

Charles County approves new VanGO Transit Operations Site

Posted by [Zach Hill](#) On 11/29/2018

LaPlata, MD - At their Nov. 27 meeting, the Board of Charles County Commissioners pushed out a legacy decision, voting on a final site for the new VanGO Transit Operations and Maintenance facility. The idea to construct an approximately 20,000 square foot maintenance facility across nearly 6.3-acres of land came from a growing need for additional public transportation. It has been calculated that mass transit is used for more than 900,000 passenger trips annually across the 16 local Charles County routes.

This increasing need for additional mass transit support facilities in the county was brought to light in a 2013 "feasibility survey." The survey helped to determine exactly what would be needed to build such a facility, such as space for buses, automobiles, and service vehicles, as well as proposing a plethora of possible construction sites.

Eventually, a short list was comprised of three main sites that were front-runners for facility construction; the Graphics Road Site, the Demarr Road Site, and the Driggs Site. These sites, all located in or near White Plains, gave the commissioners a variety of factors to base their decisions on such as size, ownership type, and environmental impact.

However, in cooperation with the Maryland Department of Transportation(MDOT) and the Maryland Transit Administration(MTA), the Board of Commissioners decided on the Driggs Site. The Driggs Site is a county-owned tract of 42-acres that is currently being used as a vegetative recycling center off of Piney Church Road, almost directly across from the Regency Furniture Stadium.

With a hefty price tag of \$12 million anticipated to be spent building the new VanGO facility, significant funding from the federal and state level are going to be necessary to complete the project. Currently, 90 percent of the bill is expected to be footed by upper level authority(although not promised yet), while 10 percent will fall under the county's responsibility. Of that 10 percent share, the value for using county-owned property will be included.

After passing with unanimous support from commissioners, the project is expected to move into the design and engineering phase over the next fiscal year, so long as the necessary funding is secured on the state and federal level.

"County staff plans to apply for Federal Transit Administration(FTA) and Maryland Department of Transportation/Maryland Transit Administration funding in FY-2020 to assist in the design and engineering phase of this project," Chief of Transit Jeffry Barnett said in a letter to the Homeowners Association that contains the Driggs Site. "If awarded funding, FTA will be providing 80 percent, MDOT/MTA 10 percent and Charles County 10 percent of the total costs."

At this time, it is unclear what would happen if the county did not receive their anticipated funding for this project.

Copyright © 2021 thebaynet.com. All rights reserved.