



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

Arthur Holmes, Jr.
Director

June 17, 2014

Ms. Francoise M. Carrier, Chair
Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Dear Ms. Carrier:


Thank you for your April 1, 2014, letter regarding the Mandatory Referrals for the Purple Line, Bethesda Metro Station South Entrance, Capital Crescent Trail and Silver Spring Green Trail. Thank you for providing detailed comments on the preliminary design of these important transportation projects.

The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) is the lead for the design of each of the projects with Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) and other County Departments making contributions in the areas of planning and design review, right-of-way, permitting and approvals, as well as providing significant financial commitment towards the ultimate construction of the projects.

MCDOT echoes the Planning Board's overall concerns over safety and traffic flow along Maryland State Highway Administration and County owned roadways; specifically cyclist and pedestrian safety and accessibility in and around planned stations and along the Capital Crescent Trail. Many of the comments provided as part of the Mandatory Referral were previously brought to the design team for consideration. Specific design details have been incorporated into the current design in a manner that maximizes the integration of the Purple Line and Capital Crescent Trail into adjacent communities, while minimizing potential mitigation, impacts and costs.

The detailed comments on these Purple Line related projects, as provided by the Planning Board and its staff are much appreciated. Again, thank you for providing MCDOT the opportunity to review your comments.

Sincerely,


Arthur Holmes, Jr.
Director

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Enclosure -- Comment Response Matrix

Office of the Director

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Section	Comment #	MR Comment / Recommendation	MTA Response	MCDOT Response
Corridorwide	6	Commit to providing quality pedestrian and bicycle improvements between station and the communities in their immediate vicinities (MCDOT, SHA, MTA)	MTA and SHA support MCDOT in their ongoing efforts to prioritize pedestrian and bicycle improvements near Purple Line Stations as evidenced by the following: Inclusion of the CCT; Relocation of the CCT to improve community access; Inclusion of Silver Spring Green Trail; 16.5 miles of new/reconstructed bike facilities; Sidewalk improvements on Newdale, Jones Mill, Stewart, 16th Street, MD 193, Wayne, Arliss, Piney Branch; Design option for University Boulevard focused on improved pedestrian safety; 2 years of community meetings on station access with M-NCPPC and MCDOT participation; Bicycle parking at stations where feasible; New traffic signals and pedestrian crosswalks	The MCDOT supports improved bicycle and pedestrian safety and access in communities and station areas along the Purple Line and will continue to work with the MTA and stakeholders during final design and after construction to meet these goals.
Corridorwide	9	Conduct a bus service planning study to determine how routes, frequencies, span of service and the location of bus stops will be adjusted when the Purple Line opens for service. MCDOT should also coordinate service changes for metrobus routes with WMATA. (MCDOT)	MTA defers to MCDOT for a response to this comment	The MCDOT will consider opportunities for coordination with the Purple Line service area in future Ride On capital and operational service planning efforts. In addition, MCDOT will work with MTA on bus transit planning for construction and Purple Line operation.
Corridorwide	11	Utilize a "Bicycle Pedestrian Priority Area Projects" annual program to enhance pedestrian and bicycle station access in locations where there is and where redevelopment is unlikely in the next 5 to 10 years. This program was recommended by the County Council's Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy, and Environment (T&E) Committee on February 24, 2014 and will be taken up by the full Council in the coming weeks. (MCDOT)	MTA defers to MCDOT for a response to this comment	The MCDOT will consider proximity to the Purple Line when prioritizing future bicycle and pedestrian improvements in designated Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority areas.
Connecticut Avenue Station Area	44	Construct a 100-foot-wide underpass for Street B-1 in the Chevy Chase Lake Sector Plan.	MTA intends to construct a 100' wide underpass subject to certain agreements with the Chevy Chase Land Company and Montgomery County DOT. The additional cost of the larger underpass will be a County or 3rd party cost. Should these agreements not be reached, MTA will revert to the 60' wide underpass as per the master plan.	The MCDOT supports construction of an underpass that will accommodate the future roadway connection, "Street B-1" as noted in the Chevy Chase Lakes Sector Plan. Specific funding responsibilities for the difference in cost of the 60' underpass versus the 100' underpass and responsibilities for construction of Street B-1 street connections are to be determined.
Connecticut Avenue Station Area	47	Design the trail to accommodate a stair on the north side of the trail and the east side of Street B-1 to be provided by developers at a future date.	A stair on the northeast side of Street B-1, north of the trail is not prohibited by the current trail horizontal or vertical design.	MCDOT concurs with the MTA response.

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Lyttonsville Station Area	60	Since Stewart Avenue will be the main access route for employees at the Forest Glen Annex until a new access point on Brookville Road can be constructed, reduce the parking lane widths on Stewart Avenue to 8 feet, and reallocate that space to the sidewalk area on the south side to achieve a 5 foot buffer and 10 foot sidewalk. (MCDOT)	Since Stewart Avenue is a County roadway the design is in compliance with MCDOT requirements	In a meeting with MCDOT Division of Transportation Engineering on November 13, 2013, The County agreed to provide a lane width exception on Stewart Avenue and also directed the PL Team to use a 14'-0" shared-use lane and an 8'-0" parking lane on each side of the roadway for a total out-to-out dimension of 44'-0" instead of 48'-0" currently shown. Per MCDOT, the remaining 4'-0" will be evenly split to provide 7'-0" sidewalks on each side of the roadway. The P3 contractor will be responsible for making this change to Stewart Avenue and complying to the County's recommendation.
Lyttonsville Station Area	61	Provide a traffic signal at the intersection of Brookville Road and Stephen Sitter Avenue. (MCDOT)	There is an existing fire house signal at the intersection of Brookville Road and Stephen Sitter Ave. Improvements at this intersection would be the responsibility of MCDOT.	This is the intersection of a private driveway and a public road. MCDOT does not participate in the costs of signaling such intersections as it is purely for the benefit of the private entity. MCDOT will entertain a study prepared by the property owner. If approved, the private property owner will be responsible for all costs to signalize
Lyttonsville Station Area	62	Widen the proposed 5-foot-wide sidewalk on both sides of Lyttonsville Place to at least 7 feet to meet AASHTO recommendations and provide bicycle lanes by removing the "activity lane." (MCDOT)	In designing the replacement of the Lyttonsville Place Bridge, MTA has complied with MCDOT design requirements. MTA defers to MCDOT for a response to this comment	In a meeting with MCDOT Traffic Division on November 14, 2013, the County agreed to keep the existing Lyttonsville Place curb to curb width of 48'-0" and keep the current sidewalk widths of 5'-0" beyond the limits of the Lyttonsville Place bridge.
Lyttonsville Station Area	63	Consider a bus stop with a pull-off area on Brookville Road instead of Lyttonsville Place and improve the crossing of Brookville Road at Lyttonsville Place for pedestrians. (MCDOT)	MTA defers to MCDOT for a response to this comment	MCDOT will review bus stop locations submitted as part of the concessionaires design package.
Lyttonsville Station Area	65	The conflict point on the Capital Crescent Trail at the ramp from Lyttonsville Place should include features that inform bicyclists of pedestrian crossings. (MCDOT)	MTA defers to MCDOT for a response to this comment	The current design process does not include signing. This can be investigated further during final design.
Lyttonsville Station Area	66	Eliminate the acceleration lane on the north leg of the intersection of Brookville Road and Lyttonsville Place. Instead use the space for wider sidewalks and bike lanes to provide continuity from the proposed sidewalks on the Lyttonsville Place bridge. (MCDOT)	The current design at the intersection of Brookville Road and Lyttonsville Place has been coordinated with and agreed upon by MCDOT Division of Transportation Engineering. Consideration of changes to the current design need to be in coordination with MCDOT	MCDOT concurs with the MTA response.
Lyttonsville Station Area	76	In addition to lighting the Capital Crescent Trail under the Lyttonsville Place bridge, provide wallwash lighting along the bridge abutment walls to enhance pedestrian safety. (MCDOT)	Lighting along abutment walls are considered to be part of the art-in-transit program.	This issue can be investigated in final design.

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Woodside Station Area	78	Eliminate the free right turns and realign Spring Street and the Spring Street Bridge to form a t-intersection with 16th Street as part of the reconstruction of the Spring Street bridge. (SHA/MCDOT)	The current layout of Spring Street was agreed upon by MCDOT Traffic Division during a coordination meeting on November 14, 2013. Consideration of changes to the current design need to be in coordination with MCDOT	Eliminating the free right turn lane from 16th Street onto Spring Street and forming a T-intersection is contradictory to the direction given by MCDOT Division of Transportation Engineering.
Woodside Station Area	80	Eliminate both rows of parking on the Spring Street bridge. Widen the proposed 5-foot sidewalks to 13 feet wide. Separate the 16-foot-thru/bike lane into 11-foot-wide thru lanes and 5-foot-wide bike lanes. (MCDOT)	There is no parking on the Spring Street Bridge. The current layout of Spring Street was agreed upon by MCDOT Traffic Division during a coordination meeting on November 14, 2013.	MCDOT concurs with the MTA response.
Silver Spring Station Area	85	Relocate the stormwater management facility proposed on the remnant of 1110 Bonifant Street to an offsite location. After completion of the Purple Line, the County should be given first right of refusal for use of the remnants of this parcel for the Silver Spring Bicycle Parking Facility.	MTA will coordinate with MCDOT regarding this proposal	MTA will coordinate with MCDOT regarding this proposal
Bonifant Street: Silver Spring Transit Center Station to Silver Spring Library Station	89	The ramp on the south side of the road is shared use path width, but the ramp directly across the street on the north side of "Ripifant Road" is smaller than shared use path width. Both ramps should be shared use path width and aligned. (MCDOT)	At this location, the shared use path splits into a 6'-8" on-street bike lane and 12'-0" sidewalk for pedestrians. Further coordination with the Metropolitan Branch Trail is needed during the final design phase.	MCDOT concurs with the MTA response.
Bonifant Street: Silver Spring Transit Center Station to Silver Spring Library Station	90	The sidewalk and curb on the north side of Bonifant Street between Dixon Avenue and the alley should be reconstructed so that they are in alignment with the sidewalks on either side. (MCDOT)	The sidewalk and curb on the north side of Bonifant Street between Dixon Ave and the alley does not need to be reconstructed. The sidewalks and cross walks line up and do not need to be moved. MTA defers to MCDOT for further discussion.	This issue can be investigated in final design.
Bonifant Street: Silver Spring Transit Center Station to Silver Spring Library Station	91	The sidewalk on the south side of Bonifant Street between the alley and Georgia Avenue appears to be as narrow as two feet wide at the eastern end. Ensure that this sidewalk meets the ADA minimum. (MCDOT)	The sidewalk width along the south side of Bonifant Street between the alley and Georgia Ave. meets minimum ADA standards. The minimum pinch point width is 4'-8" at the northeast corner of the Bethel World Outreach Building. MTA defers to MCDOT for further discussion.	This issue can be investigated in final design.

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Wayne Avenue: Silver Spring Library Station to Dale Drive Station	99	At the relocated entrance to the school parking lot on Wayne Avenue, offset the trail from the street by building a retaining wall. (MCDOT)	This change could be evaluated during final design and coordinated with MCDOT and Silver Spring International Middle School.	MCDOT concurs with the MTA response.
Dale Drive Station Area	104	The intersection of Wayne Avenue and Dale Drive should be changed to eliminate these turn lanes in favor of providing a dedicated transit lane in the eastbound direction, shifting the platform one lane to the north and creating a pedestrian refuge on the west leg of the intersection.(MCDOT, MTA)	The current intersection design concept, lane use and traffic control at Wayne Avenue and Dale Drive was a result of extensive coordination with MCDOT, following the preparation of a Wayne Avenue Traffic Study where a number of alternatives were considered.	MCDOT concurs with the MTA response.
Manchester Road Station Area	122	On Wayne Avenue between Sligo Creek Parkway and Manchester Road, a raised island should be constructed between the two turn lanes to ensure that unwanted vehicular moves are not enabled and encouraged. (MCDOT)	MTA defers to MCDOT for a response to this comment	This issue can be investigated in final design.
	126A	Provide for a future northbound left turn lane into the Long Branch Town Center by either: 1) repurposing the northern portion of the proposed southbound left turn lane from Arliss Street to Piney Branch Road or 2) adding a northbound left turn lane from Pine Branch Road to the Town Center.	MTA Continues to coordinate with MCDOT and the property owner regarding this discussion.	This issue can be investigated in final design.
Takoma Langley Transit Center Station Area	161	If the decision is made not to embed the tracks for the whole length of University Boulevard, then they should be embedded at all intersections for vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle access.	The transitway along University Blvd is proposed as ballasted track, except at intersections, where embedded track is required to accommodate cross street traffic and pedestrians.	MCDOT supports embedded tracks along University Boulevard.
Takoma Langley Transit Center Station Area	164	Embed the Purple Line tracks at the intersection of University Boulevard and Edwards Place.	The MTA is evaluating the feasibility of embedded tracks at University Blvd and Edwards Place.	MCDOT supports embedded tracks along University Boulevard.
Elm Street Park	1	Provide a smooth transition for the Capital Crescent Trail into Elm Street Park, avoiding sharp turns by making structural adjustments to the Air Rights Building garage.	A smoother transition may be possible, but it would require impacting the structure supporting the Air Rights Parking garage. The current design was developed to maximize the width of the connection without impacting the existing structure.	MCDOT concurs with the MTA response.

Section	Comment #	MIR Comment / Recommendation	MTA Response	MCDOT Response
Connecticut Avenue Trail Access	2	A shared use path should be provided on the south side of Newdale Road that is 10 feet wide where right-of-way is available, and 8 feet wide in constrained locations.	The current design width reflects pedestrian traffic. The sidewalk width is restricted to 5' at approximately TRK 1 Sta. 170+50, due to avoiding an existing gas main. Once west of the gas main, the sidewalk could be widening to 8' or 10' with the removal of the grass buffer, the decision being the responsibility of MCDOT.	This issue should be addressed in final design.
Coquelin Run Shared Use Path	3	Design the ultimate ramp connection between the Capital Crescent Trail and the Coquelin Run Trail during final design. (MCDOT)	The ultimate design of the ramp at this location has been investigated, but not been fully designed. The decision about the construction of the Coquelin Run trail is a decision for MCDOT and MTA defers to them for a response.	This issue should be addressed in final design.
Coquelin Run Shared Use Path	4	To enhance trail security, a temporary staircase should be constructed from the Capital Crescent Trail to the Coquelin Run right-of-way.	MTA defers to MCDOT for a response to this comment	Adding a temporary stair case at the Coquelin Run right-of-way would provide another opportunity to leave the trail, reducing the maximum walk time between access points. However, a user leaving the trail at this location would be entering a wooded area, and have to find their way to the nearest road by traveling through these woods, as there is no existing trail there today. It would also provide the opportunity for someone to hide among the woods before either entering the trail, or after leaving it. This does not seem like it would enhance the security of the trail.
CSX Property	6	If CSX does not agree to locate the Capital Crescent Trail on CSX property between Lyttonsville Road and 16th Street, MCDOT must submit the revised trail plans to the Planning Board as a mandatory referral.	Comment noted	Coordination between MCDOT and CSX is active and ongoing.
Capital Crescent Trail	7	The Purple Line RFP should provide a strong incentive to keeping the trail closure to a minimum and phase trail closures in a logical sequence, consistent with construction phasing/schedules. (MTA)	A logical trail closures sequence has not been developed at this time, because a construction schedule and phasing sequence has not yet been determined. MTA, in coordination with MCDOT and M-NCPPC, has developed a feasible trail detour plan, the decision to implement being the responsibility of MCDOT. This plan was present to MNCPPC during the April 28, 2014 coordination meeting.	MCDOT has reviewed and provided comments to the MTA on conceptual construction trail detour plans. The MCDOT will also review maintenance of traffic plans again once finalized by the concessionaire.
Capital Crescent Trail	8	Implement a wayfinding plan on the trail at all access points and in locations beyond the trail to direct trail users to the trail.	At this time, a wayfinding plan for the Capital Crescent Trail has not been part of the design process. MTA is proceeding in accordance with the scope provided by MCDOT and defers to them for a response.	This issue should be addressed in final design.
Capital Crescent Trail	9	Provide a bicycle channel on the stairway connection to the Capital Crescent Trail at East-West Highway	This can be investigated further during final design.	This issue should be addressed in final design.
Capital Crescent Trail	10	Provide a bicycle channel on the stairway connection to the Capital Crescent Trail at Sleaford Road	This can be investigated further during final design.	This issue should be addressed in final design.
Capital Crescent Trail	11	Provide a bicycle channel on the stairway connection to the Capital Crescent Trail on the east side of Connecticut Avenue.	This can be investigated further during final design.	This issue should be addressed in final design.

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Capital Crescent Trail	12	Investigate ways to widen the connection between the Capital Crescent Trail and the Metropolitan Branch Trail to be 16 feet upon completion of the Silver Spring Transit Center to achieve a 12-foot effective width.	The current design does not impact the existing channel on top of the Silver Spring Transit Center, as this was outside the purview of the Capital Crescent Trail project. MTA defers to MCDOT for a response.	This issue should be addressed in final design.
Capital Crescent Trail	16	Realign the trail access point to either Noyes Lane or Noyes Drive to avoid mid-block crossings.	The design of the 16th Street Connection with both a ramp and stairs required a delicate balance to deal with the significant differences in elevation between 16th Street, the Capital Crescent Trail, and Third Avenue. The mid-block location of the stairs was the best solution when balancing all factors. Also, there is no existing sidewalk to tie-into here, and neither Noyes Lane nor Noyes Drive are stop-controlled intersections, so crossing at the intersection does not look like it would provide a significant increase in safety for pedestrian. The issue is the responsibility of MCDOT.	This issue should be addressed in final design.
Capital Crescent Trail	17	Provide a landing area between Jones Mill Road and Capital Crescent Trail that facilitates adequate sight distance and safe connections.	If referring to the top of the connection ramp, a landing area is provided at the top of the Jones Mill Road trail connection, and another is provided immediately adjacent to the back of curb. If referring to the bottom of the connection ramp, the walls to the north and east at the junction are both fill walls. Therefore, these walls would not pose any sight distance restrictions for trail users	MCDOT concurs with the MTA response.
Capital Crescent Trail	18	The median island on the south leg of Jones Mill Road, across from the ramp, should be 8 to 10 feet wide to facilitate use by southbound bicyclists headed toward the ramp.	The current design width reflects pedestrian traffic. The issue is the responsibility of MCDOT.	This issue should be addressed in final design.
Capital Crescent Trail	19	The sidewalk in the southwest quadrant of the intersection of Jones Bridge Road and Jones Mill Road should be constructed behind the proposed ramps to facilitate travel by disabled persons as well as to provide storage space for people waiting to cross either street.	A bypass sidewalk was not provided behind the sidewalk ramps to avoid impacting private property and a steep slope behind the sidewalk. The issue is the responsibility of MCDOT	MCDOT concurs with the MTA response.
Capital Crescent Trail	22	Develop and implement a unique signing and branding plan for the Capital Crescent Trail between the Silver Spring Metro station and the Bethesda Metro station. Signing should be provided at regular intervals on the trail, as well as at all access points.	At this time, a signing plan for the Capital Crescent Trail has not been part of the design process. This issue is the responsibility of MCDOT	This issue should be addressed in final design.
Silver Spring Green Trail	2	Extend the curb at the northwest corner of Wayne Avenue and Dartmouth Ave to reduce the crossing distance for trail users.	MCDOT issue	This issue should be addressed in final design.
Silver Spring Green Trail	4	Offset the trail from Wayne Avenue by building a retaining wall for the adjacent school parking lot.	This change could be evaluated during final design and coordinated with MCDOT and Silver Spring International Middle School.	MCDOT concurs with the MTA response.

Section	Comment #	MR Comment / Recommendation	MTA Response	MCDOT Response
Silver Spring Green Trail	5	The connection between the Silver Spring Green Trail and the Sligo Creek Trail should be flared to the extent possible to facilitate access to the trail.	As outlined in the de minimis finding, a Work Group is being formed between MNCPPC and MTA. One focus of the Work Group is to consider the effects of widening the bridge to accommodate a wider Green Trail. The design will include signage, safe road crossings, and functional interconnections.	MCDOT concurs with the MTA response.
Silver Spring Green Trail	6	Widen the southwest corner of Wayne Avenue and Sligo Creek Parkway to at least 8 feet. Sligo Creek Trail should be relocated behind the traffic signal pole so that users can directly access the ramp to cross Sligo Creek Parkway.	MCDOT issue	This issue should be addressed in final design.
Silver Spring Green Trail	7	The existing stepped brick parapets on the Wayne Avenue bridge over Sligo Creek should be replicated in the design of the new bridge. Ornamental lighting should be added to the bridge due to the high level of pedestrian and bicyclist activity on the bridge, as planned in the design of the existing bridge.	Final design of these features within the park will be coordinated with MCDOT and Department of Parks	MCDOT concurs with the MTA response.
Silver Spring Green Trail	8	The Silver Spring Green Trail on the Wayne Avenue bridge over Sligo Creek should be widened to 14 feet (an effective width of 10 feet) to reflect expected demand. A barrier should be provided between the roadway and the trail on the bridge.	As outlined in the de minimis finding, a Work Group is being formed between MNCPPC and MTA. One focus of the Work Group is to consider the effects of widening the bridge to accommodate a wider Green Trail. The design will include signage, safe road crossings, and functional interconnections.	MCDOT concurs with the MTA response.
Silver Spring Green Trail	9	Design and construct the last remaining unbuilt and unprogrammed portion of the Silver Spring Green Trail, a one-block segment between Fenwick Lane and Cameron Street.	MCDOT issue. Outside PL project limits.	This is outside the Green Trail project limits.
Silver Spring Green Trail	10	Develop and implement a unique signing and branding plan for the Silver Spring Green Trail between Spring Street and Sligo Creek Parkway. Signing should be provided at regular intervals on the trail, as well as at all access points.	MCDOT issue	This issue should be addressed in final design.