
Letter re: ZC Case 24-11

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To DCOZ - ZC Submissions (DCOZ) <DCOZ-ZCSubmissions@dc.gov>

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Dear Commission McCray,

Thank you for posting the notice to Nextdoor regarding the project at New York & Montana Aves. NE and inviting input. As there is a time constraint, I felt I should at least share where that particular property fell into a scheme for rail transit I had been working on that is somewhat tied into a variety of solutions I had been working on for the Northeast quadrant. Specifically, that triangular set of parcels (I was looking at the use of the entire area as a prospect PPP) I was considering as a prospective site for a sort of intermodal transfer station that coincides with several potential rail routes, one of which would correspond to a DC - Baltimore Maglev line, and the other being a bonafide Metro line. The Metro line is meant to coordinate with a separately-proposed Blue line reroute, in the context of the RFK Stadium site development, but could stand on its own.

As my attention has been split between the city projects I had been working on and some federal issues which have taken precedence, I'll try to give you the general idea here:

"Serving the East Coast Corridor, this mail and package exchange facility moves freight as a multi-modal exchange, providing an expeditious link to the USPS distribution facility at Brentwood and the Freight handling facilities to the East.

Positioned on Route 50, this site serves truck freight into and out of the city, oriented on a triangle with Rt 50, Rt 1, and Montana Ave connections.

Whereas most distribution facilities work on only one or a few levels, the smallish footprint and advantageous cross-section of transit accessibility creates the impetus to experiment with vertical freight exchange, using direct off-and-on loading below grade with gantry facilities, with freight elevators delivering to a floor of on-and-off truck/trailer loading, a floor of freight-handling to move to next-step / box truck and last-mile / cargo van delivery transport.

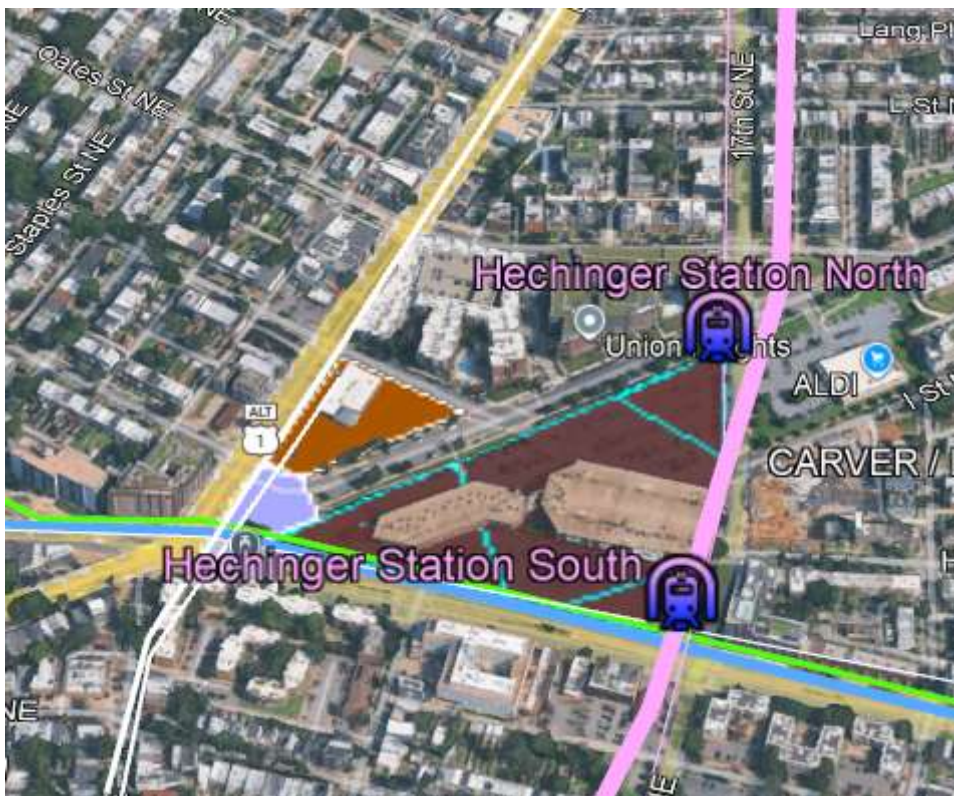
Colocation could integrate USPS last mile delivery services on site with a dedicated first-floor delivery facility isolated from the rest of the complex.

Similarly, USPS and Amazon Delivery Lockers can be provided at a first floor retail facility.



Both the East-West (New York Ave) and North-South (Bladensburg Rd) alignments are presently considered options for rail routes to and from Baltimore.

The North-South alignments are considered specifically for a Metro expansion coinciding with a Hechinger Mall station, which itself is meant to serve as a bridge between Union Station and a separately-proposed RFK Stadium-North station.



This Hechinger site would make use of the H Street / Benning Road alignment with an improved Street Car solution (suspension) between Union Station and RFK-North.

In principle, the site in question serves as a connective piece that is meant to facilitate package handling while at the same time improving access to the Arboretum and serving as a potentially novel way to deal with urban mail and package delivery (essentially serving either as a pickup location or as a hub for last-mile delivery--a middle-ground between traditional industrial freight handlers and big-box retailers). The New York Ave site was identified as a potentially better fit that the Hechinger Mall site was considered for; That scheme was expressed as:

"Not too far from Commander Stadium and the MagLev Train Station, Hechinger Mall would become a freight depot with Big Box Transfer and Retail Space for Walmart, Amazon, USPS, and others. Whereas MagLev and traditional passenger rail would connect at the RFK Complex, freight rail would be diverted to this location, and automated freight-handling equipment (gantry, AV/EV container movers, elevators, escalators, warehousing) would offload goods for the city. A smaller onloading facility would allow for additions to north and southbound freight routes.

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The facility would feature maximum space usage, with multiple floors including an underground rail depot and trucking logistics for a small urban intermodal freight system. Having an integrated package handling facility near to the urban center might make tenants like Walmart return to unique properties like that on H near North Capitol.

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Being at the corner of Maryland Ave, Benning Rd, Directly adjacent to Alt Rt 1, 17th Street, and various mid-sized off-shoots produces an ideal logistics hub within the city limits.

The structure overtaking Hechinger Mall, presently owned by the Ashkenazy Group (the same litigating members connected to DC's Union Station), would consist of three vertical phases:

Subterranean: Freight Depot in the general style of Chicago's Merchandise Mart.

First Floor-Multi-story Train Station, providing connectivity points for:

- H-Street Streetcar, reconfigured for direct access from Union Station.*
- Regional Maglev tunnel routing by way of Lincoln-Park*
- Eastbound transit feature connecting Union Station with [FedEx Field] and eventual 495 Metro Loop.*
- Local vehicular traffic, drop-off, pick-up for both pedestrians and goods (Amazon Locker, USPS Locker)*

Above-Station: Highrise Apartments with Stepped, Tiered, or cut-out elevated plazas/overlooks particularly facing Union Station and the Capitol building. Would request a height exemption, allowing for roofdeck pools, central integrated park/plaza, and potentially an integrated Hotel on the West corner of the property, providing for best views along Maryland Ave and H Street."

As it stands with both sites considered, the Hechinger Mall location would be more retail-oriented, whereas the New York Ave location would be more geared towards high-throughput logistics. The two sites, in theory, could be operated in tandem.

The "Pink Line" Route was originally conceived as a way of improving connectivity to Anacostia and the Poplar Point Project while improving connectivity generally in the NE and SE quadrants. A rough concept can be found at a temporary site I have up:

<https://ekbsolutions.godaddysites.com/>

Regards,
Elliot Boyce