

Bethesda Purple Line Minor Master Plan Appendix – Benefits of Redevelopment

Benefits of Redevelopment

Table 1 provides an evaluation of the benefits of redeveloping the Apex Building before or after the end of 2015, compared to current plans.

Capital Crescent Trail: The 1994 Bethesda CBD Sector Plan recommends that the mainline Capital Crescent Trail branch into a Surface Route and a Tunnel Route between Elm Street Park and Woodmont Avenue. This recommendation was confirmed in the 2005 Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan. The Surface Route was envisioned to provide access to trail users accessing local land use, while the Tunnel Route was envisioned to separate trail users from the traffic and delays of a busy intersection. In 2012 the County Council decided not to proceed with the Tunnel Route for the trail as then envisioned, due to the extensive cost and liability to the Apex Building. However, with the removal of the Apex Building it is possible to construct a new tunnel for the trail that crosses Wisconsin Avenue below grade. While this tunnel could be built if redevelopment of the Apex Building occurs before or after the end of 2015, the tunnel could be designed to be straighter and would have a lower cost if the building is torn down prior to the end of 2015.

Planned Red Line Entrance: Existing plans include two high speed elevators on Elm Street as part of the Bethesda Station South Entrance project. These elevators have a visual presence on Elm Street and provide a circulation area that is adequate, but not ideal. If the Apex Building is torn down by the end of 2015, the elevators could be incorporated into the redeveloped Apex Building site with additional space for pedestrian circulation. This would reduce the cost of the high-speed elevators by approximately \$10 million.

Woodmont Plaza: Existing Purple Line plans will have an aesthetical impact on Woodmont Plaza. The Purple Line tail tracks would extend up to 100 feet into the plaza, and a ventilation tower that is 40 feet wide by 18 feet long by 90 feet high may need to be located in the plaza. If the Apex Building is torn down by the end of 2015, the ventilation tower could be incorporated into a redeveloped Apex Building and the tail tracks would extend only about 30 feet into the plaza. If the Apex Building is torn down after the end of 2015, the ventilation tower could be relocated into the redeveloped Apex Building for a cost, but the tail tracks would continue to extend 100 feet into the plaza.

Bicycle Storage: With redevelopment of the Apex Building site it is possible to reserve space for a full-service bicycle storage facility that is adjacent to the Capital Crescent Trail, the Red Line station entrance, and the Purple Line platform. A bicycle storage facility – not to be confused with a bikeshare station – is important to provide access to and from transit and for commuters to Bethesda.

Purple Line Platform: Current plans for the Bethesda Purple Line station include a platform that is constrained. About 12 support columns for the Apex Building would be located in the platform, creating an impediment for pedestrian circulation and reducing the waiting area for boarding passengers. In addition, the platform is on a slight curve so there would be a small gap between the train and the platform. The estimated pedestrian level of service at this station is the lowest along the alignment under current plans. If the Apex Building is torn down by the end of 2015, the platform area for the Bethesda Purple Line station could be improved by removing the Apex Building support columns and

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straightening out the platform to minimize the gaps, improving the pedestrian flow on the platform at this end of line station.

Redevelopment of Apex Building: If the owners of the Apex Building decide to redevelop after the Purple Line is constructed, there is likely to be an additional cost to construct over an operational light rail line.

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Table 1: Benefits of Apex Building Redevelopment

Item	Current Plans		Apex Building Demolished Before End of 2015 ²	Apex Building <u>Not</u> Demolished Before End of 2015
Capital Crescent Trail	<u>Local Trail</u> : street ¹ <u>Thru Trail</u> : street ¹		<u>Local Trail</u> : street ¹ <u>Thru Trail</u> : new tunnel separate from Purple Line	<u>Local Trail</u> : street ¹ <u>Thru Trail</u> : new tunnel separate from Purple Line (curvier, more costly)
Planned Red Line Station Entrance	Pedestrian Circulation	Adequate	More space for pedestrian circulation	Adequate
	Streetscape Aesthetics	Elevators on Elm Street sidewalk	Elevators in Apex Building site	Elevators on Elm Street sidewalk
Woodmont Plaza Aesthetics	Ventilation Tower	Very large structure most likely in plaza (40 ft x 18 ft x 90 ft)	<u>During Purple Line Construction</u> : Structure integrated into Apex site	<u>During Purple Line Construction</u> : Very large structure most likely in plaza <u>After Purple Line Construction</u> : Potential costly relocation into Apex site
	Purple Line Tail Tracks	About 100 ft	About 30 ft	About 100 ft
Long Term Bicycle Station Facility	None		Integrated into Apex Building site	Difficult to integrate
Purple Line Platform	Adequate - pillars impede pedestrians - curved platform (gaps) - co-mingling w/sidewalk users		Better - unimpeded circulation - straight platform (no gaps) - no co-mingling w/sidewalk users	Adequate - pillars impede pedestrians - curved platform (gaps) - no co-mingling w/sidewalk users
Redevelopment of Apex Building Site	n/a		<u>During Purple Line Construction</u> : no additional cost <u>After Purple Line Construction</u> : adds cost to developer	<u>During Purple Line Construction</u> : n/a <u>After Purple Line Construction</u> : adds cost to developer