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Wednesday, Nov. 17, 2010

Silver Spring Transit Center still on track for fall 2011 opening

Concrete pours encounter few obstacles

by Alison Bryant | Staff Writer

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It appears that all is well behind those large fences surrounding the construction site of the Paul S. Sarbanes Silver Spring Transit Center.

The Montgomery County Department of General Services is looking at an October 2011 completion date for the three-tier, \$95 million project, said Don Scheuerman, section chief of the project management

section of the Department of General Services.

"We're making good progress," Scheuerman said. "We're to that point where we're pouring a lot of concrete, and we're very happy about that."

Concrete trucks have been filing in and out of the construction site since August. The pours start early in the morning and finish around noon or 1 p.m., Scheuerman said. Five of the 13 pours have been completed, and the biggest one is yet to come with 1,100 cubic yards, he said.

General Services diligently notifies residents of the pours within 48 hours through e-mail, he said. So far, the trucks haven't run into any traffic delays, and residents have not complained about noise levels, Scheuerman said.

"We're working within the guidelines of using a flag person instead of backing horns so the early morning trucks aren't waking people up in the apartment buildings," he said.

This eliminates the high-pitched beeping sound the trucks normally make when they drive in reverse.

The next big steps after the concrete pours are installing steel supports and general supports. Then the construction workers can put in the elevators and escalators, Scheuerman said.

Casey Anderson, a Silver Spring resident and member of the Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board, said that though the construction sometimes causes overcrowding on the sidewalks, it has not proven to be a major inconvenience.



Photo from Montgomery County
Construction of the Paul S. Sarbanes Silver Spring Transit Center is on schedule for an October 2011 opening. Upon completion, it will be one of the busiest transit centers in Maryland.

"There's a little bit of confusion over there on the sidewalk, as you have to deal with the fencing and all that stuff that keeps people out of the way of the construction," Anderson said. "I think the construction is about what you would expect. Nobody loves going through it, but it's not a big deal."

Anderson said he's looking forward to seeing the project take shape, as the overall design is difficult to visualize in the early stages.

Kathlin Smith, a Silver Spring resident who lives about five blocks from the construction site, said she hasn't been bothered by noise due to a buffer of trees. Though she does not ride the Metro daily, she said she thinks it has been a lengthy construction process.

"It's unfortunate that it's taking so long and everyone has to make such a detour," she said. "But that's the reality of it."


Still, the project will likely benefit the community, she said.

"I think it's a great idea that they're doing, and I think it will be really nice when it's done," Smith said.

The center is supposed to be one of the busiest transit centers in Maryland. The first level, with an entrance off Colesville Road, and the second level, with entry from Ramsey Avenue, will hold a total of 34 bus bays serving various local and inter-city services. The top level, accessed by Bonifant Street, will include 54 parking spaces for Kiss and Ride users and taxi cabs.

Other transit options will include the existing Metrorail station and MARC lines. The hiker-biker Capital Crescent Trail will link up with the Metropolitan Branch Trail at the transit center.

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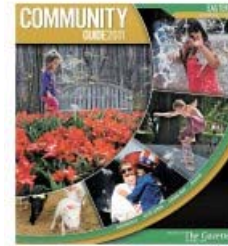
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