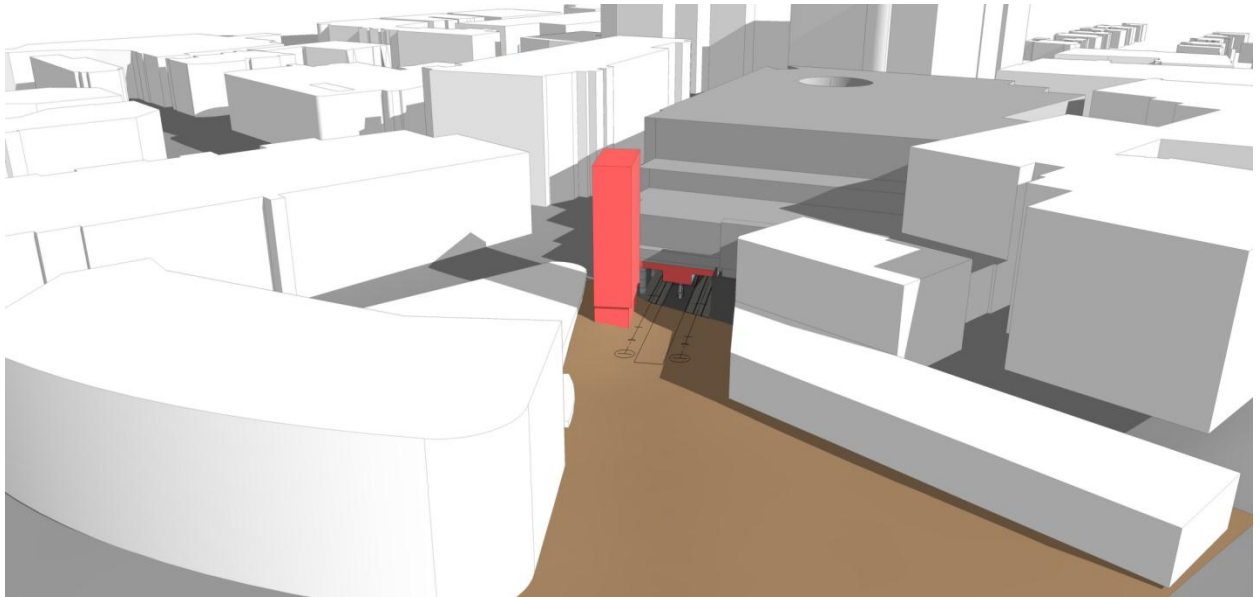
Exhibit 3 shows a plan view of the proposed fan house location. Exhibit 4 and Exhibit 5 show renderings of the fan house in Woodmont Plaza with existing building heights and approved building heights, respectively.

#### **Exhibit 3: Plan View of Woodmont Plaza and Fan House**



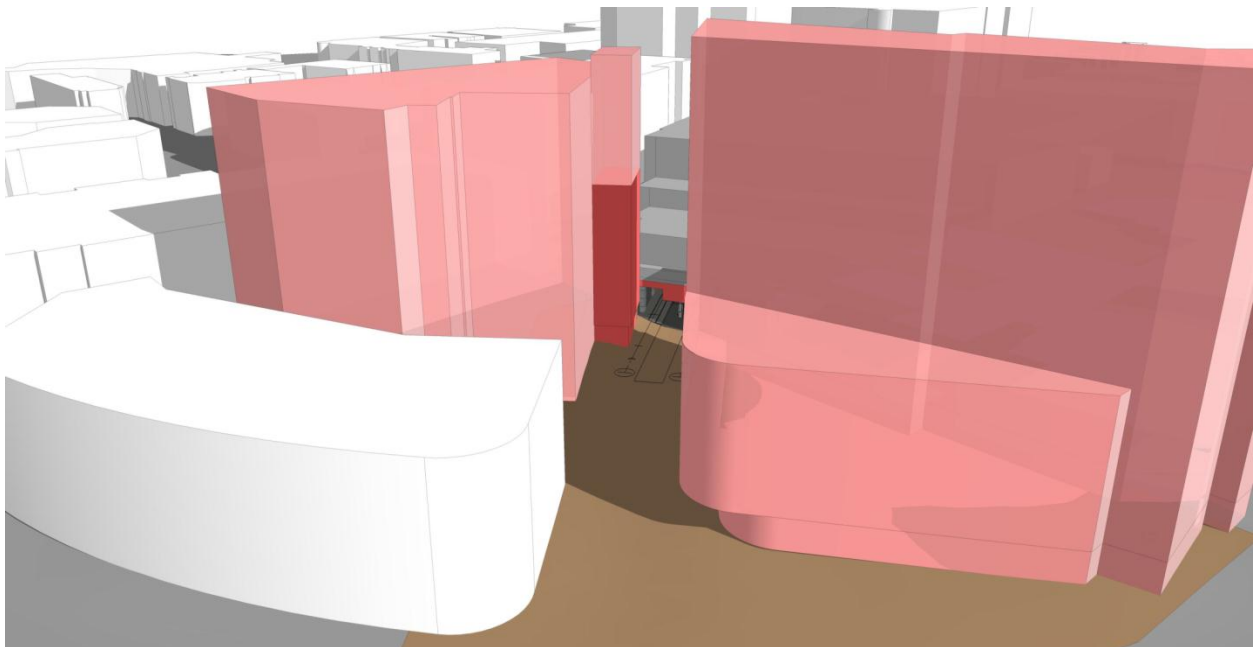
*Plan view of Woodmont Plaza showing a potential location of the proposed fan house (in red) for the Bethesda tunnel in relation to the Apex Building and proposed redevelopment.*

**Exhibit 4: Fan House in Woodmont Plaza with Existing Development**



*A rendering of a potential location for the fan house in Woodmont Plaza looking east toward the Bethesda Tunnel. Building heights reflect existing development.*

**Exhibit 5: Fan House in Woodmont Plaza with Approved Development**



*A rendering of a potential location for the fan house in Woodmont Plaza looking east toward the Bethesda Tunnel. Building heights reflect approved development.*

Since the west side fan house is a substantial structure, MTA has looked at a variety of ways to reduce its visual impact, including alternative locations and architectural treatments. Based on existing

conditions, the best place to locate the fan house is just outside the tunnel in the plaza area. Since there is some flexibility in its exact placement, MTA has reached out to Federal Realty to determine if there are minor adjustments to the location of the fan house that would have less of an impact to proposed development. However, the developer's plans at this time are still in progress and they have not expressed a preferred location that works for MTA. It is also possible to reduce the impact of the fan house through architectural treatments. For example, it could have an iconic treatment that makes it a landmark in Bethesda, or it could be designed to fit in with the surrounding architecture.

**MTA is continuing the discussion about the location of the fan house with Federal Realty and plans to begin working on architectural treatments with the community in the coming months.**

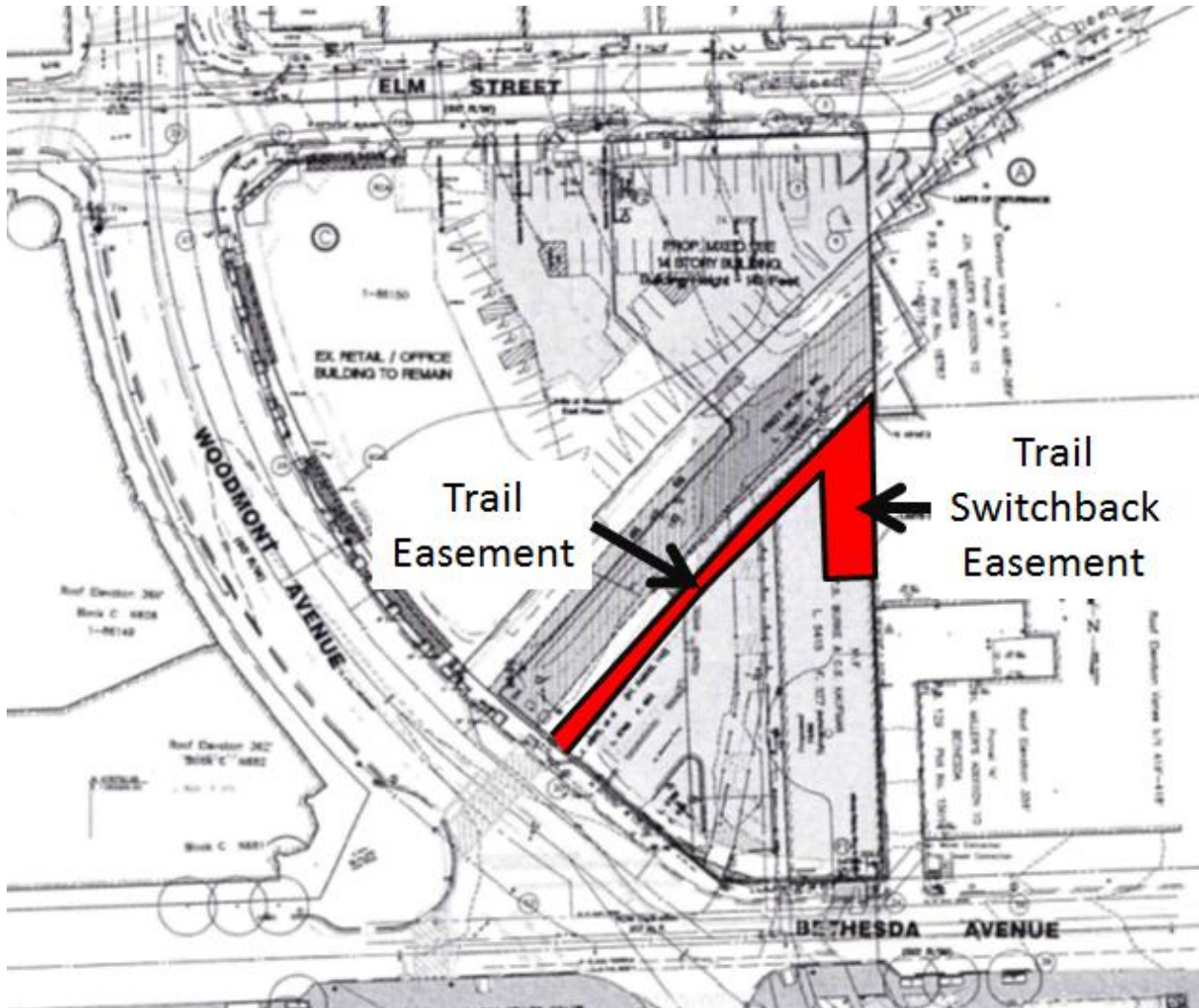
**While there are many ways that MTA can mitigate the impact of the fan house in the Woodmont Plaza, its location in a public plaza is not ideal. Planning staff has asked MTA to develop concepts for a potential future location (or relocation) of the fan house for consideration in the update to the Bethesda CBD Sector Plan.**

#### **Issue #4: Woodmont /7200 Easements and Reservations**

From the approval of the 1990 Georgetown Branch Master Plan until the County Council decided against building the Capital Crescent Trail in the Bethesda tunnel in March 2012, it had been the County's intent to construct a trail above the tracks in the tunnel. Therefore, as part of the Woodmont East development approvals (now called Woodmont /7200), the Planning Board required the developer to provide two easements for the Capital Crescent Trail (see Exhibit 6). The first easement would accommodate a switchback ramp through their building that would bring the trail from its elevated platform above the Purple Line down to sidewalk level in Woodmont Plaza. The second easement was to extend the trail from the switchback ramp to Woodmont Avenue.

**As noted above, Planning Department staff has asked MTA to evaluate the feasibility of a new tunnel alignment. Once this analysis is complete, staff will have a better idea as to whether both easements continue to be needed.**

**Exhibit 6: Trail Easements**



*Plan view showing trail easements included in the Woodmont /7200 development approval.*

**Issue #5: Lynn Drive Crossing**

Over the past two years, MTA has worked with the Town of Chevy Chase’s Purple Line Mitigation Advisory Group to come up with solutions to replace the existing connection between Lynn Drive and the interim Georgetown Branch Trail. This connection is used by many residents to access the trail, and for students and others headed in the direction of Bethesda – Chevy Chase High School. The connection between Lynn Drive and the trail includes a narrow, unpaved trail on public right-of-way wedged between two private residences. This narrow trail is used by some pedestrians to access Montgomery Avenue, via private property on the west side of the Riviera apartment building. The existing connection is shown in Exhibit 7.



**Exhibit 7: Existing Lynn Drive Connection**



*Illustration of the Lynn Drive connection. The path connects Lynn Drive to the Interim Georgetown Branch Trail / Future Capital Crescent Trail. A narrow path to the west of the Riviera Apartments provides an informal connection to Montgomery Avenue.*

Earlier concepts included connections to East-West Highway and an at-grade crossing of the tracks, both of which were dropped primarily for safety reasons. The East-West Highway concept was also dropped due to right-of-way acquisition and privacy concerns. In the past few months MTA has developed additional concepts that would directly connect Lynn Drive to the Capital Crescent Trail with an underpass. **MTA presented these new concepts to the Town of Chevy Chase Mitigation Advisory Group on January 23, 2013 and is awaiting a formal response after the concept is presented to residents living adjacent to the connection. Planning staff has concerns with both options, but we have not completed our review of them. MTA does not believe an at-grade crossing of the Purple Line tracks is safe. Their position is that if a crossing is to be included in the Purple Line project, it will have to be one of the two underpass options.**

### Issue #6: Chevy Chase Lake Aerial Structure

Prior to mid-2012, MTA's plan was to elevate the Purple Line and the Capital Crescent Trail on structures spanning Connecticut Avenue and one or more potential new north – south roads located on the east side of Connecticut Avenue. Due to cost concerns, the plan is now to only span Connecticut Avenue. To the east of Connecticut Avenue, the station, tracks, and trail would be placed on fill, with only a narrow passageway of approximately 24-feet at the east end of the station platform.

The Chevy Chase Lake Sector Plan recommends a new road – Street B-1 – within a 60-foot-wide right-of-way Business District Street between Chevy Chase Lake Drive and Manor Road, passing beneath the tracks and the trail. This street would help to relieve congestion, provide additional access to the proposed Town Center for bicycles, pedestrians, and motorized vehicles, provide space for a potential kiss & ride location, and function as a turn-around for buses. **While MTA does not preclude a 60-foot-wide road if paid for by the county or a developer, the 24-foot passageway included in the Purple Line concept plan would not accommodate motorize vehicles, a bus turnaround, or a kiss & ride location.**

### Issue #7: Lyttonsville Station Platform Location and Yard & Shop

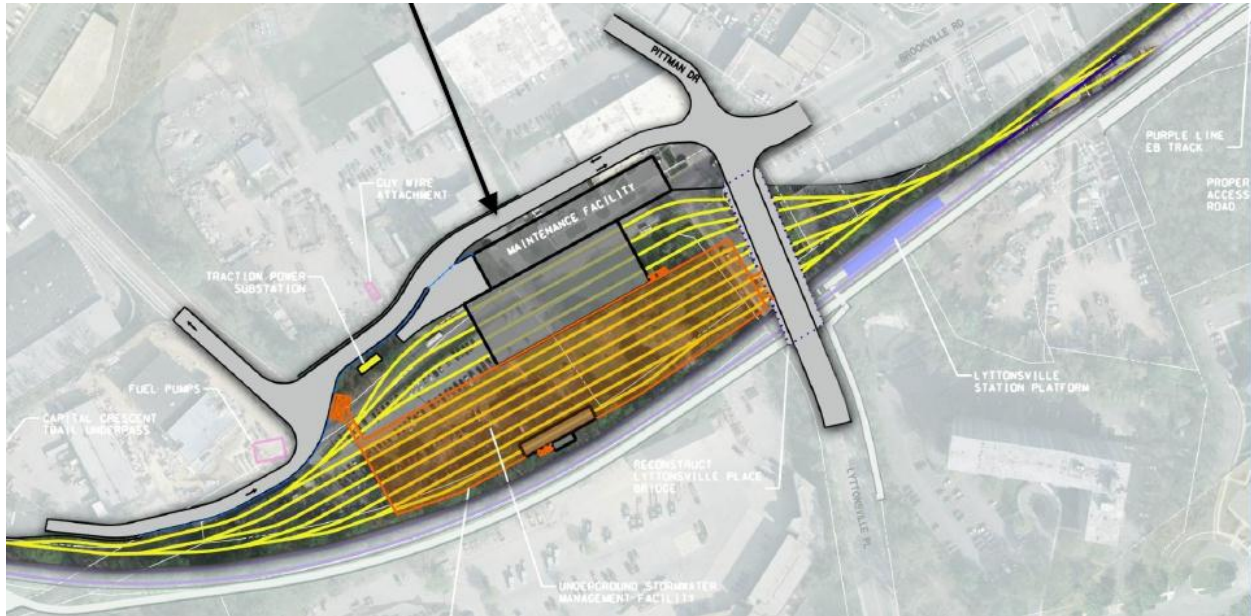
In September 2011, MTA presented the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) design for the Lyttonsville station and the Lyttonsville yard and shop at a community meeting. The design is shown in Exhibit 8. The plans were consistent with the Locally Preferred Alternative and the Purple Line Functional Plan, but were not well received by residents due to the large impacts to the east of Lyttonsville Place, an area that the community preferred to see redeveloped into a mixed use area.

Exhibit 8: Lyttonsville Station and Yard & Shop (LPA Design)



MTA spent the next few months meeting with community residents, stakeholders, and elected officials to better understand the concerns and vision for the area. They developed several alternatives and finally settled on one that shifted most of the Yard & Shop to the east of Lyttonsville Place, though it required relocating Brookville Road to the north (see Exhibit 9).

**Exhibit 9: Lyttonsville Station and Yard & Shop (March 2012)**



In January 2013, MTA presented a plan with further refinements, shifting Brookville Road back to its original location and adding a driveway entrance at the southeast corner of Brookville Road and Lyttonsville Place. These changes also addressed one of the Lyttonsville Sector Plan team’s concerns about providing access to the station from Brookville Road, though staff would have preferred the access point to be about 250 feet to the east (see Exhibit 10). In addition, the yard & shop will no longer house heavy maintenance operations, but will be limited to vehicle storage and an operations center.

**While there are still items to be worked out with MTA regarding the Lyttonsville station area, Planning staff’s comments on the Purple Line Concept Plan in this area largely focused on design details. The plans have made substantial progress over the past year and a half.**

**Exhibit 10: Lyttonsville Station and Yard & Shop (January 2013)**



**Issue #8: Silver Spring Transit Center Area**

The Silver Spring Transit Center area brings together the proposed Purple Line, Red Line, MARC, local, commuter and inter-city buses, the proposed Capital Crescent Trail, and the Metropolitan Branch Trail. Renderings are showing in Exhibit 11, Exhibit 12, and Exhibit 13. A section looking to the south is shown in Exhibit 14. It is composed of four levels that include the following elements:

- Transit Center Level One (elevation 305 feet)
  - Sidewalks along Colesville Road
  - Red Line mezzanine
  - Silver Spring Transit Center Level One
- Transit Center Level Two (elevation 330 feet)
  - 25 feet above Level One
  - Silver Spring Transit Center Level Two
  - Red Line platform and tracks
  - MARC platform and tracks
- Mezzanine Level (elevation 355 feet)
  - 50 feet above Level One
  - Purple Line mezzanine
  - Capital Crescent Trail

- Potential future project to directly connect the Purple Line and Red Line
- Connection to the MARC bridge over the CSX tracks
- Platform Level (elevation 386 feet)
  - 81 feet above Level One
  - Purple Line platform

Perhaps the easiest way to understand how circulation will occur is to focus on the proposed Purple Line mezzanine. The mezzanine will be located in the area between the existing Red Line / MARC tracks and the new Silver Spring Transit Center. It will be at the third level, above the Red Line and below the proposed Purple Line platform. From the mezzanine travelers will be able to:

- ascend to the Purple Line via stairs, escalators, or elevators
- walk directly to the Capital Crescent Trail located at the same level
- connect directly to the Red Line via a potential extension to the mezzanine and then descend a level onto the south end of the Red Line platform via escalators and elevators
- descend a level to a bridge that connects to the Silver spring Transit Center
- descend two levels to the sidewalk

The public has expressed several concerns with previous designs at the transit center that the current plan improves:

- MTA has identified a location for a direct connection for passengers transferring between the Red Line and the Purple Line so there will be a direct connection, though, this connection will not be designed or funded by the Purple Line.
- There is no longer a conflict area between cyclists using the Capital Crescent Trail and transit patrons traveling between the second level of the transit center and the Purple Line.

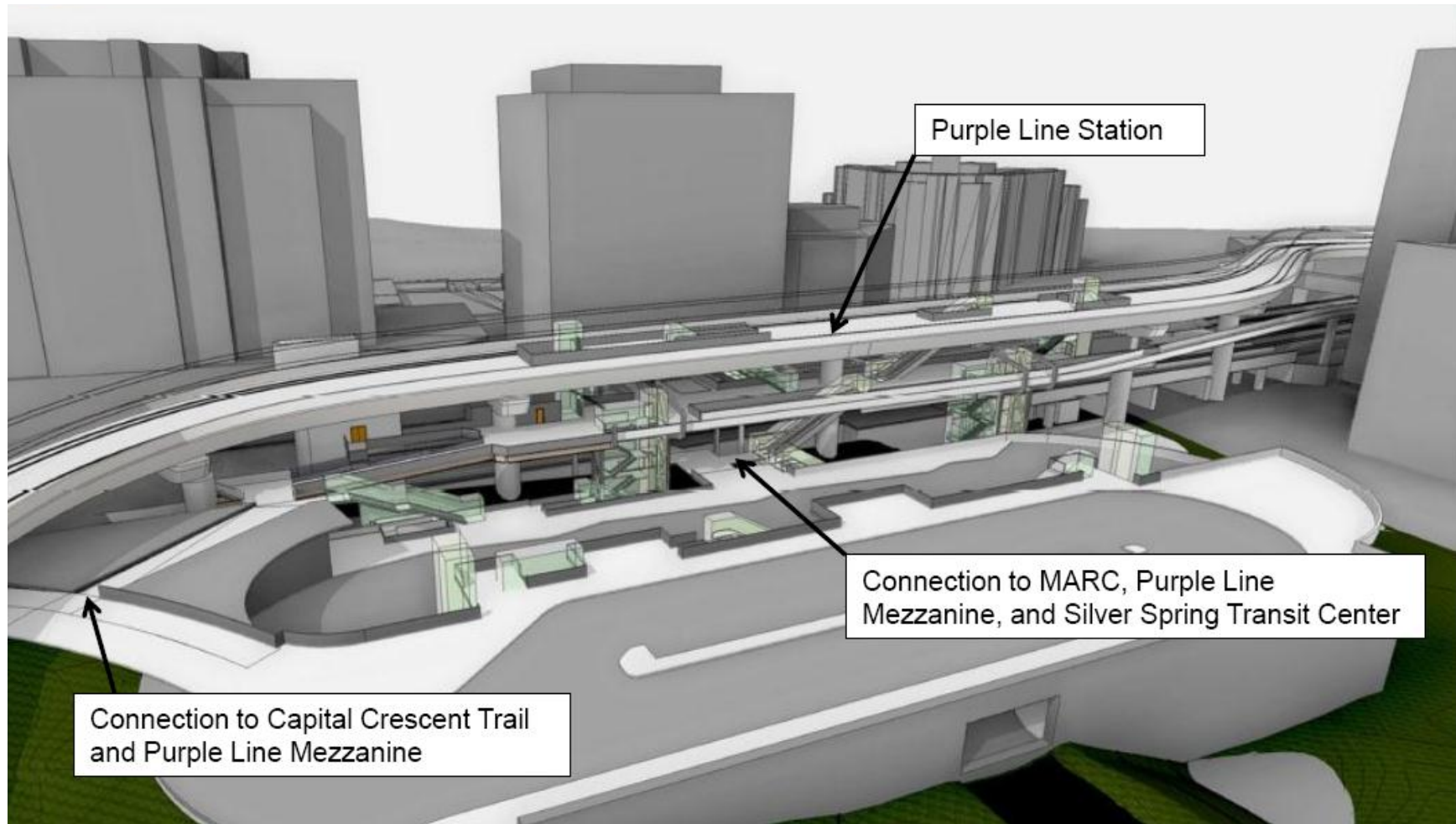
The biggest disadvantage of the new plan appears to be the height. The Purple Line platform will be 81 feet above ground level.

Exhibit 11: Silver Spring Transit Center Area



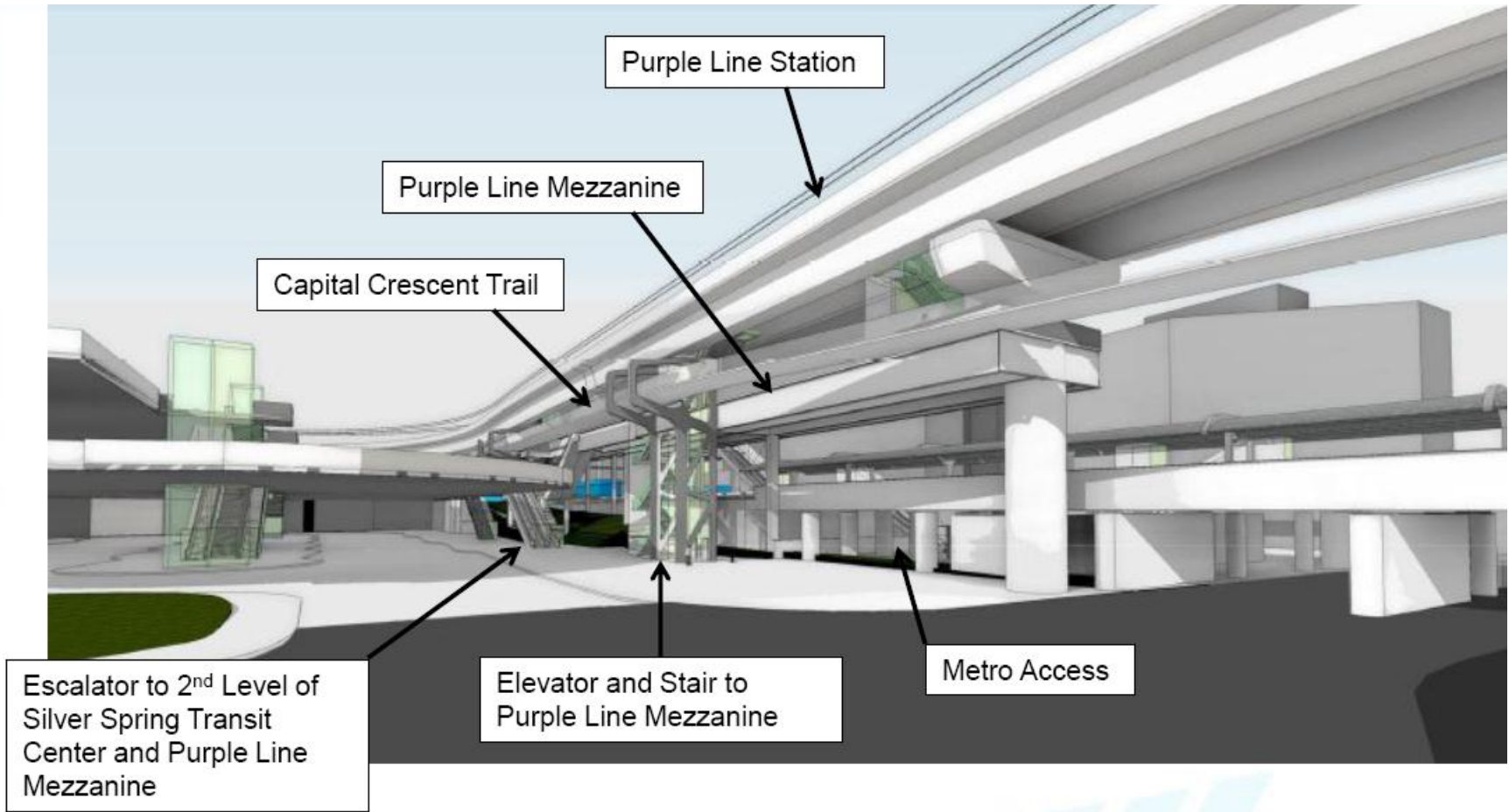
*A rendering of the Silver Spring Transit Center area looking toward the Purple Line and Red Line from Bonifant Road.*

Exhibit 12: Silver Spring Transit Center Area



*A rendering of the Silver Spring Transit Center area looking toward the Purple Line and Red Line from Bonifant Road.*

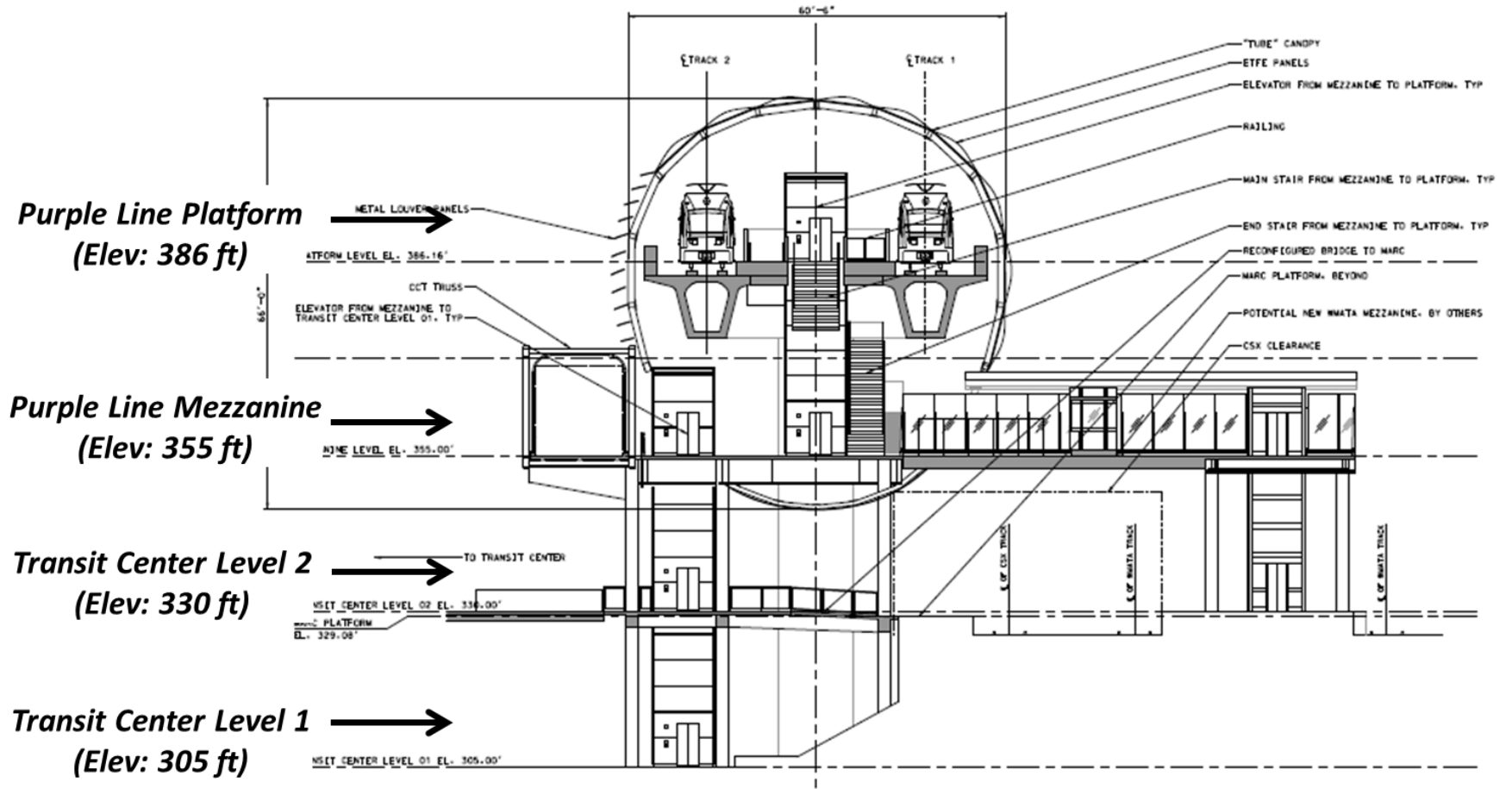
Exhibit 13: Silver Spring Transit Center Area



*A rendering of the Silver Spring Transit Center area looking toward the Purple Line and Red Line from the north side of Colesville Road.*



Exhibit 14: Silver Spring Transit Center Area

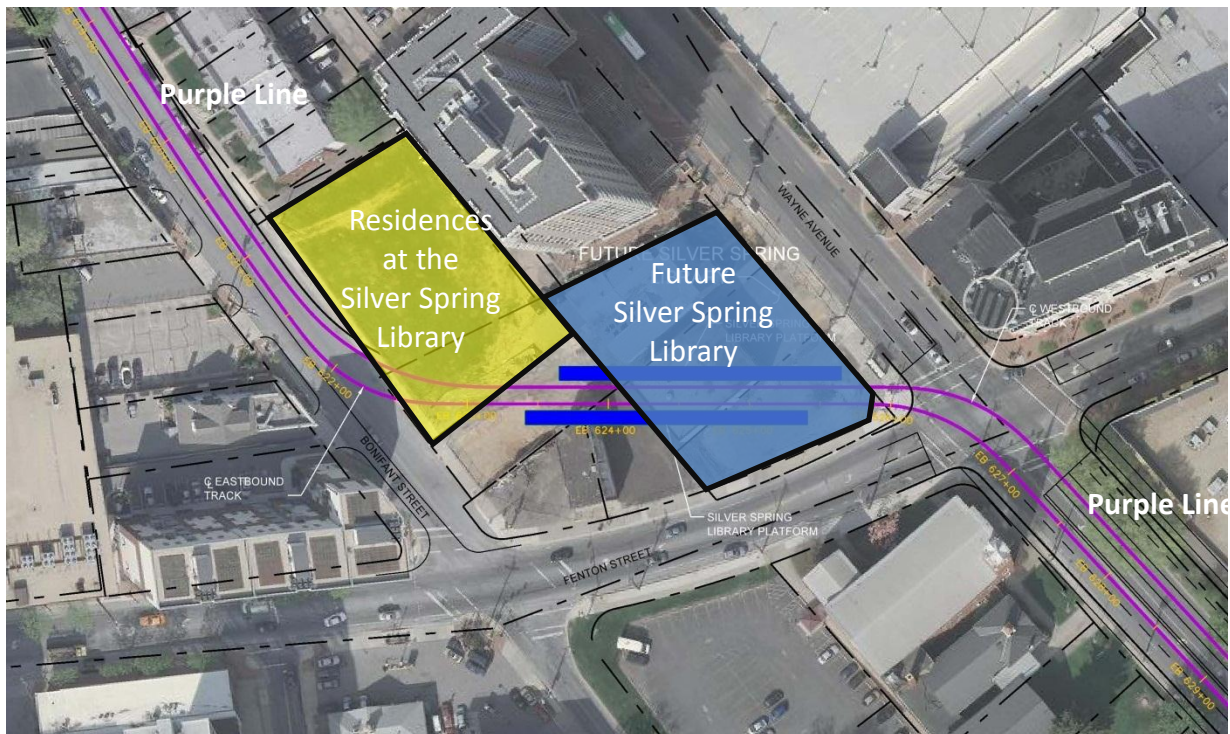


Section of the Silver Spring Transit Center Area Looking South

## Issue #9: Silver Spring Library

After leaving the Silver Spring Transit Center, the Purple Line descends onto Bonifant Street, crossing Georgia Avenue, and then cuts across the Silver Spring Library site (see Exhibit 15). The Planning Board conducted the mandatory referral for the library on June 24, 2010. MTA continues to coordinate with the Silver Spring Library project (see Exhibit 16) that is now under construction, and is coordinating with the Residences of the Silver Spring Library project, a public-private partnership to develop a site on the north side of Bonifant Street. The development application was recently received by the Planning Department and is under review by staff and the MTA.

**Exhibit 15: Purple Line and Development Projects at the Silver Spring Library Station**



*A plan view showing the location of the Purple Line tracks, the Purple Line station, the future Silver Spring Library, and the Residences at the Silver Spring Library. Stakeholder agencies and the developers continue to coordinate closely on this project.*

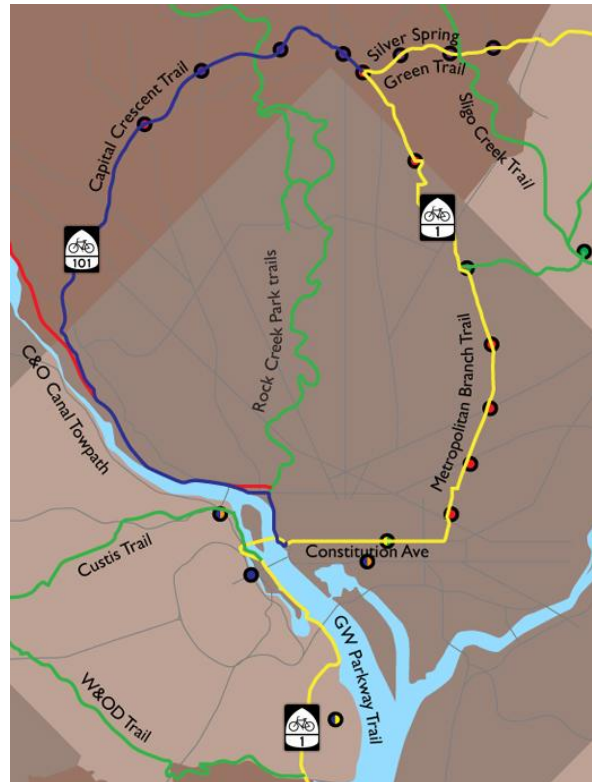
**Exhibit 16: Silver Spring Library Station**



*A rendering of the Silver Spring Library dated February 21, 2012 looking from Wayne Avenue. The building reserves space for a future Purple Line station in the tunnel beneath the library.*

## Issue #10: Silver Spring Green Trail

The Silver Spring Green Trail is a master-planned bikeway that travels along the north side of Second Ave and Wayne Ave between Spring Street and Sligo Creek Parkway. It connects the Sligo Creek Trail with the Capital Crescent Trail and the Metropolitan Branch Trail at the Silver Spring Transit center. A 2003 plan for the Silver Spring Green Trail envisioned the typical section to consist of an 8-foot shared-use path, a 5-foot sidewalk, and a 6-foot landscaped panel. Sections of the trail have been constructed on Second Ave between Cameron Street and Colesville Road, and on Wayne Avenue between Colesville Road and the Whole Foods driveway to these specifications. Completion of the Green Trail between the Whole Foods driveway and Sligo Creek was delayed to accommodate planning for the Purple Line. The Silver Spring Green Trail will ultimately be constructed in conjunction with the Purple Line.



The cross section requirements of the Purple Line require more width than was originally anticipated in the 2003 Silver Spring Green Trail plan. Therefore, it is not possible to continue both a sidewalk and a shared-use path to Sligo Creek Parkway without severely impacting residences. Instead, MTA is proposing to provide a minimum 8-foot shared use path and a minimum 5-foot landscaped panel. The County Council and Planning Board have adopted this recommendation as part of the Purple Line Functional Plan. Bicycle advocates have stated that if the sidewalk is eliminated, the shared-use path should be 10-foot-wide at a minimum, per AASHTO recommendations.

Staff commented extensively on Silver Spring Green Trail in the review of the concept plan (see Attachment A). A few of the major comments were:

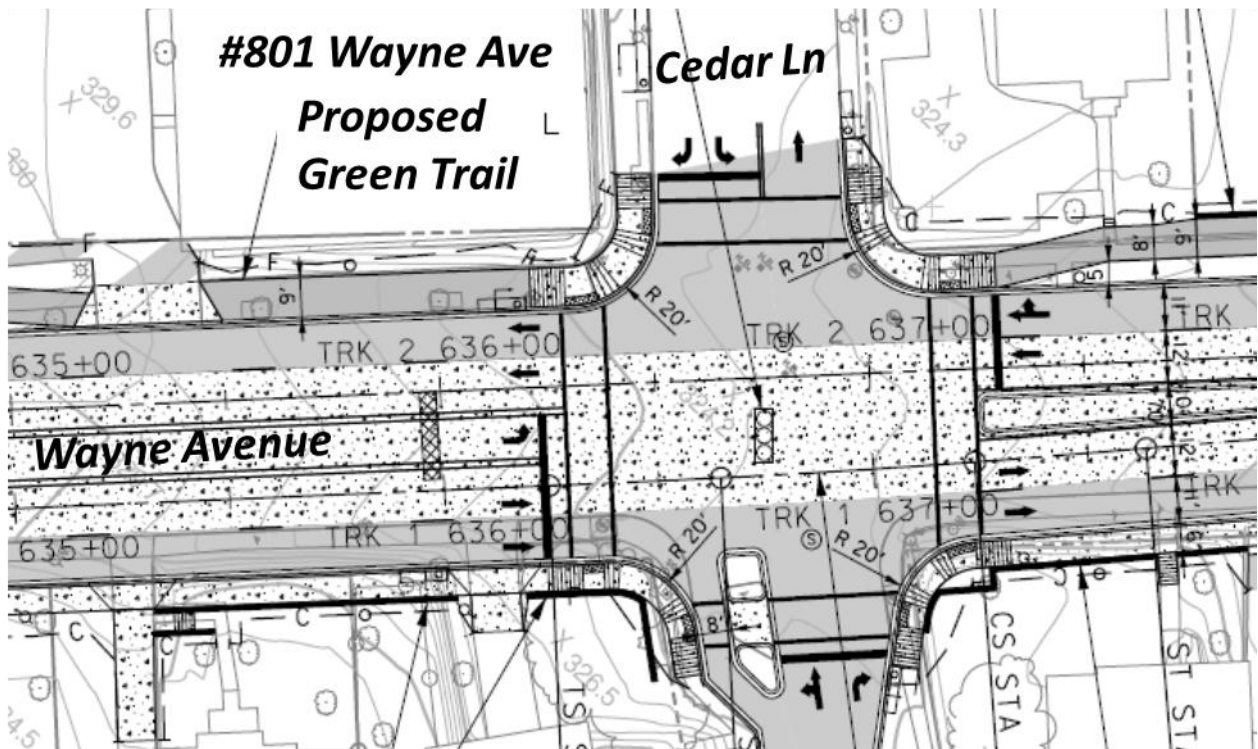
- While this section of roadway is tight, staff believes that in several locations there is sufficient right-of-way to widen the trail and buffer to 10 feet and 5 feet respectively, with a 2-foot offset from retaining walls. MTA and Planning staff will continue to coordinate on this issue.
- In several locations the plan shows a shared use path of 8 feet with a 1 ft offset from an adjacent retaining wall. At a minimum, a 10-foot-wide shared use path should be provided adjacent to retaining walls based on guidance from the 1999 AASHTO bike guide.

In addition, the intersection of Wayne Ave and Cedar Street is particularly problematic for cyclists (see Exhibit 17). Crossing Cedar Street requires cyclists to make four right angle turns, negotiate four ramps, cross a street, and avoid pedestrians. This does not create an experience that matches the importance

of this trail. And because of this, it is likely that many cyclists will ride against traffic in Wayne Avenue to cross Cedar Street. While there is limited right-of-way available to better accommodate the trail crossing, there may be some space along the frontage of #801 Wayne Ave. It appears that the stairs to this building were constructed in the public right-of-way. If the stairs were removed, it may be possible to shift the trail away from the road and to improve the crossing. This issue will need to be evaluated in greater detail to better understand if and how the staircase was approved in the public right-of-way. If this encroachment was not approved, the County could consider removing it, which might allow the trail to be shifted away from the road and provide a better crossing.

**The Silver Spring Green Trail will be reviewed by mandatory referral at the same time as the Purple Line.**

**Exhibit 17: Silver Spring Green Trail at Wayne Avenue & Cedar Street**



*A plan view of the intersection of Wayne Ave and Cedar Lane, with the proposed Green Trail on the north side of Wayne Ave.*

**Issue #11: Silver Spring International Middle School Access**

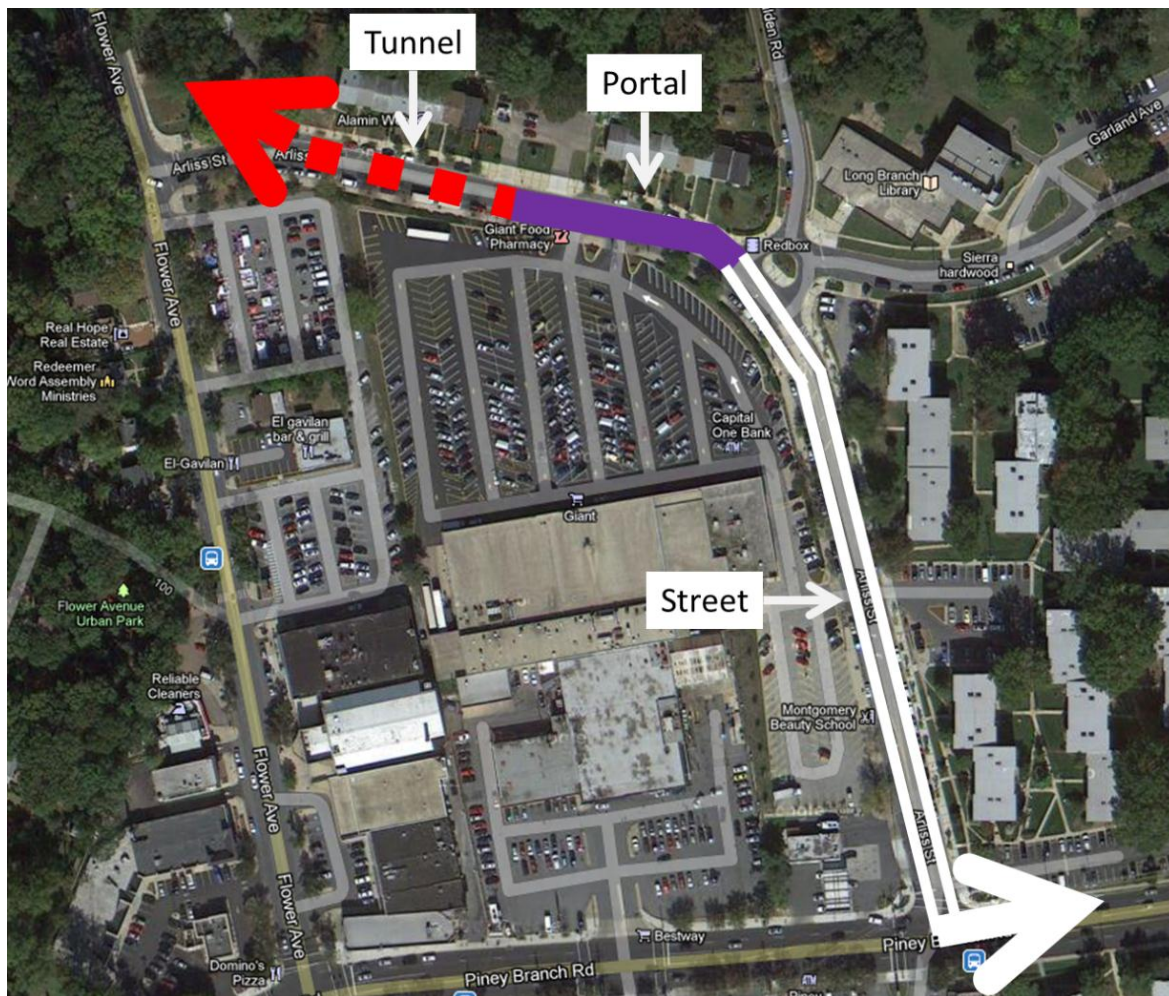
Access to the Silver Spring International Middle School is located about 100 feet east of the intersection of Wayne Avenue and Dale Drive. Because the Purple Line is proposed to operate in the median of Wayne Avenue, it would prohibit left turns into and out of the Silver Spring International Middle School. **While a solution has not yet been agreed upon, MCPS, MCDOT, M-NCPPC, and MTA continue to work collaboratively to accommodate school parking and circulation requirements, while respecting safety, security and accessibility standards.**

## Issue #12: Purple Line along Arliss Street

Arliss Street is a particularly challenging segment of the Purple Line alignment due to the presence of the Purple Line portal, access to the Town Center (Site 1), and the Long Branch Station. In effect, there is no typical section for Arliss Street. MTA hopes to have a rendering of the portal area available for the briefing on February 28<sup>th</sup>.

The Long Branch Sector Plan proposes a 100-foot typical section along Arliss Street that includes the Purple Line in the median, two travel lanes, bicycle lanes, and 15-foot streetscaping on either side of the road. MTA is proposing what more or less amounts to three different sections along Arliss Street: a tunnel section and a portal section between Flower Ave and Garland Ave, and a street section that includes the station between Garland Ave and Piney Branch Rd. These are shown in Exhibit 18.

Exhibit 18: Purple Line Tunnel, Portal, and Street Sections on Arliss Street



**Note:** This map is for illustrative purposes and does not necessarily match the exact sections proposed by MTA

One of the comments on the Long Branch Sector Plan from the Executive was that the Purple Line section does not match the Public Hearing Draft section. After further discussions with MTA, staff will

propose a revised right-of-way during the worksession on March 7<sup>th</sup>. At the time of writing this memo, the additional right-of-way varies from 9 feet to 16 feet, but remains under discussion with MTA. The widths of the three sections proposed by for the Purple Line, the Public Hearing Draft, and for discussion during the Long Branch Sector Plan worksession on March 7<sup>th</sup> are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Proposed Sections for Arliss Street for the Purple Line, Public Hearing Draft, and the Long Branch Worksession**

| Section        | Purple Line* | Public Hearing Draft** | Additional ROW Needed | Worksession Revised ROW ** |
|----------------|--------------|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| Tunnel Section | 109 ft       | 100 ft                 | 9 ft                  | 109 ft                     |
| Portal Section | 116 ft       | 100 ft                 | 16 ft                 | 116 ft                     |
| Street Section | 110 ft       | 100 ft                 | 12 ft                 | 112 ft                     |

\* There is variation in each of the three Purple Line sections. This number represents the maximum section based on existing information.

\*\* The Sector Plan dimensions are typical sections and do not include additional widening that is needed for turn lanes at intersections.

While the ROW requirements for the Purple Line and the Worksession Revised ROW shown in Table 1 are nearly identical, there are a few key differences. The Worksession Revised ROW has:

- 5.5-foot bike lanes
- A consistent 15-foot pedestrian realm, including sidewalks and tree buffers
- No turn lanes
- No on-street parking (this would be replaced with a parking garage in the Town Center)

MTA’s proposed alignment along Arliss Street assumes that most of the right-of-way is acquired from the Town Center (Site 1) side of the road. The proposed encroachment ranges from 25 to 50 feet. WRIT is also concerned about the proposed access point to their site at a future signalized intersection at Arliss Street and Garland Avenue at the Long Branch Library. They would prefer to shift the signalized intersection to the north side of the Long Branch Station location. This would either require an additional traffic signal or would require relocating Garland Avenue.

Planning staff has asked MTA to investigate ways to reduce the encroachment into the Town Center. For example, MTA is proposing to provide on-street parking on the north and east sides of Arliss St. This parking is currently heavily used, especially by residents. But in the ultimate condition recommended by the Long Branch Sector Plan the on-street parking is replaced by a parking garage. If the on-street parking does not need to be located on the north and east side of the road when the Purple Line is constructed, it could free up an additional 8 ft in the Town Center. Therefore, staff has asked MTA to look at arrangements that do not require parking on the east side of the road. One possibility may be to shift the parking from the east side of the road to the west side of the road, between Garland Ave and Piney Branch Rd. During the construction of the Town Center when a parking garage is provided, the on-street parking would be removed.

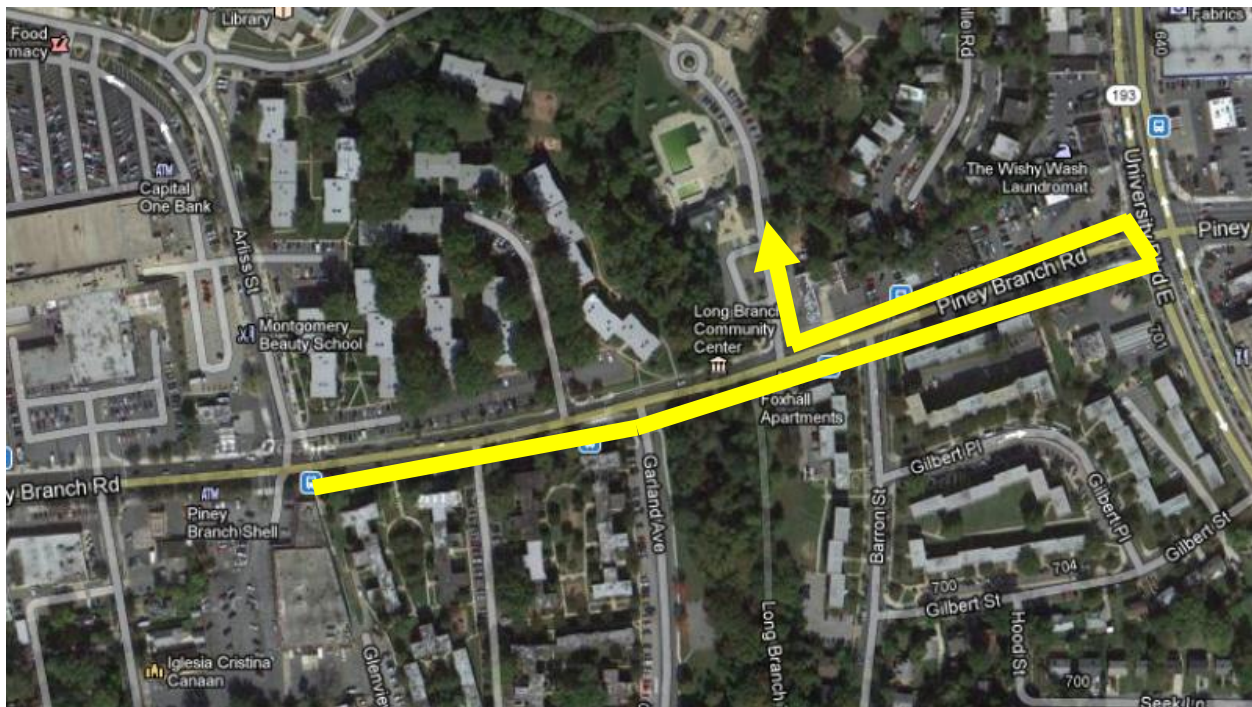
**Staff continues to coordinate with MTA and MCDOT on the proposed sections for Arliss Street.**

### Issue #13: Long Branch Recreation Center Access

Because the Purple Line is proposed to operate in the median of Piney Branch Road, it would prohibit left turns into Garland Avenue and Barron Street, as well as into and out of all driveways along Piney Branch Road between University Blvd and Arliss Street. Vehicles intending to make these left turns would be required to travel beyond the intersection, make a U-turn at the next available intersection, and make a right turn onto the desired street or driveway. This is particularly problematic for the Long Branch Pool and Recreation Center.

MTA states that facility patrons will still be able to access the facilities via U-turns at Arliss Street and University. Vehicles traveling in the eastbound direction on Piney Branch Road would have to pass the recreation center, make a U-turn at University Blvd, and then turn right into the recreation center (see Exhibit 19).

**Exhibit 19: MTA's Proposed Access to Long Branch Recreation Center and Pool (From Eastbound Direction)**

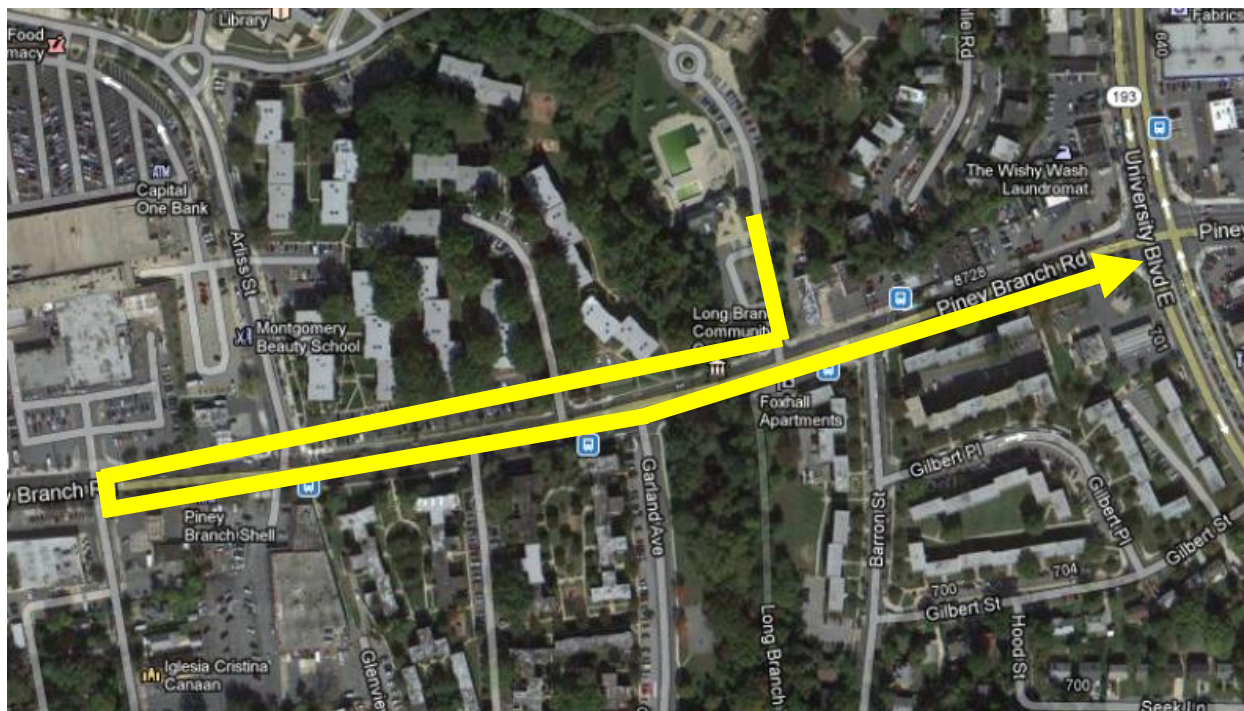


*A plan view of Long Branch showing the proposed access into the Long Branch Pool and Recreation Center for motorists traveling from the west.*

Exiting vehicles headed in the eastbound direction would have to make a right onto Piney Branch Road, make a U-turn at Greenwood Avenue, and then head in the eastbound direction on Piney Branch Road (see Exhibit 20). Of the two access restrictions, the proposed replacement of the entering left turn with a U-turn at University Blvd is the most concerning.



**Exhibit 20: MTA's Proposed Egress from Long Branch Recreation Center and Pool (To Eastbound Direction)**



*A plan view of Long Branch showing the proposed egress from the Long Branch Pool and Recreation Center for motorists traveling to the west.*

M-NCPPC staff contends that these intersections will be complicated enough post-Purple Line and post-plan implementation and we should not make the intersections even more complicated by encouraging U-turn movements. In addition, the U-turn concept at the intersection of Piney Branch Road and University Blvd is incompatible with the proposed congestion relief strategy proposed in the Long Branch Sector Plan. This strategy would relocate left turns from eastbound Piney Branch Road to northbound University Blvd to the access road proposed at the southwest corner of the intersection.

MTA has been asked to explore three options to allow full turning movements into and out of these facilities in the Long Branch Sector Plan Public Hearing Draft (page 33). These include:

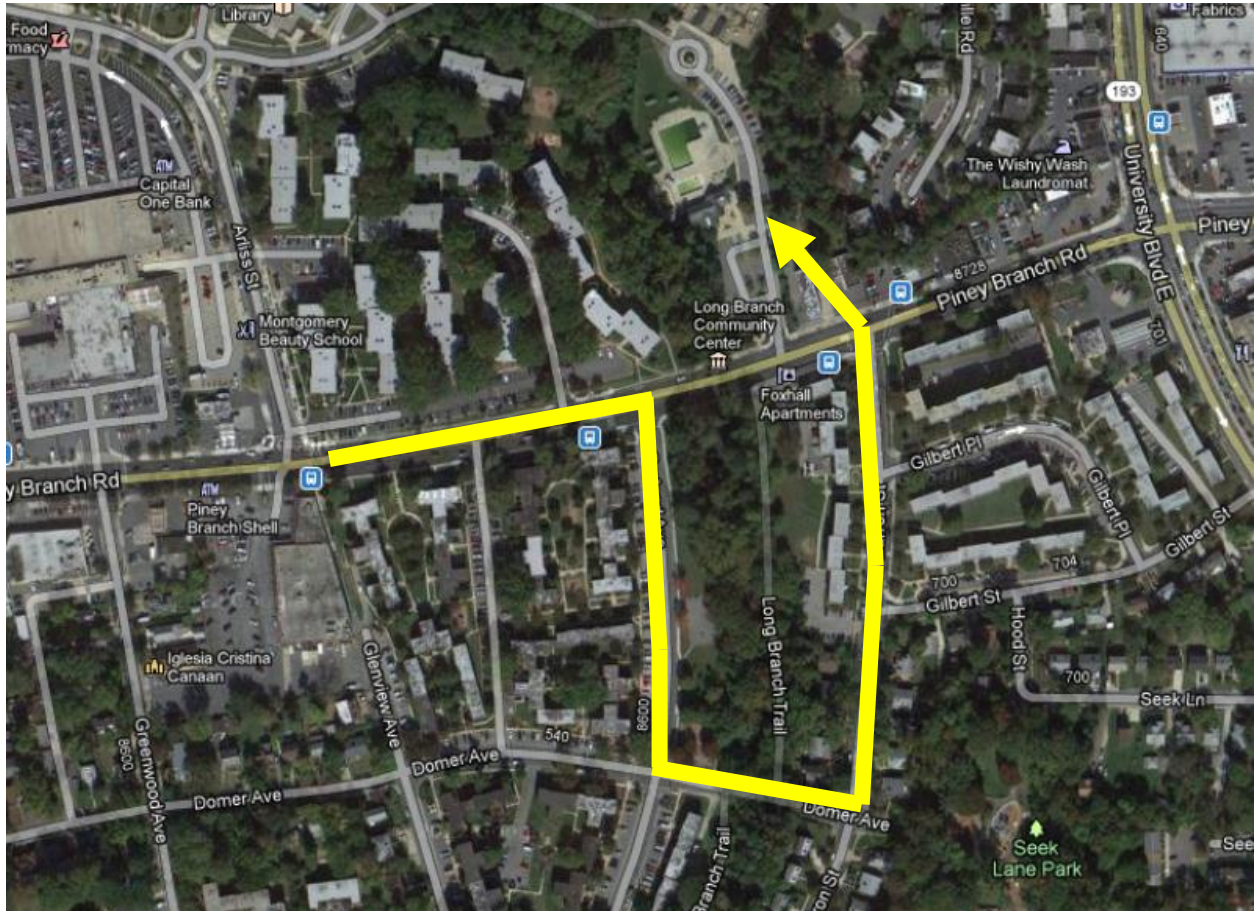
1. Align the driveway of the Long Branch Pool and Recreation Center with Barron Street and also add a new left turn lane for eastbound traffic along Piney Branch Road.
2. Widen and improve the new Long Branch Pedestrian Bridge to allow vehicular access to the Long Branch Pool and Recreation Center from Arliss Street.
3. Develop preliminary concepts and cost estimates to relocate the Long Branch Pool and Recreation Center to a new public facility campus on the west side of the Long Branch Stream Valley, at the current site of the Long Branch Library.

In their comments on the Long Branch Sector Plan Staff Draft, MTA noted that “the options listed, specifically developing preliminary concepts and cost estimate for relocating the community center and

pool are beyond the scope of the Purple Line study and reasonable mitigation for the impacts expected as a result of the project.” They have also stated that MTA’s participation in any study for Option 1 and 2 would need to occur in conjunction with the County and M-NCPPC.

There is also a potential fourth option – a variation of option 1 – that instead of adding a new left turn lane for eastbound traffic would instead route visitors through south on Garland Ave, across the proposed Domer Ave multimodal bridge, and north on Barron St (see Exhibit 21).

**Exhibit 21: Fourth Access Option to Long Branch Pool and Recreation Center**



*A plan view showing a variation of Option 1 that routes visitors to the Long Branch Pool and Recreation Center along Garland Ave, the proposed Domer Ave multimodal bridge, and Barron St.*

**Access to the Long Branch Pool and Recreation Center remains a point of discussion between MTA and M-NCPPC.**

#### **Issue #14: Sequencing of Streetscape Improvements**

In several locations MTA is not planning to implement the full master plan vision for roadways, especially the streetscaping. As an example, on Piney Branch Road MTA is proposing to construct the Purple Line, four travel lanes, bikes lanes, 5-foot sidewalk adjacent to the curb, and leave the utilities above ground. The sector plan recommends streetscaping with a 5-foot buffer area and 10-foot

sidewalks and undergrounding utilities. The additional streetscaping would be completed piecemeal as part of development projects.

**Staff is continuing to work with MTA to confirm that proposed streetscaping remains viable after the Purple Line construction. Staff is also investigating ways to accelerate implementation of the ultimate streetscape.**

#### **Issue #15: Park Mitigation Generally**

The Department of Parks is coordinating closely with the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) and its team of consultants to identify impacts to county parks caused by the Purple Line project, as well as any proposed mitigation measures. From west to east, the following parks are in close proximity to the transit project, immediately adjacent to it, or directly impacted by it. Statements below concerning park impacts (de minimis findings, etc.) have not yet been reviewed by senior management in the Department of Parks. A meeting between MTA and the Department's senior managers is scheduled on February 26 during which final decisions on park impacts will be made. If there are any changes to the text below as a result of that meeting, we will update the Planning Board during the worksession.

- **Elm Street Park** – This Park is immediately adjacent to the Purple Line, but will not be directly impacted. **Impacts are de minimis for purposes of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).** During project design, MTA will provide visual screenings to enhance park aesthetics and mitigate visual impacts. The county's Capital Crescent Trail "surface alignment" project from Elm Street Park to Woodmont Avenue will have direct impacts to the park, but these impacts are separate from the Purple Line. As noted in Issue #2, the "surface alignment" is the continuation of the Capital Crescent Trail and will be designed and constructed by the County.
- **Rock Creek Stream Valley Park Unit #2** – The Purple Line crosses the park entirely within the master-planned right-of-way (ROW) and does not directly impact parkland. The switchback trail connector to the Rock Creek Trail also will be entirely within the transportation ROW. One concern is storm water management (SWM); MTA believes it will be able to include all SWM facilities within the ROW as well. There will be aesthetic impacts caused by tree loss and re-grading within the stream valley. **For purposes of the EIS and 4(f)<sup>1</sup>, the impacts are de minimis. But during project design, visual and aesthetic impacts will be addressed.**
- **Sligo Creek Stream Valley Park Unit.** The Wayne Avenue Bridge over Sligo Creek will need to be rebuilt to accommodate the Purple Line. Some trees will be lost, but MTA also proposes to realign the stream channel to reduce flow velocity. The resource impacts and benefits are more or less equal. **Impacts are de minimis for the purposes of the EIS.**
- **Long Branch Stream Valley Park.** This Park is located on the south side of Piney Branch Road. **The Purple Line has minor impacts to this park and is de minimis for the purposes of the EIS.**

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<sup>1</sup> Section 4 (f) stipulates that Department of Transportation agencies cannot approve the use of land from publicly owned parks, recreational areas, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, or public and private historical sites unless: (1) there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of land, and (2) the action includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the property resulting from use.

- **Long Branch Local Park** – This Park is located on the north side of Piney Branch Road and includes the Long Branch pool and recreation center. **The Department of Parks and the Department of Recreation believes that the Purple Line has significant impacts to the activities and operations of the park and facilities, but MTA does not agree. They believe that the access restrictions are not de minimis because full access is not guaranteed to any property owner on a state highway.** See Issue #13 for a discussion.
- **New Hampshire Estates Neighborhood Park.** The Purple Line project will require about 20' of park frontage to accommodate the transit alignment. This will cause impacts to the park. **MTA will mitigate all parkland loss, by finding replacement parkland immediately adjacent or within the sector plan area. MTA will also contribute funding to redesign/reinvent and reconstruct the park after the Purple is built. Purple Line impacts are de minimis for the purposes of the EIS.**

## **PE CONCEPT REVIEW**

The Planning Department submitted comments to MTA on the Purple Line, Capital Crescent Trail, and Silver Spring Green Trail concepts plan. Many of those comments are related to issues that have been summarized in this staff memo. We have advised MTA that additional comments would be forthcoming after this Planning Board briefing.

## **PROJECT REVIEW GOING FORWARD**

### **Mandatory Referral Process**

Planning staff has coordinated with Council staff and MCDOT and MTA on an approach to the mandatory referral for the Purple Line and related projects that is consistent with the guidelines and overall intent of the review process. We propose to conduct the mandatory referral after the Purple Line ROD. The mandatory referral will simultaneously review the Purple Line, Capital Crescent Trail adjacent to the light rail, Bethesda South Entrance, and the Silver Spring Green Trail. The mandatory referral of the Capital Crescent Trail surface alignment would be conducted separately as it is a project that will be constructed by the County and/or private development projects.

The ROD is expected to be issued in summer 2013, and the mandatory referral would occur a few months after that.

The Forest Conservation Plan review will be conducted by the State.

**Functional Planning will continue to coordinate in-house with the Area One team as the sector plans along the Purple Line corridor progress and also with the Department of Parks and MCDOT in what is essentially an on-going review of this large and important project.**

### **Funding**

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) FY 2013-2018 Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) includes \$41.6 million for Purple Line engineering work (most for Final Design) for FY

2014 beginning July 1, 2014. The CTP also notes that these funds will be reallocated within MTA's budget if there is no revenue increase in the 2013 legislative session now underway. The same language accompanies the programming element (\$17.4 million in FY 2014) for preliminary engineering for the Corridor Cities Transitway. County Council has forwarded a letter to the MDOT Acting Secretary noting the potential loss of these funds as "unacceptable."

Should funds be identified and/or the Purple Line engineering continues as scheduled, construction would begin no earlier than 2015 with the beginning of revenue service in 2020.