



DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

David E. Dise
Director

December 30, 2009

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Dr. Royce Hanson, Chairman
Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARKLAND PLANNING COMMISSION

Dear Dr. Hanson:

The Draft Purple Line Functional Plan reflects the County Executive and County Council February 2, 2009, joint letter with recommendations for the locally preferred alternative and closely follows the Maryland Department of Transportation locally preferred alternative.

The February 2, 2009, joint letter requested additional analyses be undertaken during preliminary engineering. The Draft Purple Line Functional Plan should specifically list these additional analyses and identify the right-of-way issues associated with each of the following additional analyses:

- (1) Examine the feasibility of using hybrid light rail vehicles that do not require wires, poles, and electrical substation
- (2) Identify more access points to the Capital Crescent Trail
- (3) Maximize the retention of existing trees in the corridor
- (4) Investigate surface LRT operations in Silver Spring to ensure safe operation with respect to pedestrians and vehicular traffic
- (5) Study pedestrian, vehicular, LRT operations in Silver Spring, including vehicle queuing, on-street parking operations, and the design of the Green Trail
- (6) Develop detailed designs for the Capital Crescent Trail that include access points, retaining walls, security and fencing, landscaping, aesthetic treatments for new bridges, signing and markings, bicycle facilities at stations, and the public plaza at the Woodmont East terminus
- (7) Prepare a phasing plan along University Boulevard that identifies how LRT implementation will be coordinated with the wider master plan typical section
- (8) Provide continuous sidewalks and/or shared use paths on both sides of roadways that carry the Purple Line alignment; and
- (9) Include mitigation strategies for wetlands, parkland, wheel squeal locations, historic resources, and Parks Department Brookfield Road Maintenance site

In addition to the foregoing areas for study, please consider the following comments from Executive Branch departments.

Office of the Director
101 Monroe Street, 9th Floor, Rockville, Maryland 20850
www.montgomerycountymd.gov

Design of the Green
Capital Crescent

Department of Transportation

The Draft Purple Line Functional Plan should address a few critical components needed to preserve right of way and to develop station area plans. The LRT system will require electrical substations perhaps every mile or two for the length of the corridor. These electrical substations typically are one-story buildings with space for maintenance vehicle parking and for servicing. These buildings need to have road access and a secured perimeter. The Plan should identify feasible locations for these substations along the LRT route and specifically how they will be accommodated along the Capital Crescent Trail and the East Silver Spring segments.

The Plan does not develop comprehensive station area plans and leaves out how formal and informal kiss-and-ride will be accommodated. This is especially critical for all of the proposed stations except for Bethesda, Silver Spring, and Takoma Park Transit Center. The Plan needs to identify the size and location of the kiss-and-ride areas and needs to investigate in preliminary engineering traffic issues and pedestrian safety. The Plan should also identify the location and condition of sidewalk and bicycle access to each of the stations and identify facilities that need to be built or reconstructed to accommodate the Purple Line stations.

The Plan delves into operational issues (proposed restrictions to existing on-street parking, adding left-turn lanes at existing signalized intersections, etc.) where the Purple Line is intended to be located on existing streets. DOT opposes having such details in a planning document and urges their removal. Operational decisions to include the decision to create a one-way street and whether to allow or remove on-street parking are DOT and SHA determinations, and should not be addressed in this functional Master Plan as they require traffic analyses. These specific references should be removed from the document, and merely identify that a potential cross-section issue may exist and will have to be coordinated with the appropriate agency to develop a solution. The lack of detail in this Plan makes it difficult to analyze the appropriateness or feasibility of implementing such recommendations. If those suggestions are retained in the document, it should provide more detailed drawings of the proposed restrictions and modifications which can be reviewed by MCDOT.

Department of Police

The Police Department recommends that an interagency working group similar to the Interim Operations Working Group for the Silver Spring Transit Center Project construction be created to deal with and plan for traffic patterns and coordination during the construction of the Purple Line.

A light rail system will add a new dimension to the approach for handling vehicular/pedestrian conflicts and keeping both safe and moving smoothly. For example, the investigation of crashes involving vehicles/pedestrians/trains will raise issues related to disruption of schedules and the moving of disabled trains from the track/road will have to be addressed. Management of these issues will be multijurisdictional and the police and MTA and appropriate training for first responders will need to be developed and implemented.

Department of Public Libraries

Libraries would like the recommendation to make Bonifant Street one way eastbound with parking on the south side to be reviewed before a final decision is made to include this recommendation. This decision would make for a very awkward access path to Libraries' drop off/bookdrop location. This will also require wayfinding. If Bonifant is to be one way, the Department of Public Libraries strongly

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Page 3 of 3

recommends that the one-way direction for Bonifant Street be studied by MCDOT to see what is the most appropriate direction for making Bonifant Street safe and convenient for the public.

Department of General Services

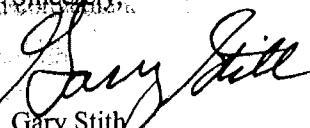
The impacts on parking and driveway access in the commercial areas are of critical importance to the businesses in downtown Silver Spring. The Purple Line Functional Plan should emphasize the need for these details to be addressed in the final design of the Purple Line. If parking must be removed from a commercial street, then it may be necessary for off-street public parking to be provided. Loss of parking can have severe economic impacts on businesses that depend on public parking for their customers.

The Plan should also address the importance of maintaining access to businesses for loading and parking via drives and alleys. This access should be maintained for left turns, particularly into high-volume entrances such as the Whole Foods Market off Wayne Avenue.

The impact of parking by transit riders on neighborhood streets should be reviewed around stations located in residential areas as a design issue to ensure that it is addressed in the final design and location of these transit stations.

The Executive Departments appreciate the hard work of the Planning Staff and of the Advisory Committee in preparing the Plan. We will continue to work with Planning Staff and the Maryland Transit Administration to develop a Plan that preserves the right of way needed for the Purple Line and identifies transportation issues that need to be addressed in the preliminary engineering phase of the Purple Line.

recommends that the one-way direction for Bonifant Street be studied by MCDOT to see what is the most appropriate direction for making Bonifant Street safe and convenient for the public.

Sincerely,

Gary Stith
Deputy Director

GS/sa

- cc: Rollin Stanley, Planning Director
- Art Holmes, Director, Department of Transportation
- Tom Manger, Chief, Department of Police
- Parker Hamilton, Director, Department of Public Libraries
- David Dise, Director, Department of General Services
- Ken Hartman, Director, Bethesda Chevy Chase Regional Center
- Reemberto Rodriguez, Director, Silver Spring Regional Center

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