



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

OFFICE OF THE CHAIR

March 24, 2014

Council President Craig Rice
Councilmember Roger Berliner, T&E Committee Chair
Councilmember Cherri Branson, District 5
Council Office Building
100 Maryland Avenue, 5th Floor
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Mr. Rice, Mr. Berliner, and Ms. Branson:

During the Planning Board's review of the Purple Line mandatory referral on March 20, 2014, there was considerable discussion regarding the need for a direct connection between the planned Purple Line station and the existing Red Line station at the Silver Spring Transit Center. This connection is recommended in the Purple Line Functional Plan and is important because it will facilitate transfers between the two rail lines, but it is currently unfunded. In fact, the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) estimates that there will be 3,500 daily transfers between the Red Line and Purple Line by 2040. This represents almost 30% of Purple Line boardings and alightings at this station.

Ease of transfer between transit lines plays an important role in encouraging people to use public transportation and will help to increase ridership on the Red Line and meet Silver Spring's non-auto driver mode share (NADMS) goal. If this direct connection is not built, passengers transferring between the Purple Line and the Red Line will have to take a circuitous route to continue their trip. The longer walking distance will increase travel time for passengers and create additional pedestrian congestion in the plaza area of the Silver Spring Transit Center – a space that will be functionally smaller once the Purple Line is constructed. With a direct connection, passengers would have a shorter and more logical transfer.

MTA has indicated it may be willing to contribute some funding to the project and is including the connection in its final design phase for the Purple Line. WMATA would also be a logical partner, since Metrorail passengers will benefit, but according to MTA, to date, they have been unwilling to contribute.

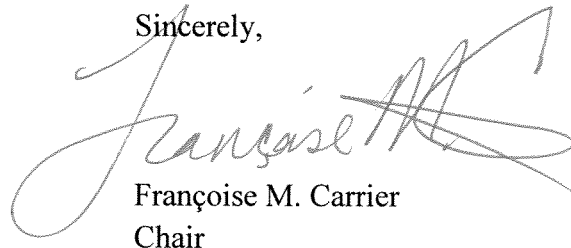
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While the operational benefit of constructing this connection as part of the Purple Line is clear due to the substantial benefit to passengers, the cost considerations discussed in our review have made a decision on this issue more urgent. MTA estimates that the \$28 million cost of constructing the connection with the rest of the Purple Line project would more than double if it is constructed after the Purple Line is complete, due to the difficulty of constructing it between two operating rail lines.

While the County's contribution to this project could be a significant addition to the CIP, we recommend that the Council give all due consideration to this important project as you consider the capital budget for FY15 to FY21. We also recommend that the Council encourage WMATA to participate in this project in which they have a clear interest, not only in ensuring that the transit center works as smoothly as possible, but also in promoting transit as the mode of choice.

Thank you for your consideration of these recommendations. Please feel free to contact me at 301-495-4605 or staff member David Anspacher at 301-495-2191 with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Françoise M. Carrier".

Françoise M. Carrier
Chair

cc: Montgomery County Council
Art Holmes
Jamie Kendrick
Mike Madden
Glenn Orlin
Gary Erenrich