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Foulger-Pratt to develop portion of transit center

Key player in redevelopment of downtown Silver Spring to build hotel, residential units

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by Meredith Hooker
Staff Writer

Rockville-based developer Foulger-Pratt Company plans to build two residential buildings and a hotel above a multi-modal transit center to be built at the Silver Spring Metro station.

The first priority of the center is to make different types of transit easily accessible to users and increase ridership, said Bryant Foulger, a principal at Foulger Pratt. That's why Foulger-Pratt is working with the architect designing the transit center, to ensure compatibility.

"We're real believers in transit-oriented development," he said at a Nov. 15 Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board commercial and economic development committee meeting.

Foulger-Pratt is well known to many Silver Spring residents. The company, along with Peterson Companies and Argo Investment Company, redeveloped downtown Silver Spring, creating a town center concept on Ellsworth Drive with restaurants and shops.

The \$75 million transit center will have three levels, taking advantage of the change in grade on the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's property. There will be an entrance on Colesville Road between Wayne Avenue and East West Highway, a second level to be accessed off Ramsey Avenue and a third level also accessible from Ramsey Avenue.

The new center would bring together buses, Metro trains, MARC trains, taxi cabs, a hiker-biker trail and intercity bus services in one place, and would also accommodate whatever form the Bi-County Transitway, also known as the Purple Line, takes.

The hotel and two residential buildings will be built above the center, Foulger said. All three buildings will be 200 feet tall — the height limit in that area.

"It's a very, very desirable place to be," he said of the location.

The hotel will have about 200 rooms, Foulger said, with primary access off Colesville Road and Ramsey Avenue. Retail will be located on the first floor of the hotel.

In total, the residential component will have about 420 units, Foulger said. He has not yet determined whether it will be apartments or condos. Much, he said, depends on the market.

There will also be a park and plaza on site, with water and other elements to create "white noise" to mask the sounds of the center, Foulger said.

One resident at the meeting raised concerns that people would not go to downtown Silver Spring if they had all that they needed at the transit center site.

“Will this be keeping people there at the center?” asked Silver Spring resident Marcie Stickle. “We want them to come up into the downtown Silver Spring that you’ve created.”

Foulger said the approximately 25,000 square feet retail at the transit center won’t be “destination retail,” and will be geared primarily toward travelers and residents. There might be a restaurant or two, or a small grocery, he said.

The transit center can move forward before his project does, Foulger said. The center is not dependent on his project. The transit center project is expected to go before the Montgomery County Planning Board in January.

The transit center is a public/private development by the Maryland Department of Transportation, Maryland Transit Authority, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, Montgomery County and Foulger-Pratt Company.

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