



Mandatory Referral #MR2016024 – Purple Line – Amendment – Silver Spring Transit Center Station

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SUMMARY

The MTA Office of Transit Development and Delivery has submitted a Purple Line Mandatory Referral Amendment related to the Purple Line alignment and platform location at the Paul S. Sarbanes Silver Spring Transit Center Station (SSTC). This modification to the plan previously reviewed by the Planning Board on March 20, 2014 involves a change that will result in (1) the Purple Line alignment crossing Colesville Road at a different angle and (2) the placement of the station platform on the northeast side of the Silver Spring Transit Center (at the third level adjacent to the kiss-and-ride drop-off) instead of the southwest side (between the transit center and Metrorail and MARC/CSX tracks located at an elevation approximately 80' above Colesville Road). There is no change to the Capital Crescent Trail in the vicinity of the Silver Spring Transit Center.

This amended plan for the Purple Line alignment and station location at the SSTC will continue to be refined as Preliminary Design for this change progresses through the balance of this calendar year. A vicinity map comparing the new alignment and station platform with the original alignment is shown in Figure 1 below. The location of the tracks and platform as depicted in Figure 1 is a concept level representation and is not intended to reflect actual location or scale. Staff recommended comments follow this Summary. Report narrative in **bold** print represents key points and/or the basis for recommended comments.

Figure 1 – Purple Line Alignment and Station Location Change at the Silver Spring Transit Center



RECOMMENDATIONS/COMMENTS

Staff recommends approval of the Purple Line Amendment at the Silver Spring Transit Center with the following comments transmitted to the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT), and the Washington Area Metropolitan Transit Authority (WMATA):

- 1. The Final Forest Conservation Plan for the SSTC will have to be amended by the Purple Line Forest Conservation Plan that will be submitted by the MTA as final design progresses.**
- 2. The new design includes all major functional elements with respect to connections and access included in the prior design and does so in the same general location and is therefore substantially consistent with the Purple Line Functional Master Plan.**
- 3. Provide the Planning Board additional briefings on the Purple Line SSTC alignment change as design progresses. Key focus areas of interest for these briefings include:**
 - additional detail on the CCT bridge impact on the SSTC Plaza area**
 - additional detail on the aesthetic treatments related to the bridge and structural elements – as well as plans developed to support activation of the space beneath the Metrorail Red Line and the Purple Line.**

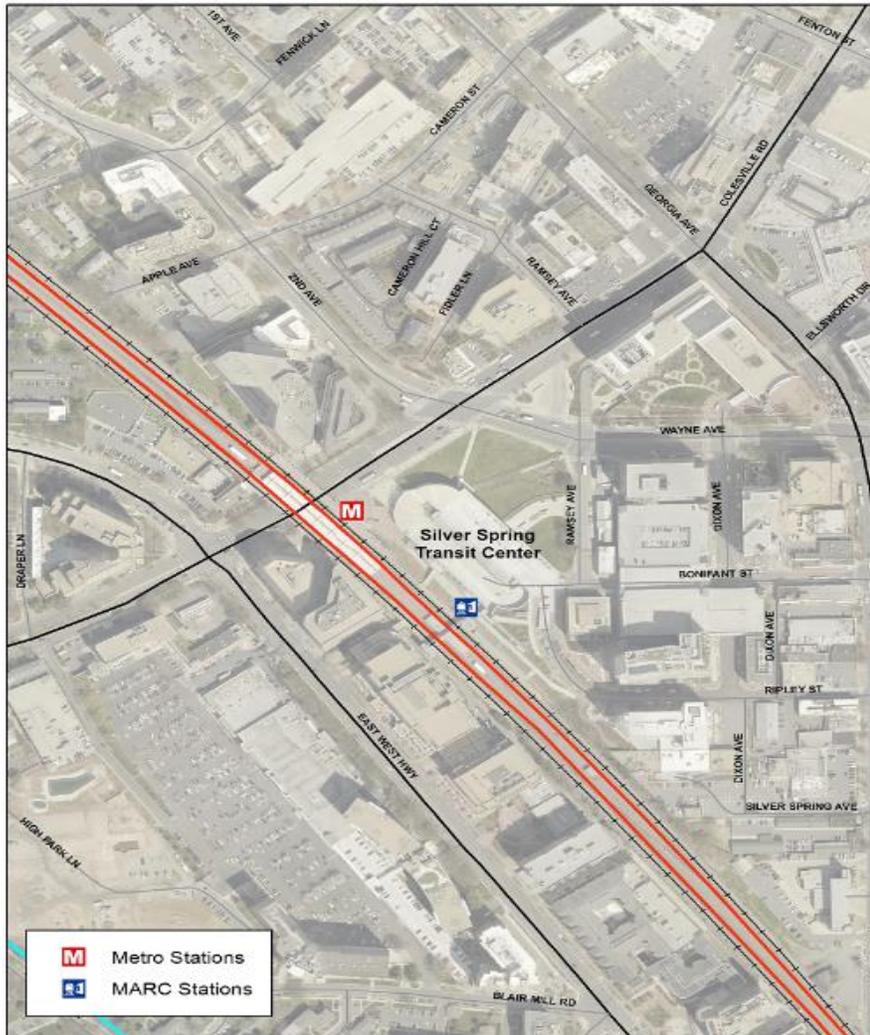
4. Consistent with the comment at the initial Mandatory Referral review, the MTA and WMATA should consider part of the remaining available area on the site as an area for the location of a Bicycle Parking Station.
5. Continue to work with all stakeholders to identify in the long term the appropriate uses for the available remaining area on this signature site.
6. Clarify whether there are escalators to and from the Purple Line platform and the street level.
7. Provide additional analysis to the Planning Board and staff of all safety and operational aspects of the platform area access at SSTC Level 3 where Bonifant Street, Ripley Street, and Ramsey Avenue converge.
8. Confirm that the sole CCT access point remains at the point where it meets the Metropolitan Branch Trail.
9. Continue to consult with Planning Department staff on the redesign of the Silver Spring station area.

SITE DESCRIPTION

Site Vicinity

This master planned project is located in downtown Silver Spring adjacent the Silver Spring Transit Center as shown in the aerial in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2 – Site Vicinity



Adjacent streets include Colesville Road (MD 384) to the northwest, Wayne Avenue to the north, Ramsey Avenue to the east, and the termination of Ripley Street to the south. Bonifant Street, Ripley Street, and Ramsey Avenue converge at the access point to the 3rd level of the SSTC on the southeastern edge of the site. The CSX/WMATA right of way is on the western edge of the SSTC.

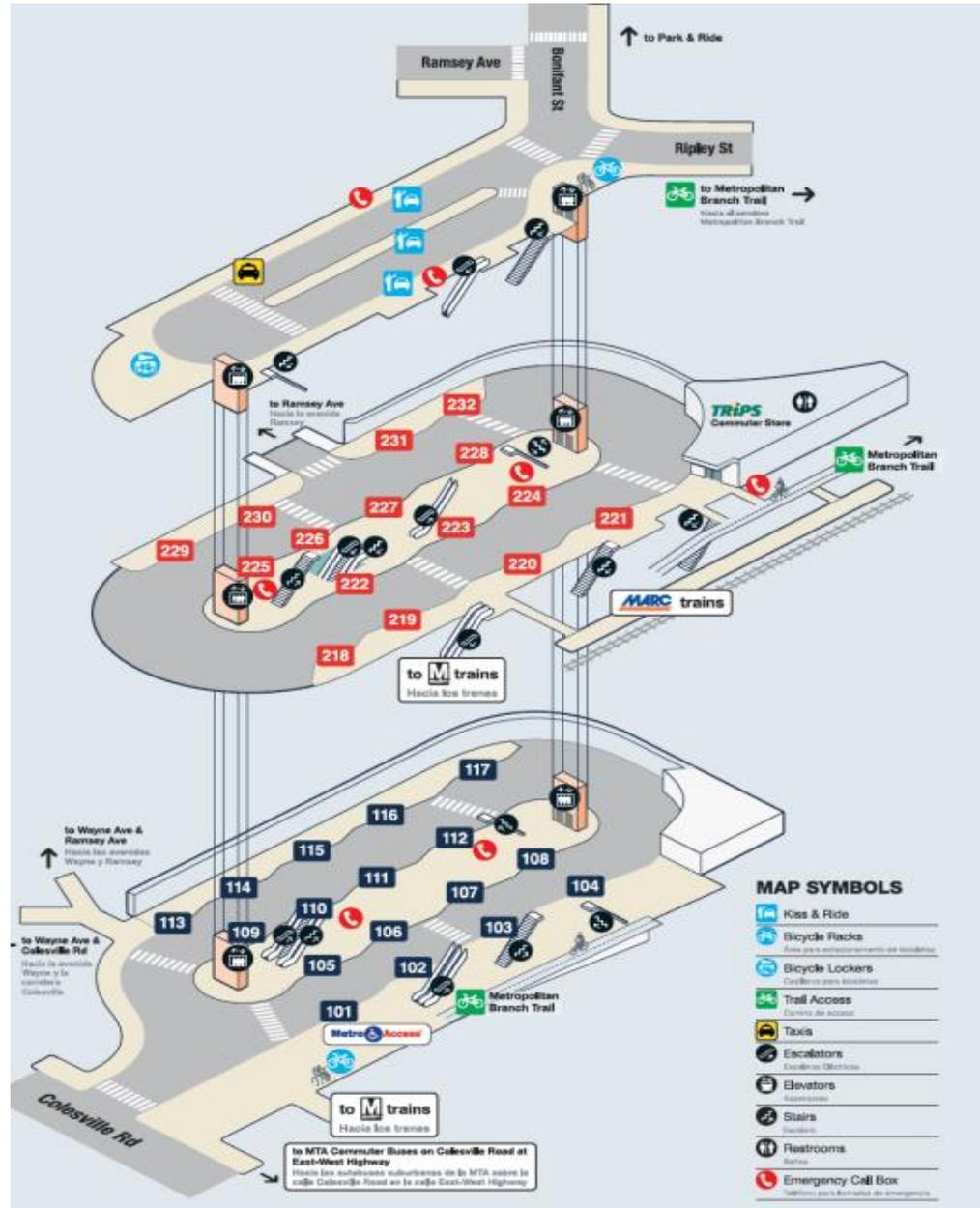
Existing Conditions

The site is one of the larger multi-modal transportation hubs in the country and consists of the following components:

- Metrorail Red Line Station
- Silver Spring Transit Center
- MARC Commuter Rail Station
- Metropolitan Branch Trail
- TRIPS Commuter Store
- Kiss & Ride, Taxi, and Car Sharing

There are a total of 32 bus bays on Levels 1 and 2 of the SSTC. Bus access to Level 1 is on Colesville Road and bus access to Level 2 is on Ramsey Avenue. Vehicular access to the Kiss & Ride, Taxi, and Car Sharing locations on Level 3 is from the point where Bonifant Street and Ripley Street intersect (see Figure 3).

Figure 3 – Paul S. Sarbanes Silver Spring Transit Center



Source: WMATA

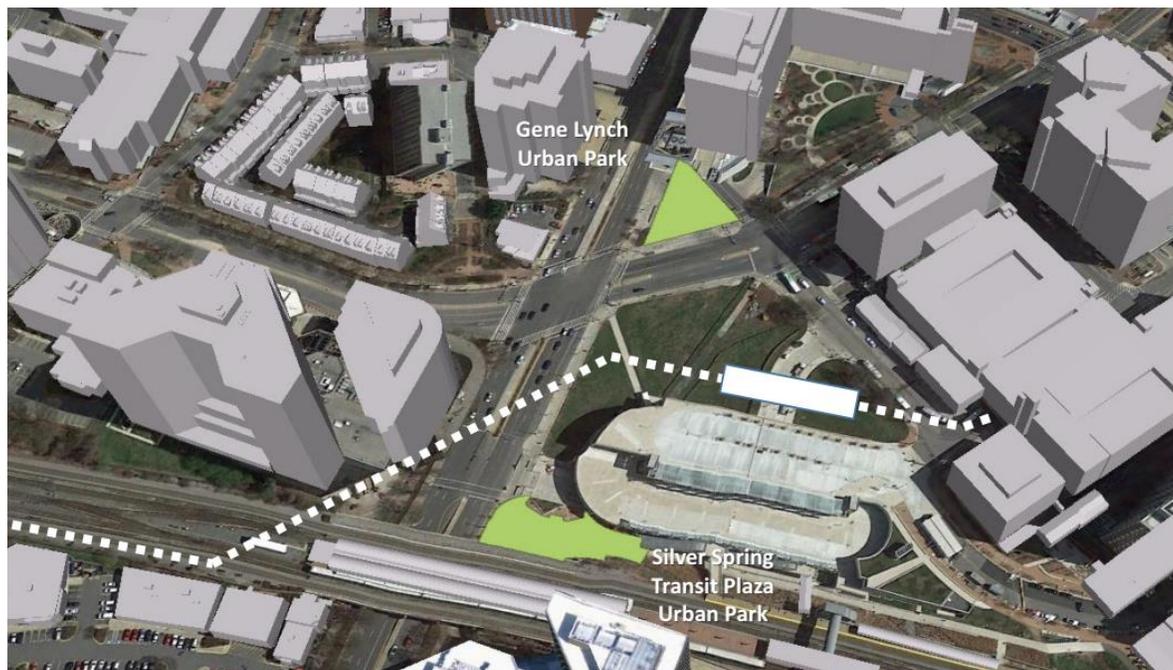
Another key feature of the SSTC is the Plaza that serves as the entry point from Colesville Road. The Plaza (see Figure 4) is an urban park and was constructed on a park easement that was established to replace an urban park that existed on another part of the parcel before the construction of the SSTC.

Figure 4 – SSTC Plaza



As reflected in the photo above, the Plaza functions as both a key Silver Spring gateway and functional element of this large multi-modal complex. The original Purple Line alignment would have resulted in the Purple Line being located about 80 feet above the Plaza with one or more piers located in the Plaza to support the Purple Line tracks and station. The new alignment avoids the Plaza area while coming somewhat closer to the Gene Lynch Urban Park (see Figure 5 below). The Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) alignment through the SSTC has not materially changed since the March 20, 2014 Mandatory Referral and will still be on an elevated structure that crosses Colesville Road and begins a gradual descent to a point where it meets the Metropolitan Branch Trail at Level 3 of the SSTC. The Preliminary Engineering Plans (30% design level) appear to show a pier located in or near the Plaza next to the Colesville Road curb.

Figure 5 – New Purple Line Alignment in Relation to SSTC Plaza Urban Park and Gene Lynch Urban Park



PRIOR PLANNING BOARD REVIEW / ACTION

The Planning Board reviewed the Purple Line Mandatory Referral on March 20, 2014.¹ The comments forwarded at that time for the segment of the Purple Line alignment near and adjacent to the SSTC were based on the original alignment as reflected in the Preliminary Engineering drawings. The comments at that time focused primarily on the connection with the Metrorail Station, SSTC and the Capital Crescent Trail.

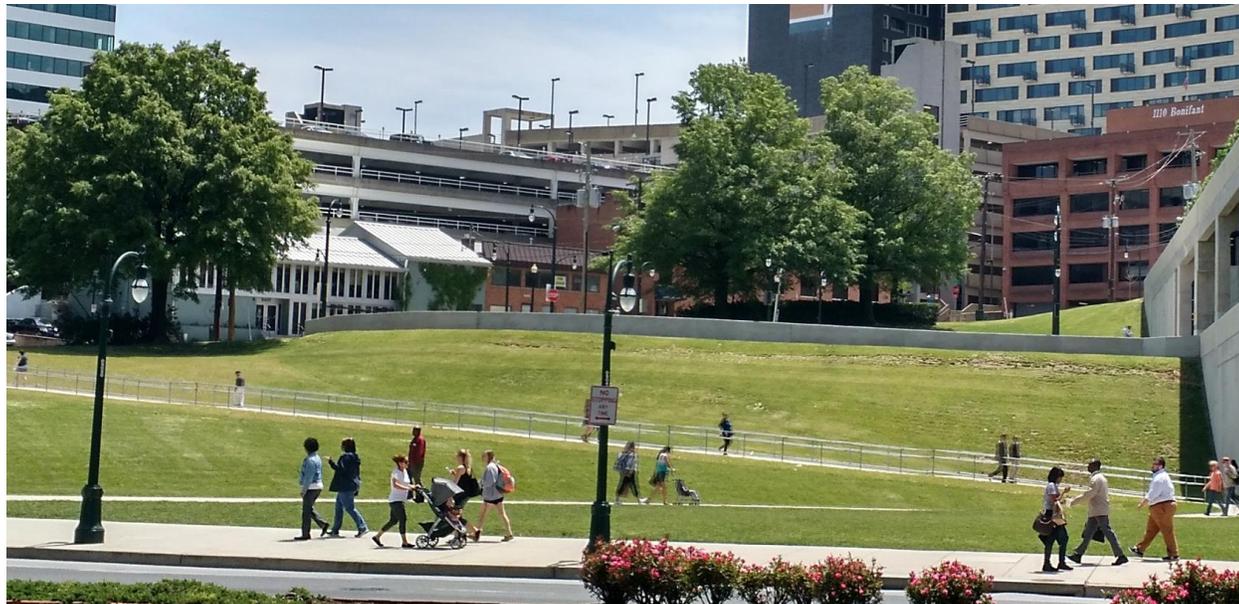
One of the Planning Board comments forwarded as part of the March 20, 2014 review was that MTA submit for Mandatory Referral any substantive changes in the plans for the Purple Line. The change in the alignment and platform location were considered by both the MTA and staff to be a substantive change in that it represented a significant modification to the project footprint. It is important to note there are other changes that have been made to the project in response to the value engineering exercise conducted by MTA and the subsequent submittal of proposals by the respective teams responding to the competitive procurement process. Those other changes within Montgomery County however do not involve significant modifications to the alignment, station locations, or other aspects of the project footprint.

In addition to the Purple Line Mandatory Referral on March 20, 2014, the Planning Board on March 10, 2005 and then again on June 7, 2007 reviewed Mandatory Referrals related to the Silver Spring Transit Center. A Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan was approved at the March 10, 2005 Planning Board meeting. That Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan reflected the joint development plan proposed for the site at that time. A

¹ See the Planning Department's Purple Line Mandatory Referral <http://ow.ly/8sAi300KS3o> for additional detail on the March 20, 2014 Planning Board review and comments.

Final Forest Conservation Plan reflecting the SSTC as the only development on the site was approved on July 15, 2008. **The Final Forest Conservation Plan for the SSTC will have to be amended by the Purple Line Forest Conservation Plan that will be submitted by the MTA as final design progresses.** The primary focus of both the Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan and the Final Forest Conservation Plan that was approved are the specimen size Willow Oak trees currently surviving in the lawn panel along the Ramsey Street right of way (see Figure 6).

Figure 6 – Willow Oak Trees Along Ramsey Avenue



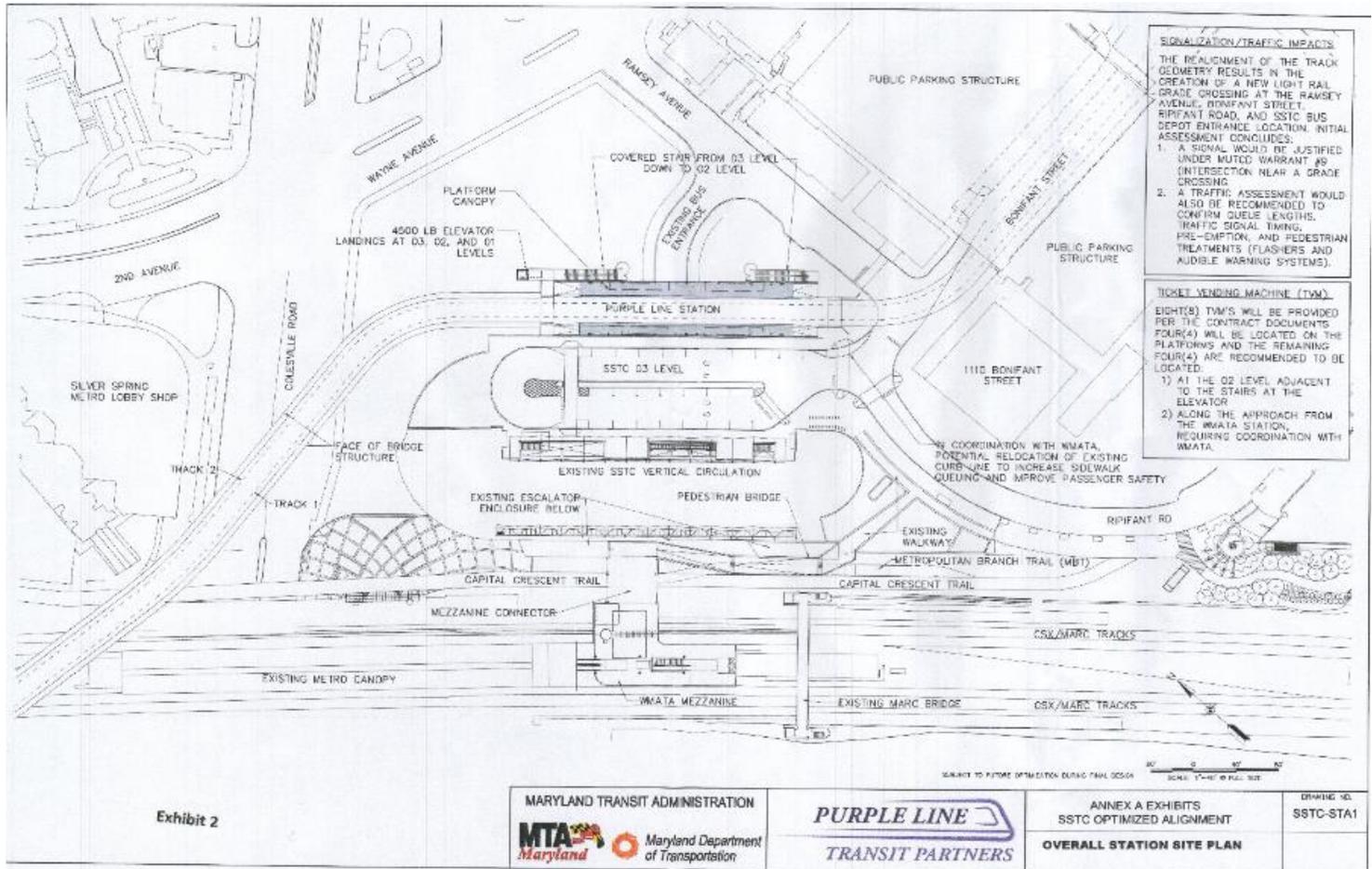
MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT (MOA) RELATED TO THIS PROJECT

The Planning Board on February 25, 2016 approved a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Commission (on behalf of the Montgomery County Department of Parks and the Planning Department) and the MTA. The MOA outlines in part a procedure for review and coordination through Purple Line Final Design. The concept plans included in this Mandatory Referral will be further refined during Final Design and reviewed at key milestones by the Interagency Working Group established under the MOA. **Consistent with the MOA, the MTA should provide the Planning Board additional briefings on the Purple Line SSTC alignment change as design progresses.**

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

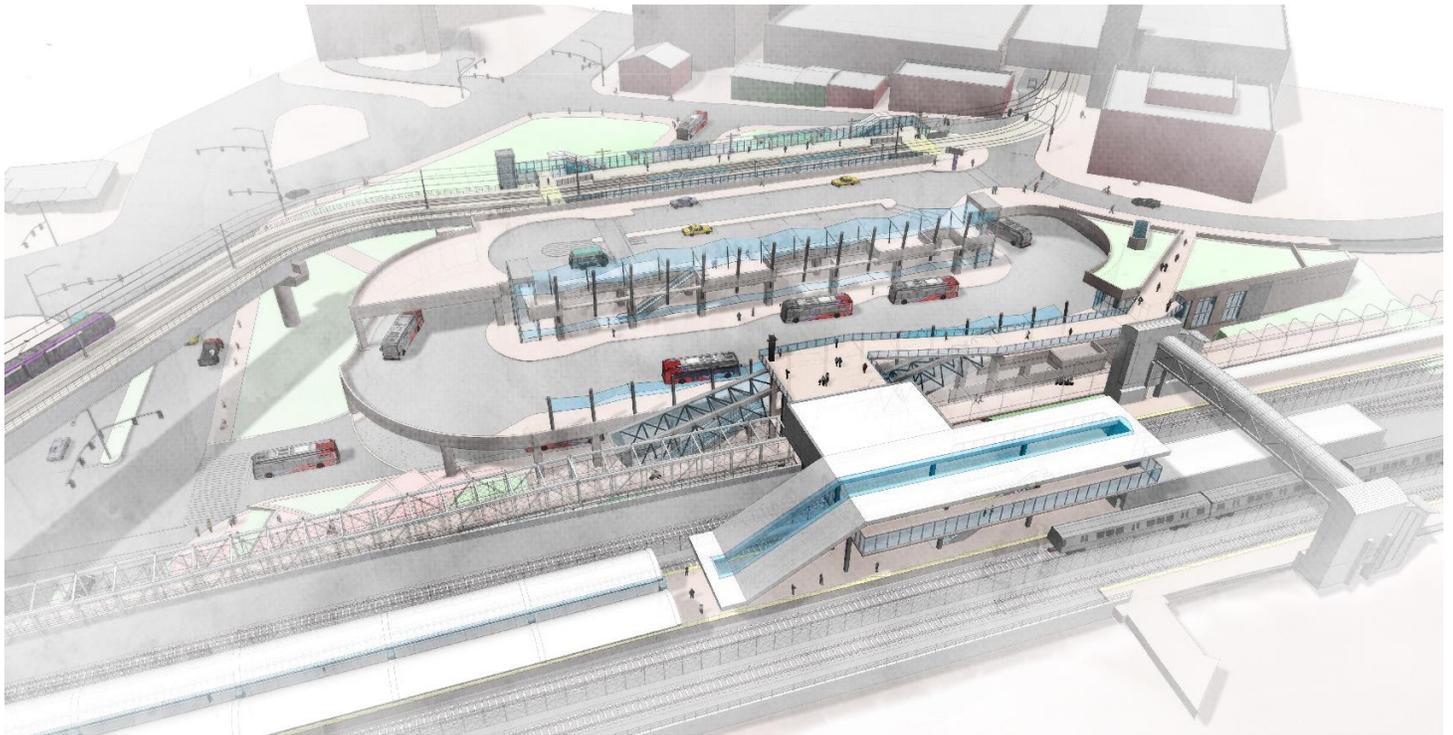
The change in the alignment will bring the Purple Line over Colesville Road at a different angle and relocate the station platforms adjacent to Level 3 of the SSTC near the intersection of Ripley Street and Bonifant Street. The plan view as submitted by the MTA as part of this Mandatory Referral Amendment is shown in Figure 7 below.

Figure 7 – Plan View of New Alignment & Station Location of the Purple Line at the Silver Spring Transit Center (SSTC)



The Purple Line tracks will be located above the 3rd level of the SSTC crossing Colesville Road and will descend to a point where is adjacent to the 3rd level of the SSTC where Ramsey Street, Bonifant Street and Ripley Street meet. A rendering of the how the new alignment and station location relate to the SSTC and Metrorail / MARC is shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8 – Purple Line Silver Spring Transit Center Station



GENERAL EVALUATION OF CHANGES

The proposed change to the alignment and station location offer advantages over the prior design as well as a few drawbacks.

The biggest advantage is it avoids the increased cost and complexity of constructing the Purple Line in the constrained area between the SSTC and WMATA/CSX right of way and the building displacement at 1110 Bonifant Street

The biggest drawback is the increase in time it will take to transfer between the Purple Line and Red Line although it is unclear what that increase is estimated to be at this point in the design process. Related to that issue, the MTA in its submittal noted that additional analysis of Purple Line, pedestrian/bike, vehicular, and bus access and movement where Ramsey Street, Bonifant Street and Ripley Street meet at Level 3 of the SSTC will be a focus as the plan is refined. Finally, it is also important to note the bridge over Colesville Road will be more visually prominent and consideration of the treatment / appearance of the bridge and associated structural elements should be reviewed as more detail design becomes available. **The MTA and its design team should provide the Planning Board with briefings on these issues – along with additional detail on the CCT bridge impact on the SSTC Plaza area – as Final Design progresses.**

MASTER PLAN CONSISTENCY

The adopted Purple Line Functional Master Plan (September 2010) notes key features of the Silver Spring Transit Center Station that reflect the prior plan to locate the alignment and station platforms above the Metrorail and MARC tracks with the necessary access points and connections associated with that design. As noted above, the new design contains elements that enhance some connections and access while increasing the time it will take to transfer between the Purple Line and Metrorail Red Line. **The new design includes all major functional elements with respect to connections and access included in the prior design and does so in the same general location and is therefore substantially consistent with the Purple Line Functional Master Plan.**

OUTREACH

A public notice of this Mandatory Referral was mailed to civic associations and businesses in the vicinity of the project between May 6, 2016 and May 16, 2016. The public notice was also posted on the Department's Development Activity Information Center (DARC). Finally, The Department's Purple Line web page included information on the submittal and Planning Board review date for this Mandatory Referral submittal.

BRIDGE OVER COLESVILLE ROAD

In reviewing the Mandatory Referral submittal, staff requested clarification on the extent to which current planning has taken into consideration the treatment/appearance of the bridge over Colesville Road (and associated structural elements) and the eventual activation of the space beneath it as it approaches the station. The MTA in response noted the importance of a safe and attractive pedestrian environment in the area along Colesville Road and beneath the Metrorail Red Line and MTA Purple Line and indicated plans to activate the space below the structure would be incorporated in the intermediate design phase. **The Planning Board should be briefed on additional detail on the aesthetic treatments related to the bridge and structural elements – as well as plans developed to support activation of the space beneath the Metrorail Red Line and the Purple Line – at 30% design.**

Figure 9 below shows the area below the bridge and along Colesville Road in question in a rendering included in the MTA Mandatory Referral submittal.

Figure 9 – Purple Line Crossing Colesville Road with Station Platforms on SSTC 3rd Level Above Ripley Street Bus Access



REDEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL ON REMAINING PART OF SITE

The MTA in response to staff inquiry, has indicated it is “committed to working with WMATA, M-NCPPC, and other stakeholders toward a goal of “no net loss” of developable area at the open site at the corner of Wayne Avenue and Colesville Road” (see Figure 9 above). MTA in an e-mail to staff also notes that the site is owned by WMATA and that construction requirements of the Purple Line and WMATA – as well as on-going operations and maintenance requirements of the Purple Line and the SSTC – could influence the timing and constructability of any redevelopment.

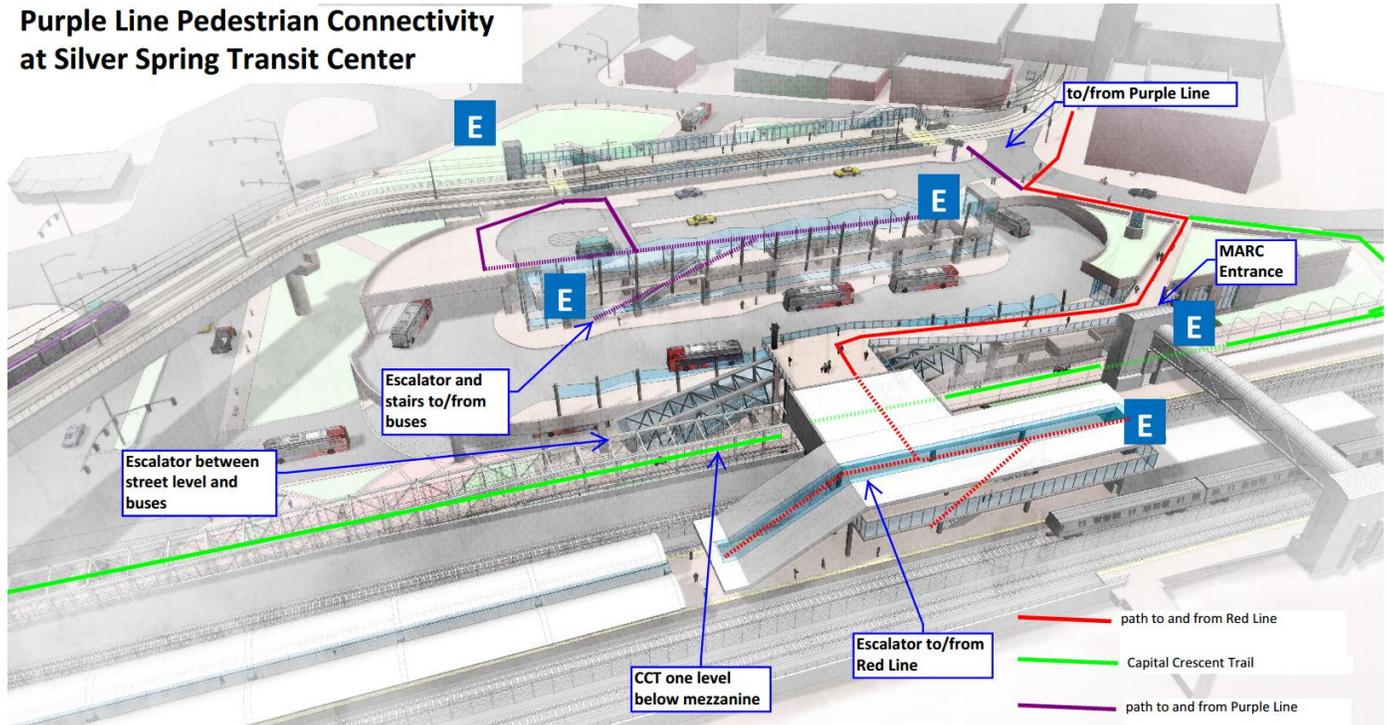
One Planning Board comment in the March 20, 2014 Purple Line Mandatory Referral was to provide an area for a Bicycle Parking Station on the remaining part of the parcel where the building at 1110 Bonifant Street is now located. In the original plans, this building was scheduled to be acquired and demolished. As previously noted, this is no longer required so the potential location of a needed Bicycle Parking Station for long term bike parking at this large multi-modal complex remains a priority. **Consistent with the comment at the initial Mandatory Referral review, the MTA and WMATA should consider part of the remaining available area on the site as an area for the location of a Bicycle Parking Station.**

In addition, the MTA and WMATA should as the MTA has indicated, continue to work with all stakeholders to identify in the long term the appropriate uses for the available remaining area on this signature site.

PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

The MTA has provided a diagram depicting pedestrian circulation between the Purple Line in its new location and other key elements of the site (see Figure 10 below).

Figure 10 – Pedestrian Circulation at the Purple Line SSTC Station



Important aspects of the circulation as noted in Figure 10 above include the following:

- Two access point to and from the Purple Line platform directly to SSTC Level 3
- Major convergence point of Purple Line train, pedestrians, and vehicles at SSTC Level 3 where Ripley Street, Bonifant Street and Ramsey Avenue meet.
- Elevator from Purple Line platform to street level (also shown in Figure 9)
- Mezzanine over Red Line platform similar to prior design but with a new connection to and from Purple Line as shown above in Figure 10. Access to the new connector is from Level 3 of the SSTC and will involve walking up (when transferring from the Purple Line to the Red Line) to the mezzanine level and then taking an escalator or elevator down to the Red Line.

Not shown in this figure are the escalators to the Purple Line platform to and from the street level. Also not shown and not provided at this point is the relationship between the CCT and the Purple Line bridge over Colesville Road and the potential for any direct connection between the CCT and the SSTC. The MTA has indicated there are no significant changes to the profile or elevation of the CCT which suggest there is also no change to access to and from the CCT. This would mean the access to and from the CCT remains at the point where the CCT and Metropolitan Branch Trail meet.

With respect to the Purple Line SSTC station interface with the SSTC, Metrorail Red Line, and CCT, the MTA should:

Clarify whether there are escalators to and from the Purple Line platform and the street level;

As noted in the MTA submittal, provide additional analysis of all safety and operational aspects of the platform area access at SSTC Level 3 where Bonifant Street, Ripley Street, and Ramsey Avenue converge;

Confirm that the sole CCT access point remains at the point where it meets the Metropolitan Branch Trail.

Continue to consult with Planning Department staff on the redesign of the Silver Spring station area.