More concrete inconsistencies found on Silver Spring Transit Center

County council considers legal action against developer

By Kristi Tousignant, Staff Writer

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A county-commissioned report found significant portions of the concrete poured on the middle and upper floors of the transit center either are too thin or too thick, said David Dise, director of the Montgomery County Department of General Services.

“We are disappointed,” said Montgomery County Council President Roger Berliner (D-Dist. 1) of Potomac. “This was a human mistake.”

The county could be considering legal action against developer Foulger-Pratt.

The county’s contract with Foulger-Pratt includes a damages clause in which the contractor owes the county $8,700 per day the project is delayed, Dise said. Foulger-Pratt will be responsible for fixing and paying for the problem, Dise said.

Foulger-Pratt did not return calls for comment by deadline Tuesday.

The council’s Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy & Environment Committee went into a closed session Monday to discuss legal action, but Berliner said no decision was made.

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Berlin said the county council would not decide on legal action until Foulger-Pratt released its plans...
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To fix the problem, expected in a month. A subcontractor, Facchina, poured the concrete on the building.

The county and other agencies involved, such as the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority and the Maryland Transit Administration, will discuss Foulger-Pratt’s plan and whether to implement it.

The county commissioned a structural evaluation of the site by project architect Parsons Brinckerhoff. The study found not only thin areas, but also spots that were too thick. When the concrete is too thick, the reinforcement bars cannot support its weight, Dise said.

The reinforcement bars spread horizontally to create the bones of the floor. Concrete is poured over these bars and should be 10 inches thick, Dise said. In some areas it is 8 inches or 11 inches thick, according to the study.

The center, which was supposed to open June 2011, has faced multiple delays.

Construction began in 2008 and hit a roadblock in its early phases when utility lines had to be rerouted, Dise said.

The center was rescheduled to open in January 2012 until inspectors discovered the concrete problem.

Until the developer, county, WMATA and MTA decide on a plan to remedy the concrete inconsistencies, the opening date for the transit center remains uncertain.

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